

Declaration of Candidacy for Vice-President of Student Life

I am running for Vice-President of Student Life because I believe in student government and its capacity to affect concrete changes that will allow us to build a better Colorado College for every student. I have served on CCSGA for two years, first as a First Year Representative and this year as Vice-President of Student Life. Those two years have given me a balanced perspective on this position and how it can be most beneficial to the student body.

First off, the powers of CCSGA are limited because “Student Government” is a misnomer; CCSGA does not have the power to create laws or directly affect the issues you likely care about most, such as setting tuition rates for instance. Instead, our student government has two major functions that govern how it will interact with you personally. First, it is designed mainly to provide student groups with events funding and other forms of assistance to ensure that they have the means to pursue their individual interests around campus. CCSGA has gotten much better at this during the time I have served on it, and today the funding system is both fiscally sustainable and more efficient than ever before. However, we in student government also have the duty of representing the interests of students and effectively advocating for our needs, and in this area I believe CCSGA still has much work to do as an organization. The challenge before the student body in this election is selecting a candidate who not only has the platform that will most tangibly advance student interests, but who also has the expertise to utilize the powers afforded to our student government to most effectively to accomplish real change on the issues that actually matter to students.

My goal in running for Vice-President is to have CCSGA live up to its promise as an organization. In my time as Vice-President of Student Life this year, I have had several successes supported by the tireless work of my fellow Student Life Committee members that evidence the possibility for CCSGA to be a true force for positive change on this campus. For instance, one of my first actions as Vice-President was to establish regular office hours in the CCSGA Office for my committee members to provide a direct forum for students to address concerns to my committee. This process provided the impetus for many of my committee's later accomplishments, such as revamping the chartership process for student groups, passing a bill which gave greater representation to Heads of State representatives on Full Council, and sponsoring a resolution to allow the student group SOSS to serve as a confidential resource for survivors of sexual assault. All told, my time in office this year has allowed me to interact directly with the most pressing student concerns across campus, and if I am elected to another term I will build on progress we have made this year by focusing on tangible goals that are most impactful for students.

In particular, I aim to advance these specific goals during my second term as Vice-President so as to set CCSGA on the path towards meaningful change at CC:

1. Establish greater unity between CCSGA and other organizations around campus by creating periodic forums for representatives of CCSGA, Greek Life, Athletics, Butler Center Groups, and other student groups so that CCSGA is better able to support change occurring across campus.

2. Expand funding for programs over block breaks that are of interest to students who find it is too expensive to leave campus, international students, and those who stay behind for other reasons.
3. Utilize CCSGA's power over all campus-committee appointments to further action on meaningful issues across campus, such as by appointing advocates for increasing financial aid on the College Budget Committee to support students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.
4. Establish a new Executive Council Position for a Vice-President of Diversity and Inclusion who can push CCSGA to address the lack of diversity in certain committees and coordinate diversity promotion efforts across campus.
5. Establish a Sexual Assault Prevention Plan with the Office of the SARC by the end of first block and provide additional funding support for student groups who support survivors of sexual assault.

The goals listed above will not be obtained easily; rather they will require a sustained campaign of attention to ensure student government does not lose sight of what truly matters and the expertise to make them a reality. After two years of experience in CCSGA I can confidently say that I possess the understanding of student government and the drive to best advocate for them across campus. If you support these goals and want a Vice-President who can make them a reality, I ask for your vote on April 7th.

Sincerely,

Steven Ortega