

James Surak

Wednesday, Jan 24

UVM Student Government Association Senator Platform

I am running for SGA Senator because I would like to be a part of a group that is making real change in our community and I thrive in environments like that. I have noticed many things on our campus concerning accessibility, campus food, and school clubs and activities and I hope to take steps to improve the quality of life for every student on campus.

The main characteristics that would enable me to thrive as a student leader are my communication and group working skills. I am hardworking and able to collaborate with many people while having an open mind. I was in a project-based learning program in high school that gave me a lot of experience working in group settings about school-wide issues. I was able to take the role of leader during many of these projects and found that I thrived in that role. I led the creation of an inclusion and diversity mural in our high school and I facilitated many group research projects including one on glass and single-stream recycling. In each of these projects, I was able to foster a collaborative environment that enabled diverse perspectives to be heard, respected, and productive together. I have found that my personality allows me to bond with people from all different demographics. I enjoy meeting new people and I feel like this role will allow me to do so. I was also part of a leadership counsel focused on learning in new and innovative ways. There was only one student from each high school grade to join this leadership counsel and the application process was similar to this one. I worked

directly with teachers and administration from the entire school district to foster growth and innovation.

While UVM does a lot to improve the student and campus experience, I do think there are several areas where there is room for improvement. The school's accessibility for students with disabilities and the distribution of quality food throughout the campus. In terms of accessibility, our school lacks many resources that would make it easier for people with physical disabilities. Many of the living community buildings don't have any sort of elevator and ones that do often have them shut off or down in fear of students using them wrongly. On campus, there are ramps and elevators around, but most ramps are very hard to traverse during the cold and icy winter months and the elevators or inside ramps are often very far out of the way or completely inaccessible. Since I arrived at UVM, I and many others have found the food at the dining halls lacking. For places like Trinity and Redstone, the remoteness of the living communities doesn't allow for access to all of the dining halls. The options at a place like Northside Dining are often very slim with only one hot option, the salad bar, a pancake station to fill up the students on Trinity. Whether or not you think this is enough food, the quality of most of the options is lacking. These are the main issues I would like to look into if selected as a senator.

I hope you will agree that I would be a great fit for a SGA Senator position and I hope you consider me for this position.