

Student Government 2021 Candidate Guide

The following are your candidates for the Spring 2021 Student Government election. Please take the time to read why they are running, and what the biggest issue they believe is facing their constituency. Sections are broken up by position, and those within each section are in alphabetical order by first name.

Presidential Candidates

Reauna Stiff

Running Mate: Kara Svercl

Empowering Mavericks

Why are you choosing to run for this position?

We are interested in this position because as students ourselves, we are empathetic to the many struggles and situations different demographics of students go through daily. We feel as though we are qualified to serve students in the best ways we know how, which is taking up a leadership position and encouraging those that look up to us to advocate for their peers as well. We believe that students should have a seat at every table where decisions are being made and that starts with committed Student Government leadership. Our ultimate goal is the betterment of the student experience at Minnesota State University, Mankato. We are interested in this position because we believe in this institution and the students, faculty, and administrators who populate it. We want to see students flourish while attending this institution and so we are running to make positive changes at the university.

What do you believe is the biggest issue facing your constituency?

We believe that the biggest issues facing our constituency group are threats to basic needs. In order to succeed and have a balanced, well rounded student experience, students must feel supported, safe, and secure in their housing and basic nutritional needs. We intend to address these issues by dedicating our term to continuing to seek out these students, support them through programs like Swipe Out Hunger, and create and expand programs that address their financial and physical needs. We will advocate for a continued commitment from the university to support students in addressing their basic needs longer the pandemic. We firmly believe that hunger and homelessness should not be a part of the college experience. Among other plans, we would also like to see university wide initiatives like a mental health day, a student endorsed housing recommendation list and the expansion of reserve funding to create more full-ride scholarships specifically for low-income students.

Vice Presidential Candidates

Kara Svercl

Running Mate: Reauna Stiff

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College of Allied Health & Nursing Senator Candidates

Brian Swancutt

Empowering Mavericks

Why are you choosing to run for this position?

I am interested in running for the College of Allied Health and Nursing Senator position because I have had the opportunity to serve as a Residential Life Senator this past year, and I absolutely loved it. Representing Residential Life Students was a true honor, and now that I live off-campus, I want to represent the students within the College of Allied Health and Nursing and bring their issues to the table.

What do you believe is the biggest issue facing your constituency?

I think the biggest problem we face in the CAHN is a lack of interest in filling Senate vacancies when they arise. They often go months before being filled. As a Senator for the College of Allied Health and Nursing, I will attempt to address this through engaging with students and faculty within the college more to promote the opportunities student government has to offer.

College of Arts & Humanities Senator Candidates

Colin Hanke

Empowering Mavericks

Why are you choosing to run for this position?

I think this position would allow me to build upon my leadership skills and it would also give me insight on how administrative stuff works in higher education.

What do you believe is the biggest issue facing your constituency?

Funding--the College of Arts & Humanities doesn't get nearly as much funding as the STEM programs. I also would like to see international (particularly queer international students) have more opportunities for financial aid at MSU.

College of Business Senator Candidates

Sean Chimezie

No party affiliation

Why are you choosing to run for this position?

I am very interested in what MNSU offers and I would love to create awareness as well as add more great ideas. I also want to work with individuals in making choices that is best for MNSU. I am International Business major and having this position will give me real life experience on working with groups to achieve certain goals.

What do you believe is the biggest issue facing your constituency?

I believe the biggest issue would not be able to communicate. I would send emails regularly to remind members of the group about meetings and also updates. I would also expect feedback from everyone so we could all move as a team; This would help create good ideas that would be in the interest of MNSU.

College of Education Senator Candidates

Lelti Asgedom

Empowering Mavericks

Why are you choosing to run for this position?

I'm in interested in helping improve the quality of education and help students get the maximum skillset needed to take life head on.

What do you believe is the biggest issue facing your constituency?

I have seen that the university lacks in many summer research or internship opportunities and I would get in touch with the fellowship director at school and try to improve on that.

