



May 2021

ASUPS Board of Trustees Report

Kayden Diodati | *ASUPS President*



Dear Members of the Board of Trustees of the University of Puget Sound,

Land Acknowledgement

Let us acknowledge that we, members of the Puget Sound community, have the privilege to work, live, and learn on ancestral stolen Coast Salish and Puyallup land. While we spend our time reflecting on our community in reading and writing this report, let us remember that we are visitors to this land. As we virtually engage in this important work, we recognize that members may be joining in conversation from land with its own distinctive and important history. Please take a moment to read through this [land acknowledgment statement](#), developed as a part of the preparations for the 2018 Race and Pedagogy National Conference.

Introductions

Hello! My name is Kayden Diodati, I use he/him pronouns, and am a sophomore in the Business Leadership Program. Aside from studying business, I am also a Politics and Government double major, a Campus Visit Program Tour Guide, a Resident Assistant for Residence Life, serve as my house's Philanthropy Chairman in Greek life, and was the Vice President of the Interfraternity Council prior to being elected President of ASUPS. In all my undertakings, I have strived to improve inclusion, communication, and understanding in my community. As we approach the light at the end of this tunnel called Covid-19, I look forward to supporting and representing the student body with vitality and compatibility.

I am most excited to introduce you to the Vice President of ASUPS, Grant Konkel. Many refer to Grant as a walking Wikipedia page, the winner of one too many University of Puget Sound trivia games, or an amazing first-year Resident Assistant and mentor. That said, he has shown time and time again his care for the Puget Sound community through his integrity, honesty, and humility when interacting with peers. I am excited to see all that he accomplishes with this position and honored to be working with him as both a colleague and good friend.

While I wish I had an amazing list of Directors to introduce in this report, we are currently searching for our Executive Team for the next year. We plan to hire our team within the next week.

Recognition

I want to congratulate former ASUPS President Nicole Gherima Cariño and ASUPS Vice President Kari Ysabelle Nolasco for their success this past year during such trying times. I want to recognize and thank them for their leadership, poise, and commitment to our Puget Sound

community. It is because of their role modeling and dedication to transformative justice, cultural consciousness, and communal responsibility that we find ourselves reflecting and growing immensely in our understanding of what being a “community member” is. I look forward to continuing their work over the next year and serving the student body as we continue through arduous times.

I want to recognize the dedication of our community for keeping us in the classroom (even if on a screen) and on campus this semester. We are grateful for our professors who have poured hours of screen time to provide a thought-provoking-space; our Counseling, Health, and Wellness Services department that has kept us educated, frequently tested, and recently vaccinated for Covid-19; Residence Life staff, both student and professional, who were the backbone to keeping us together in person; and to our greater Tacoma community that has welcomed us back to their neighborhoods, grocery stores, and beautiful parks with a masked face, but friendly attitude. Returning and staying on campus this semester was a group effort, and we are immensely grateful for all of the people who made it possible.

Goals

Our primary goal this year is to not just promote equity and inclusion through our mission statement, programming, and platform, but to integrate it into our institution through the adoption of a new director position on the ASUPS Executive Team: Director of Equity and Diversity. We look forward to taking the summer to review and update our Bylaws and Constitution to approve of the new position. It is my team’s goal to bring a report for approval of a new Director of Equity and Diversity before the Academic and Student Affairs Committee in October to then be voted on by the Board of Trustees. Upon approval by the Board of Trustees, my office will conduct a school-wide search and application process.

Another goal for my team is to represent the voice of the student body, the whole student body. The office has recently received inquiries from graduate students looking to form their own student governing body, or to be adopted into the current ASUPS institution. In pursuit of inclusion, my office plans to meet with these graduate students to discuss what being represented by ASUPS would entail.

An additional goal, while not a small task, is to help rebuild a sense of campus community lost due to the pandemic. The nature of our response to the crisis has been to keep our social circles small. While this has mitigated outbreaks on our campus, the student body has lost a noticeable connection with peers that they would normally make walking to class, randomly meeting at the Student Union Building, or playing a pick-up soccer game on Todd Field. I believe that we are struggling to find student interest in our Executive team because another commitment, another connection to the campus community, means more time on a screen. Our hope, while dependent on any Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and University of Puget Sound Counseling, Health, and Wellness Services guidelines, is to program more in-person activities that are safe and welcoming to the student body. We hope to provide events that allow students to recognize the significance of our contemporary context and to connect with one another in the Puget Sound community.

