

November 8, 2019
CSA Mid-Term Report



Dear Carls,

I am now in the middle of my tenure as CSA President and I have so much to share with you. Though we were not able to complete each and every initiative we set out to achieve this year, I am incredibly proud of our student government's accomplishments. Over the past two academic terms, we have worked extensively to increase student outreach and engagement, strategically refine our relationship with the administration, and streamline our internal processes.

But before I begin, allow me to give a brief, incomplete history of CSA: In 1880, the *Carletonian* carried an article entitled, "Is the student body ready for a college senate?" It seems that many, especially administrators, were content to leave that question unanswered. It wasn't until 1911 that students of Evans Hall formed the Young Women's Student Government Association, which was immediately followed by the Men's Student Government Association out of Burton. Initially, "both organizations dedicated most of their work to organizing social activities and the logistics of dorm life such as quiet hours."¹ After the First World War, they combined to form the Alma Mater Association, which was replaced in a student referendum by the Carleton Student Association (CSA) in 1930. The editor of the *Carletonian* at the time wondered "whether a student organization can ever rise to great heights in a small liberal arts college." Nevertheless, he admitted that the newly-formed association "possibly can achieve much." Has it?

I think it has. Over the past 90 years, CSA has pushed for an end to segregated seating in the chapel, passed resolutions on affairs of national and international importance (*e.g.* the Iraq War), and promoted student activism and agency. Our duties have evolved from organizing quiet hours to playing an active role in shaping College policy.

This term, for instance, we appointed 25 students to college governance committees. To the uninitiated, college committees generally help to administer policy by examining specific areas of College life. In particular, there is the Student Life Advisory Committee (SLAC), which is "constituted as an advisory committee to the Dean of

¹ Headley, Leal A. (Leal Aubrey) and Jarchow, Merrill E. *Carleton: The First Century*, 1966.

Students to address issues specifically concerning student life and to help develop policies for review by College Council or the Board of Trustees.²” Having students on such committees is vital for fostering transparency, accountability, trust, and good governance.

I am glad to report that the College has been responsive to many of our requests for more student representation on the upper echelons of college governance. President Poskanzer and Dean Livingston, in particular, recently supported our cause to have a permanent liaison to the Student Life Committee of the Board of Trustees. A few weeks ago, the Board approved the resolution to make the CSA President a permanent liaison to the committee, where they will keep the trustees apprised of student issues, ideas, and concerns.

Indeed, one of our primary responsibilities as Carleton’s student government is to serve as a platform for the expression, discussion, and advancement of student opinions and concerns. Last term, in response to student concerns about high laundry fees, we established and charged the CSA Laundry working group with finding sustainable ways to address the need for affordable laundry. We also engaged Dean Livingston on how the College could help us in these efforts. Over the summer, thanks in part to CSA’s efforts, Carleton eliminated laundry fees for on-campus machines.

CSA has continued to support student activities, initiatives, and interests by chartering and financially supporting student organizations. We have chartered a number of old and new clubs, including the *Carletonian*, Brew Club, and Public Health Advocates. Additionally, we have allocated more than \$76,000 in funding to student groups and organizations. We still have \$48,700 left to support student programming and activities this year. Hibo Abdi ‘20 and Brandon Moy ‘20, our Vice President and Treasurer, respectively, will release a more comprehensive financial report at the end of winter term. Nevertheless, they are always happy to answer any questions you may have about the finances of CSA.

Over the past few months, CSA has collaborated with various offices on campus to provide “free” resources and services. Specifically, we have collaborated with the Library to provide free digital access to the *New York Times*; with the Career Center to host a reputable financial advisor, Isaiah Goodman, for an investing seminar; with the Sustainability Office to provide Klean Kanteen thermoses; and with the Student Financial Services to disburse more than \$25,000 in CSA scholarships.

Further, we have invited Title IX, CRIC, Admissions, Student Life, and OHP to speak on matters of student interest. We occasionally invite administrators to Senate to get updates on College policies, priorities, and initiatives; encourage student participation in such initiatives; and promote clear communication between students and the College. Our goal is not to attack administrators; rather, it is to foster constructive and thoughtful discussions around issues that students care about. However, this does not mean we won’t hold administrators accountable or ask them the hard questions.

This year has been extensive for CSA, as we have been working hard to optimize our internal processes and functions. Specifically, we have restructured and revamped our working groups; instituted a Senate Reporting System to foster accountability and improve our institutional memory; convened the Constitutional Review

² <https://www.carleton.edu/committees/student-life/>

Board to streamline our governing structure and documents; and decentralized several Executive responsibilities. Starting next term, we hope to broadcast our Senate meetings and increase student engagement through more office hours and socials.

This report is not meant to be an exhaustive account of everything we have done thus far. Rather, it is meant to show how much we care about clear communication and accountability. From now on, CSA will strive to be more transparent about what we are doing on behalf of the student body.

Needless to say, we will keep advocating for student values, concerns, and ideas; influencing College policy through college committees, resolutions, and working groups; chartering and funding student groups and organizations; creating opportunities for collaboration among these organizations; and finding ways to enhance all aspects of student life at Carleton. I could not be more excited to see how we progress further in our efforts to #makeCarletonhome. I hope you join us.

Sincerely,

Anesu Masakura
CSA President