College of Graduate Studies Senator Candidates

None

College of Science, Engineering, and Technology Senator Candidates

Siene Haq

Empowering Mavericks

Why are you choosing to run for this position?

I am interested in this position to continue working on my project and making a change for all my classmates. This is important so that we can always help everyone and be the change we plan to see.

What do you believe is the biggest issue facing your constituency?

The idea of communication and unnecessary requirements of different platforms which can be done by one.

Jayden Thieschafer

No party affiliation

Why are you choosing to run for this position?

I am interested in this position because I am someone who hopes to make a difference for students who are a part of the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology at Mankato. In the past I have held leadership positions such as being a member of the Student Council, National Honors Society, and the varsity hockey and lacrosse captain. I feel that the experience through these numerous positions have prepared me to take on additional leadership roles and responsibilities.

What do you believe is the biggest issue facing your constituency?

I believe that the biggest issues facing the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology would be the lack of women presence. As a woman, I would speak for all members of this group, but especially the few women that are involved in this community. I would like to get more women involved in this group and also listen to any future issues that people might have and try to resolve them the best I can.

College of Social & Behavioral Sciences Senator Candidates

None

Student Body At-Large Senator Candidates

Zahara Osman

Empowering Mavericks

Why are you choosing to run for this position?

I'm running because I want to make positive changes in MNSU and help my party (Empowering Mavericks) advocate to the administration to meet the needs of our students so that everyone can have the best college experience possible.

What do you believe is the biggest issue facing your constituency?

I believe the biggest issue facing my constituency group is food insecurities I'm going to address it by making them aware of the resources available for them like the campus kitchen and maverick food pantry. and help campus kitchen find more local restaurants to donate to our organization.

Jack Wheeler

Empowering Mavericks

Why are you choosing to run for this position?

I am interested in being a part of student government again because I want to make a change within the campus community. Student government is a great opportunity that lets me comment with students and voice their concerns on the University level. I see student government as an opportunity to work with a variety of students and tackle issues that will affect current and future students who come to MSU!

What do you believe is the biggest issue facing your constituency?

Regarding the At-Large senator position, I want to tackle a variety of issues within individual colleges and for students living off-campus. One of the first issues is establishing a more effective Pre-Law track for students. I want to change the advisor to one that has experience at law school, and I want to get more guidance for students who are interested in that track. I also want to improve the experience for students in Greek life. An idea that was pushed around is the Greek row, which is something that I could see being pursued again in the future. I have lots of ideas that I want to pursue with Student government as a platform.

Off-Campus Senator Candidates

Ahmed Abbasi

Empowering Maverick

Why are you choosing to run for this position?

I am interested in being an Off-campus Senator to continue the work I have done so far in the Student government and I intend to complete my projects. There are a lot of things I have in mind for the off-campus community for the post-pandemic year.

What do you believe is the biggest issue facing your constituency?

Before my views were more oriented towards mentor ship of student living off-campus. But now my focus is more towards the lease and tenant's policies. Off-campus community faces several issues with the leasing, and I tend to investigate these issues and try to bring forth a way to solve this issue.

Yeabsira Dessie

Empowering Maverick

Why are you choosing to run for this position?

As a kid, I always tried to find a shape to things fitting one category into another. There was one thing I couldn't find a form to though-what our purpose in this life was. Coming from a working-class family, I was always taught to work hard and push to the limits while still being an honorable and respectful child. My dad was an agricultural researcher so, he would travel to the rural parts of Ethiopia now and then. I had always wanted to accompany him on his endeavors, and it wasn't until 8th grade that I got the chance. I was so surprised to witness the lack of health care in the rural parts of our country. It got worse as I had to watch powerless the death of countless mothers while giving birth. This is when I found my purpose in life, living for others and being selfless not when possible but when it looked unlikely and unbearable. That is why I want to join this board to become the voice of the voiceless.