MIBU Demands

The Multi-Identity Based Union (MIBU), a cohort of ASUPS clubs, sent a letter to the University of Puget Sound Administration listing ten demands centered around making our university more welcoming, open, and accessible for all. Their letter addresses the needs they, students of the university and active ASUPS members, feel are lacking within our institution and have provided a detailed outline for addressing these needs. As of the writing of this report, none of their demands have been met. In their open letter, MIBU demands the following:

The following shorthand demands were provided to the President of the Associated Students of the University of Puget Sound by the Multi-Identity Based Union. Follow @mibu202x on Instagram to keep up-to-date with events and statements provided by the Multi-Identity Based Union. Read their demands in their entirety [here](#).

1. We demand that the administration place Dr. Dexter Gordon as interim Chief Diversity Officer until a Vice President of Institutional Equity and Diversity is hired. We demand the conclusion of the national search name Dr. Dexter Gordon as the top candidate among finalist candidates. We demand that President Crawford select Dr. Dexter Gordon after this conclusion. In essence we demand Dr. Gordon was formally hired as the Vice President of Institutional Equity and Diversity.
2. We demand the expansion and reformation of the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity.
3. We demand that the Welcome Center be repurposed for the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity (OIED), Intercultural Engagement, Student Accessibility and Accommodations, the University Chaplain and any other positions that uplift and support members of the Puget Sound community with marginalized identities, this building will then be called the Justice and Equity Center.
4. We demand that every semester there be mandatory training for faculty and staff relating to unlearning bias and identity sensitivity. We demand that an outside firm, or paid qualified Puget Sound faculty and staff take responsibility for these trainings and the choice of the firm be chosen through the collaboration of RPI, AFAM, the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Intercultural Engagement, and other authoritative voices in diversity work.
5. We demand the discrimination and harassment reporting process be altered and improved to meet the needs of the campus community. We demand more from the Bias Hate Education Response Team (BHERT), and specific motions towards accountability in bias hate incidents.
6. We demand that the University implement a semesterly forum to establish transparency and accountability of the UPS administration to uphold and follow through with its goals of justice and equity.
7. We demand the University work towards an ethnic studies framework and facilitate interdepartmental cooperation and growth. We demand the University create Indigenous Studies Courses. We demand the decolonization and expansion of the Latine Studies, Asian Studies, and Gender and Queer Studies Department.
8. We demand that the University of Puget Sound renovate all areas of campus to be more accessible to people with disabilities. We demand that the University develop a concrete

and transparent renovation plan in consultation with students with disabilities and experts in creating accessible environments.

9. We demand a reimagining and restructuring of the student accommodations system on campus to serve, not police, students who need accommodations.
10. We, the Multi-Identity Based Union, demand that the University's Statement on Academic Freedom and the Exercise of Free Speech be altered to allow for genuine protests and demonstrations of resistance to enable direct action without retaliation. We demand a revised statement be released by January 2022. We demand a task force made up of individuals with an understanding of the importance of protests and demonstrations, these individuals would have an established record of supporting justice movements on campus. The task force cannot include members of campus security. The task force must be made within two months post release of our demands.

Following the letter, a group organized as "Students Unaffiliated With MIBU In Support" connected and mobilized to show support of the demands. In the recent months, signs have appeared across campus demanding action and support from administration on behalf of the MIBU demands. On April 3rd, the Multi-Identity Based Union hosted a protest that marched from the President's Woods across campus to the Welcome Center. They did so out of love for their community and to bring awareness to the change MIBU demands on our campus.

Abolish Greek Life

On March 25th, an anonymous Instagram account titled "Abolish Greek Life UPS" went live and began posting content in connection to the National Abolish Greek Life campaign that became prominent this last summer. In their original post, the anonymous group characterized themselves as, "a coalition of current and former UPS students and alumni. We are people who have never joined a house, disaffiliated members and current members of Greek life. Our goal is simple, the abolition of Greek life from our campus ... We also want to create a space for individuals to share their narratives and experiences with Greek life."

Since their original post, the account has gained a substantial audience. They have used their platform to share personal accounts from anonymous current and former students who have experienced mistreatment, sexual assault, and racism within the Greek community. Individual chapters have given space for their members to reflect on the stories and to discuss what it means to be a Greek member. It has allowed for fruitful dialogue and self-reflection on what it means to be a "community member." The Panhellenic Council and Interfraternity Council have used their positioning to collect clarifying questions in response to the account and plan to meet the creators of the account privately for discussion.

Staying Connected

My door, or "zoom link," is always open for conversation and questions. I am very excited for the work we will get to do together this next year. You can reach me by email, asupresident@pugetsound.edu, or my team by visiting our [ASUPS website](#).

Please, do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or just to better introduce ourselves.

While it has been a rollercoaster of a year, we have braved the storm together, and will continue to uplift one another as we hope to return to a sense of normalcy soon.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kayden Diodati', written in a cursive style.

Kayden Diodati
ASUPS President 2021-2022
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