Hi UVM students! My name is Olivia Eisenberg, and I am a junior from Bethesda, MD -- about a half mile from D.C. I am studying political science and public policy analysis, and in addition to being a student, I have been part of the Student Government Association Senate since the fall of my freshman year. I am on the Committee on Legislative and Community Affairs, or COLCA, and I have served as the Chair of the committee for the past year which has taught me a lot about leadership and about the university.

I am now running to be the next President of the Student Government Association because I believe I have the passion, organization, and determination to continue to support students and advocate for your concerns while leading the Student Government. With any position on SGA, there comes increased contact with administration, especially with the role of the president, and I want to make sure that dialogue is focused completely on helping you.

One of the most frequently asked questions I get about SGA is something along the lines of “what do you all really do?” I completely recognize that all of SGA’s work isn’t always accessible to the student body, which is something I want to change. That being said, here are a few of the things the amazing senators on SGA have accomplished in the past year:

- Hosted Week of Kindness to promote self-care and kindness to ourselves, other students, faculty, staff and the community. Some activities included make-your-own bouquets, rock painting, massages and mindfulness yoga.
- Conducted a public forum with Community Support Liaisons from the Burlington Police Department to discuss alternatives to traditional forms of policing.
- Worked with faculty to lessen the burden of the cost of textbooks costs each semester for students.
- Brought in Vermont Legislators Barbara Rachelson and Mary-Katherine Stone for a town-hall to create an accessible dialogue between students and state legislators.
In addition to those accomplishments, I have personally worked on a number of projects. Here are some that I am most proud of:

- Helped to make sure period products are continuously replenished in all buildings on campus.
- Assisted in the planning of last year’s Sexual Violence Awareness Month, including booking speakers, creating social media posts and organizing events.
- Organized a Community Cleanup event to pick up trash in the neighborhoods surrounding campus.
- Currently serve as the Co-Chair of the Burlington Community Coalition and work with the Office of Student and Community Relations (OSCR) as well as members of the Burlington area to work towards community-based solutions to issues facing the population.
- Currently serve the Chair of a committee to put together a Strategic Plan for SGA. This is a newly-formed project aiming to collect student input on the issues on campus and create a comprehensive report to hold SGA and administration accountable for working to solve them.

With all of the improvements that SGA has made in the past year, there are still obvious changes that need to be made at the University. If I were to be elected President, I would work tirelessly to make as much meaningful change in those areas as possible. Below are a few of the main improvements I’d like to see.

Firstly, I want to continue to promote the SGA Strategic Plan and ensure that the Student Government is checking in with the report to make sure their projects are centered around student concerns. We developed this project so that the report will be put together bi-annually, making next year an “off-year”. Thus, it is imperative that SGA works hard to focus our efforts on the specific issues brought up by students, and to work with administration to do so.

I also want to increase the number of community events which encourage UVM students and Burlington community members to connect. Events like Winterlude which is put on by OSCR each year are great examples of events that exemplify the notion that a connected community is a safe one. Building respect for our neighbors through more events like these will build a better Burlington.

Each year SGA makes it a goal to increase access to CAPS and mental health resources. This year should be no different. CAPS is currently underfunded and so its functions are lacking. For example, the 24/7 hotline is not operating in the capacity that it should be. I want to make sure that the University is allocating sufficient funds to CAPS and to better advertise the many services it offers.

Finally, in the fall of my freshman year, I came into SGA wanting to mitigate the burden survivors have to face. This goal has not changed, and next year I want to work to shift the Title IX process at University of Vermont to align with this principle of taking the burden off of survivors. Currently, UVM’s criteria for a Title IX Sexual Harassment complaint is for the harassment to be severe, pervasive and persistent, while the Federal criteria are for it to be severe, pervasive and objectively offensive. Essentially, for a valid complaint at UVM, an individual has to put themselves back in an unsafe environment in order to prove the harassment is persistent. That needs to change.
As President, I want to center student voices in the work that I do, as well as the work that SGA does. This means continuing SGA tabling in the Davis Center and using the Strategic Plan to make sure we are serving you -- the students. As someone who is extremely hardworking, compassionate and experienced, I want to always be available to listen to any concerns you may have about SGA or the University and do what I can to solve them. If you have any questions about anything in my platform or any changes you’d like to see, please feel free to reach out to me via email (Olivia.Eisenberg@uvm.edu) or phone (240-405-1244).

I would be absolutely honored to serve as your SGA President, and it would mean the world to me to have your vote on March 29th through the 31st. Please check out my running mate, Carter Purple’s platform as well, and make sure to vote for him, too!

Thanks so much Cats!