

SGA outsider Chris Boretti wants to make the organization more receptive to students



Christopher Boretti, a freshman finance major, stands for a portrait in Anne Arundel Hall on April 12, 2017. Boretti is running as an unaffiliated SGA presidential candidate. (Tom Hausman/The Diamondback)

By Diamondback Staff

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In his first year at the University of Maryland, freshman Chris Boretti felt the SGA was not responsive to student needs.

Boretti, a finance major, said he hopes to change that if elected Student Government Association president.

"The student government has not been receptive," Boretti said. "And that has to end." He noted the system wasn't built for individual students who want to get involved, because they would need to have a ticket and connections to run.

[\[\[Read more: *Two more students are now eligible to run in UMD SGA's election after successful appeals*\]\]](#)

Boretti added that he would like to see higher turnout and a longer cycle in SGA elections as well. About six percent of undergraduate students voted in last year's SGA election, which was uncontested.

"It's the responsibility of the student government" to increase turnout in order to be legitimate campus representatives, Boretti said.

While Boretti is a freshman running as an independent candidate, he said his previous political experience demonstrates his passion for politics. Boretti has worked on political campaigns, such as Kathy Szeliga's senate campaign, and as a page in the Maryland Department of Legislative Services.

Campaigning for this year's election began Wednesday, and voting will open from April 19 to April 21. With only 10 days of campaigning, candidates can canvas but can't genuinely listen to people's concerns, Boretti argued, adding it is too short of a time frame for students to understand each politician's platform.

"Is 10 days really enough to allow all of the candidates to be heard? I don't think that's the case," he said. "You have this dichotomy where the candidates are listed [on the SGA website] but they're not allowed to campaign." Boretti called these restrictions "nonsensical."

[\[\[Read more: *The two SGA parties posted similar donation amounts, but one has 11 times as many contributors*\]\]](#)

He noted that he was glad that most positions have contested elections this year, while last year, the Bold Party ran unopposed.

"We should encourage competition. You can't see what the good ideas are without it," Boretti said. "...Having a single party rule is problematic. If it's truly the will of the student body to have those people elected, that's fine. But I don't see that they can definitively state that is the case."

As an SGA outsider, Boretti said he has received criticism for having a "limited understanding" how the SGA system functions. Still, he said he believes the current SGA members are not addressing important policy issues, such as the election process and low voter turnout.

"I might not be the best candidate," Boretti said, "but the people who supposedly are the best candidates are not addressing the issues."

The Diamondback interviewed Boretti Tuesday evening. The One Party and the Unity Party released their policy platforms on Wednesday. The One Party aims to reduce Counseling Center wait times, create a strategic plan for diversity and inclusion, increase access to SGA funding for student groups and investigate affordable housing options in College Park, among other initiatives. The Unity Party wants to increase SGA transparency, work to prevent sexual assault on the campus, increase access to academic advising and increase representation of students in Greek Life, among other initiatives.

Boretti's roommate, Nicholas Stewart, said he knows Boretti as a very focused and passionate person. Stewart and Boretti are in the same Honors Humanities program, so they live and take a class together.

"He's an insightful student, and he participates a lot in class," the freshman economics major said. "He's really focused in completing his assignments and

making sure everything is done on time. He knows how to get his work done efficiently, and he follows through."

Steward added that Boretti is also "really determined to make change happen."

"I know he believes that if you want something to happen, you have to make it happen yourself," Stewart said. "I know that he's very passionate about politics and passionate about making things happen, and I know he has the experience to do so."

Sean Farrell, who has been friends with Boretti since high school, said he wasn't surprised to see him run for president as a freshman.

"[Boretti] has always been an ambitious guy," the freshman finance major said. "He has dreams of being president of the United States one day, so I wasn't surprised when he said he was going to run to be president of the SGA for Maryland."