

The Student Body Elects Anthony Thomas as SGA's New President

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Photo by Hannah Gallagher

Jordan Brown

On Aug. 31, 2022, following the Student Government Association (SGA) presidential debate, voting opened to the student population. Candidates Anthony Thomas and Benjamin Shepard ran for the presidential seat with the goal of getting GGC students more involved on campus. Increasing the connections between students and Registered Student Organizations (RSO) was an important part of both candidates' campaigns. Though Thomas and Shepard had different views on how to strengthen the community at GGC.

The Globe Editor-in-Chief, Jordan Brown, met with Thomas and Shepard to discuss their plans for the presidency. When discussing critical issues GGC students are facing, Thomas expressed the need to focus on commuter students. "We are a heavy commuter student base. I think the biggest issue that I touched on yesterday is parking lots," said Thomas.

As the student population of commuter students increases, the availability of parking is becoming a significant issue. Students living on campus also face parking and other concerning issues that are often overlooked. Thomas plans to solve these issues by filling the senate seats with students who can accurately represent the commuter and resident population.

"We need to break into two sectors for commuters and residents. We need a senator from housing to be held accountable for meeting with RAs and members of the executive team who want to get involved," said Thomas.

Shepard expressed concern about the shortened RSO budget. "As an RSO leader myself, I felt the pain when it was announced that the SOFAB allotment would only be \$500 per RSO per semester", said Shepard. The Student Organization Funding Advisory Board (SOFAB) budget has become an issue for many student organizations that spend more than \$500 per semester planning their events. Student leaders are facing the challenge of finding creative ways to connect with students on a lessened budget. Shepard is preparing different strategies to solve this issue. "In an attempt to help mitigate this, I will forgo an executive stipend this year and instead create a grant that RSOs can apply to for excess funds," said Shepard.

Both candidates expressed the importance of getting students involved on campus, starting with the collaboration of RSOs. "That is what I am working on every day here in SISC. SGA needs to be at every First Friday event and continue to build relationships with RSOs because, in my opinion, student organizations are how you get more students involved on campus," said Thomas.

RSOs, including the SGA, have the power to reach students who are not involved. By taking the time to talk to students who may pass them in the hall, RSO leaders can communicate their organization's value to student interests.

"We can't just be a voice; we must also be an ear for the students. To properly advocate for the needs of the students, we must be first willing to listen to their concerns and problems," said Shepard.

Voting closed on Sept. 1 with Anthony Thomas being elected as SGA president. Shepard will be continuing his role as senator of Science and Technology with plans to hold SGA accountable for accurate representation within the Senate.