

Alex Baranpuria

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A Rocky Start

Alex had to adjust to being SGA President. "The hardest thing early on was delegating.... Initially I tried to make it 'What can I do?' I soon switched that to 'What can we do?'" Alex also learned about being focused. "[SGA] looked at a lot of issues this year. Perhaps we spread ourselves too thin. I would have liked to have an agenda... at the beginning of the year, and to really advance those issues."

The only way to move forward and fight the apathy about SGA, Alex knew, would be to raise SGA's profile and show accomplishments. Some improvements were made to the way SGA conducts its official business early on.

Alex said, "Productivity is key...SGA meetings are systematic, what have you done lately?"

"Initially we had to combat the idea of, 'What can we do, this is pointless!' "[This year] we're asking 'What's wrong with this proposal, this concept, this issue? How can we make it better?'" he said. And it is working.

The result has been clear. "Persistence pays off...you stick your head through the door, eventually you get a pot of gold," said Alex.

The Agenda

SGA has done a great deal this year. Here are the highlights.

Second Semester Senior Exam-Exemption Policy:

Seniors will have to take exams, although now teachers have more options and flexibility to assign alternate assignments.

Ethical Awareness Group: This group was begun this year to explore an honor system for NCSSM, and has written a Declaration of Character as a foundation for that.

"The goal was to raise awareness, and the Declaration of Character does that. It will be a mainstay at the school. Seeing something that concrete and enduring...is incredible. It is a hot issue, but it is in good hands, and progress will be made."

Testing Policy: Though Faculty Council has not voted on a formal change, SGA has raised awareness of continuing problems with the timing of work. Teachers have been far more consistent scheduling tests, quizzes, and major assignments.

Senior Gift: From the efforts of the Class of 2002, a new swing-bench combination is now up where the Boiler Plant once sat. "I hope that people will reevaluate placing a building in the center of campus. Having a central aspect of Science & Math that will be in our memories of the school is important too."

Senior Dinner: "This was a night where many seniors will open up and reflect back on the time spent here. The emotional, or the humorous... that was what I had hoped it would be, the opportunity to reflect."

Student Fee: "I was told the same reasons [for the fee] as everyone else. [SGA] set up

a committee, presented an objective report, and had a very split vote against.

"Keeping my emotion out of this was the most difficult thing I had to do.

"I hope that a Student Fee will not become a mainstay of this institution, but that the publicity will be used constructively. If one student decides not to apply because of the fee, it is one too many. That money can destroy so many dreams...dreams not even yet dreamt, yet alone realized. When our finances are on par, we should not have the student fee anymore."

Even with these accomplishments, Alex says, "I want to be remembered just for being Alex." He credits the successes to the entire student body. "Remembering our family is the most important thing.

"I'd say that the credibility of SGA has grown over this year. SGA has grown; it is now not just 25 students. This is the cornerstone set by everything we've done this year."

Reflecting on Alex's year in SGA, Dr. Warsaw said, "Alex has been as effective an SGA President as we have had. He has many leadership skills, follows up on things, and has the respect of the students that he leads."

Alex the Man

Family is clearly important to Alex, and it helped shape who he is today.

"When I was little, I never saw my parents. They were always working their tails off. My dad, with my mom, came here with a few bucks in his pocket and a lot of wisdom in his head. 'The biggest mistake you can make is doing nothing out of fear of you'll make one,'" Alex quoted.

"I think time commitment and results equal happiness. When my parents are happy, I am happy. I live two lives: one for me, one for my dad. He sacrificed so much, and I appreciate it. I learned humility from them, and to appreciate criticism as well as credit."

The Future of NCSSM & SGA

Brian Phelps is President-elect. Brian and Alex have been on Ethical Awareness Group and SGA committees and Alex is impressed with his successor.

"Brian doesn't need to fill anyone's shoes. He'll be amazing," Alex said. "We're in good hands."



You can always see Alex smile from the At-a-Glance page.

What unfinished business has this SGA left for next year's? Many of the issues SGA has examined this year could be taken farther. Alex feels the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Conduct should be revisited, as well as the Attendance Policy and the "level" system. Establishing a rapport

between SGA and the Parent Council on the Student Fee is also crucial to maximizing the money's usage.

Issues like GPA, Testing Policy, and Exam Alternatives will all need to be picked up next year. And new on the list, SGA needs to seriously study the effects of sophomore enrollment. On this last issue, Alex said, "students know best."

Brian, for his part, said, "I've learned from Alex that hard work and sacrifice are a necessity to be a good SGA president."

The Future of Alex Baranpuria

Alex already has a lot of his future beyond NCSSM figured out, but he also says, "I'm only 17, and I feel like I've already done so much." He will be off to Duke, where he applied Early Decision. "I'm going with an open mind," he says. "I'm pretty sure I'm pre-med, but undecided on a major. Whatever I do in the future, it will be a relationship of interrelating with people and ideas...medicine, business, or even politics or diplomacy. I want to come in with a clean slate, like coming to NCSSM, just maybe not so raw."

Parting Thoughts

Though he will miss the people most (won't we all?), Alex's favorite memory of this school comes from early in his junior year.

"I was in Dr. Wilson's class," he says. "We were having a quiz. I answered all the questions, scurrying through my notes to find them. Then Dr. Wilson said we were going to grade our own quizzes! That's when I knew this place was special."

War Against Women

CANDIS WATTS

War is defined as physical manifestation of hostility toward a group. David Freeman, a former employee of the Durham Crisis Response Center, describes rape and other forms of sexual assault as the War Against Women because nearly 261,000 women are raped or sexually assaulted every year. Not only that, but victims of sexual assault face similar physical and emotional trauma to someone who has faced combat in war. Someone is sexually

assaulted every two minutes in America, and the most susceptible group to be raped or sexually assaulted is women between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four years old. However, anyone can be raped or sexually assaulted. There are many misconceptions as to what rape, sexual assault and domestic violence are. Before the NCSSM seniors walk across the stage and the juniors get overnights to their favorite senior's dorm, these misconceptions should be cleared.

Rape is an act of sexual aggression committed by one person against another, is a crime and is all too common. Sexual assault refers to any unwanted sexual activity.

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Domestic abuse is abuse committed by someone that you know, whether it be your spouse, relative, or significant other. A rapist's motivation is usually not sexual gratification. A rapist is generally looking for a means to gain control, power, respect and a

feeling of superiority. In order to prevent a rapist or sexual abuser from taking these same things away from you without your consent you must be informed:

- Ladies:**
 - One out of six American women has been a victim of attempted or completed rape.
 - Rape occurs anytime you do not give consent. You cannot give consent if you are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
 - 80% of rape victims know their attacker.
 - "No" means "no," in all cases.
- Guys:**
 - Rape can happen to you.

- 1 out of 10 rape victims are men.
 - 3% of American men have experienced sexual assault. That's 2.78 million men.
 - If a woman is flirtatious or is wearing sexy clothing, she is not "asking for it."
 - "No" means "no." If you are in doubt, ask.
- NCSSM seniors are graduating not only from high school but also from the protective bubble in which they have lived for two years. They will be entering into the "real world" where Bobby and Tim won't be able to protect them, so be careful, safe and mindful of your environment.