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# HOWARD AIMS TO REFORM SGA, INSPIRE CHANGE

Jalyn Howard and Kendrick Dawson were voted in as the next Student Government Association president and vice president on March 23.



Winners of the SGA presidential and vice presidential election, Jayln Howard and Kendrick Dawson. Howard is a junior health care management major and Dawson is a junior risk management and insurance major. The Howard/Dawson ticket won with 1,421 (54.1%) of the total votes for the 2016 election. Photo by Brandon Peterson.

by **Tommy Culkin**

April 5, 2016

## Quick Takeaways

- They plan to raise awareness on underutilized resources.
- Raise awareness on where student fees go.
- Emphasizing change at the SGA level.

**Use social media? So do we.**



Jalyn Howard and Kendrick Dawson were voted in as the next Student Government Association president and vice president on March 23.

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Howard, who had previously served as SGA director of cultural affairs, said he felt that SGA wasn't reaching its full potential.



"When I got into SGA, I saw that it could be a powerful organization, but I wasn't sure if it was being utilized quite correctly, or its full potential wasn't quite realized," Howard said. "I just want SGA to do a better job of bringing resources to students who don't know about them, and to really benefit and elevate student voices."

One of the ways Howard hopes to help SGA benefit student voices is by doing a better job of informing them of opportunities available to them.

According to Howard, there's a \$90,000 grant allocation for ASG and a \$30,000 of diversity grants that most of the students aren't readily made aware of. By raising awareness of services and opportunities like these grants, Howard believes SGA can do more to benefit the students they represent.

Another way they think SGA could improve is by promoting mental health services on the campus.

One of the reasons Howard believes SGA can improve is because of the lack of diversity it has historically had.

"SGA isn't a bad organization by any means," Howard said. "They've been efficient in the past.



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However, I think they lack perspective from diversity.”

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As a voting member of the Board of Trustees, Howard says he would like to be able to present personalized students.



Another change that Howard and Dawson hope to implement is the re-prioritization of student fees.



Students pay \$3,257 in fees per year. Out of that amount, \$738 go to athletics, which is by far the biggest student fee. Only \$294 go to health services. Howard said he would like to decrease the emphasis put on athletics so that other areas can flourish.

Dawson said his responsibility is to get the other members of SGA interested and passionate about issues. The way to do this, he said, is through education.

“People can’t be passionate about what they don’t know about,” Dawson said. “If you make people aware of our platform, they’ll naturally become interested. And if you can find what people are passionate about, it’s not that hard to inspire them.”

The changes that Howard and Dawson are striving to achieve are all parts of a larger culture change that they’d like to see take place in SGA.

“There are senators on SGA who admit that they don’t like coming to senate meetings because they don’t feel like they can speak up,” Howard said. “We want to make a comfortable and inclusive environment for everyone involved would fix some



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of the problems we have now of certain senators  
being standard.

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Howard believes that this culture change would  
then spread to students.

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“Culture change is something that is going to have  
to happen at Appalachian State if we’re increasing  
diversity,” Howard said. “Even if we don’t want to  
talk about it, it’s something that needs addressing,  
and SGA needs to be a strong organization that can  
facilitate those discussions.”

Howard is Appalachian State’s first African  
American SGA president since 1975, and he and  
Dawson are the first all-black ticket to be elected in  
the history of SGA.

Story by Tommy Culkin, Senior News Reporter

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