What do you believe is the biggest issue facing your constituency?

Students living off-campus have limited interaction with those found on campus. I believe this is a major issue because I as an undergraduate didn't have the chance to live on campus. Hence, my experience with dorms is minimal. This will in the long run affect the diversity of the school since there are numerous international students from the same country. Not only will it affect the diversity of the school, it will also minimize the socioeconomic background of the school further leading to a situation where no one learns from the experience of others. If I am elected, I hope to fix this big issue by hosting different events to link students found in and out of campus. Events are just the start; I will assist students interested in viewing the dorms with a chance to look at them and communicate with at least one other student from another country.

Residential Life Senator Candidates

Patrick Flynn

Empowering Mavericks

Why are you choosing to run for this position?

As a returning candidate to this position, the representation of students living in the residence halls is important to me, particularly when it comes to ensuring a positive experience for students from all walks of life-regardless of age, race, creed or class.

What do you believe is the biggest issue facing your constituency?

Student representation in policy decisions regarding COVID-19 policy has been an issue in the past. I do hope that it is a settled issue but am ready to stand up for students once again. Additionally, the experience of non-traditional students who live on campus has been an area I have been wanting to create change in - given that I fall within that demographic.

Audrey Hopwood

Empowering Mavericks

Why are you choosing to run for this position?

The reason why I'm interested in this position is because I'm a Residential Life Senator right now and I really enjoy it. I enjoy uplifting the voices of the students who decided to further their education here at Minnesota State University Mankato (MNSU). It's important to me that the student body is being heard and that as a senator my duty is to help amplify it. I enjoy being part of something that can change our University for the better and for the students that go to MNSU. While being in the position I was able to achieve goals and better this University as a whole for all students that go to MNSU and I want to be able to continue that next school year.

What do you believe is the biggest issue facing your constituency?

One of the biggest issues facing the constituencies of On-campus student is not being able to connect to their peers as effectively during the pandemic which lacks the community feeling. Another thing is the internet in the residency still can be unstable and I believe that I could work on getting a grace period with turning things in with the internet sometimes being unstable. Lastly, I want to work on bringing more diversity amongst all the residency and I would like to do that by creating a Learning Community that resides in other residencies other than Crawford or McElroy. While there are countless other On-campus issues that need to be addressed that is just some that I would like to enact change upon this next school year.

Joseph Novak

Empowering Mavericks

Why are you choosing to run for this position?

I am interested in continuing my role as a student senator because over the past semester I have had the great honor of working side by side with my fellow student leaders to accomplish great change. I still feel however, that there is still much to be done and that we are in need of people willing to dedicate time and resources to helping others. I hope to be one of those people.

What do you believe is the biggest issue facing your constituency?

A lot of what I have done in my time as Senator had been dealing with COVID related issues and now coming out of the pandemic I expect there to be a lot of issues to overcome in the next year.

Candidates for Various Boards

Athletic Fee Advisory Board Candidates

Yeabsira Dessie

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Centennial Student Union Board Candidates

Ahmed Abbasi

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What do you believe is the biggest issue facing your constituency?

Before my views were more oriented towards mentor ship of student living off-campus. But now my focus is more towards the lease and tenant's policies. Off-campus community faces several issues with the leasing, and I tend to investigate these issues and try to bring forth a way to solve this issue.

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Emma Gabbert

Empowering Mavericks

Why are you choosing to run for this position?

I have served on the Centennial Student Union Board for the past year and have found that student input is an important part of student government. I would like to run for the CSU Board again to continue our efforts.

What do you believe is the biggest issue facing your constituency?

I think the CSU is the home away from home for students at MNSU. I would love to continue to represent them and their opinions.

Siene Haq

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Newspaper Board Candidates

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Student Health Services Advisory Board Candidates

Lelti Asgedom

Empowering Mavericks

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What do you believe is the biggest issue facing your constituency?

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