

# Student Government explained

BY VIBHA PURI  
STAFF WRITER

Just like everything at NCSSM, the Student Government Association can be unnecessarily complicated. Up until halfway through last year, I myself wasn't sure what the organization of it was or who exactly was part of it.

So I'm here to break it down for you. There are three main bodies: the Executive Council, the Senate, and the Executive Board. The Executive Council consists of the Student Body President, Senate President, and Treasurer.

They work closely with both the Senate and the Executive Board (and this counts as their workservice). The Senate consists of Senior Senators, Junior Senators, Dorm Senators—all elected by the student body—and Senators-

at-Large (applications coming out soon).

These members propose and vote on all legislation and serve on committees meeting multiple times a week. Lastly there is the Executive Board, appointed by the Student Body President. This board consists of the following positions: Director of Information Technology, Director of Public Relations, Director of State Relations, Elections Board Chairperson, Parliamentarian, and PFM Liaison.

They meet with the Executive Council once a week, carrying out their respective jobs and/or working on projects for committees. Student Government is also a part of the UNC Student Government Association (ASG), giving a unique opportunity to work with college student governments.

There are five committees, led by Senior Senators, that Junior and Dorm Senators can serve on. These committees include Outreach, led by Vibha Puri, Student Affairs led by Andy Hoang, Academic Affairs led by Max Schlenker, Programming led by Jessica Yao, and Governmental Affairs led by William Oles. Frank Kenny is the sixth Senior Senator, serving as Secretary and as part of Governmental Affairs.

The Outreach Committee works with improving communication between student government and the student body. Student Affairs works with—well—student affairs, trying to make living here easier (Where's my Wi-Fi, Andy?).

Academic Affairs works mainly with faculty to help with everything school related,

including grades, AP exams, and more. Programming organizes fun events including lock-ins and block parties, and Governmental Affairs works to keep Student Government in check.

So far, the Senate has passed the Club Charter Act, chartering 68 clubs. The Senate also passed the Minimum Achievement Plan (MAP) Act, which outlines each committee's goals for the year.

The Budget Act has also been passed, allocating money to different events and initiatives for the 35th session. Additionally, this past month Senate President Adam Schmidt was elected to serve as the Sergeant-at-Arms for the entire UNC Association of Student Governments.

So how can you get in touch with Student Government? One

option is the Facebook page—"NCSSM Student Government Association"—with which share updates about bills, post pictures of students from events, and host impromptu contests for those who like the page (Congratulations to Katherine Li for winning the most recent one and getting a Student Government t-shirt).

Another way is coming to the Senate meetings themselves, as they are open to the public for comments from the student body; these are usually at 7:15pm on Sundays.

Student Government also hosts monthly Let's Talk booths outside the PFM during lunch where you can voice your complaints or praise, ask questions, or just chat.

Lastly, please friend us on our brand new Snapchat at ncssmsg. Currently we have 0 friends.

# NASA makes advances towards Mars mission

BY JORDAN GREENERT  
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We've all heard about Mars as a hot topic within the past couple of years. There have been books written about it, films made, and endless conversations. But what we may not have seen are the steps that have been taken to maybe move this dream from the big screen to real life.

What is this dream? A trip that could change the way we think of our life here on Earth: a mission to Mars. Although we might not be ready to pack up and move tomorrow, here are some inventions that give light to the idea that a trip to Mars may not be too far into the future.

The first part of a mission to the red planet? Getting there. NASA has recently made a new advancement towards doing just that, with the NASA Evolutionary Xenon Thruster (NEXT), the fastest, most fuel-efficient propulsion engine that humanity has ever created. The thruster is able to propel a spacecraft at a speed of 90,000 mph, and on top of that, it is lightweight and capable of running non-stop for five and a half years.

Another new development in work would affect the potential for damage to the spacecraft. NASA has funded research that has led to the design of a new material that has been likened to that of the Terminator. By combining two polymers with a reactive liquid called thiol-ene-trialkylborane, they have created a substance that solidifies into a putty-type material when exposed to air. This could be used for repairs on the ship as well as to protect astronauts and the craft from hurtling debris out in space.

This has also been found to have practical applications here at home, making useful objects from bullet-proof armor to exhaust pipes.

Even with all these technical advancements, what about sustaining human life? Good question—science has considered that too. NASA has now successfully grown lettuce in zero gravity conditions. Using tightly packed pouches of soil and seeds, along with a special fertilizer, astronauts aboard the International Space Station have grown 33 heads of romaine lettuce over a period of 33 days. This is a good sign for the potential of growing food in space, as there is only so much space for food on a spacecraft, and ways of sustaining human life for such a long trip need to continue to be advanced.

Another agricultural development that changes the way we think of space travel is a nifty invention called AstroGro. It was presented this year at the International Space Apps Challenge, and can be used for growing plants both in and outside of a spaceship. It works with multiple sensors that monitor plant growth and optimize it by mimicking Earth's environment within the pot by recycling water, refreshing air, and adjusting to gravitational differences. This creates the possibility that fresh, organic food could be grown in space, using less water than plant growth on Earth.

Even if we're not leaving within the next two, ten, or fifty years, these inventions are giving hope to the idea that one day we might be able to visit our planetary neighbors. All of these developments put us one step closer to making another giant leap for mankind.



NASA technicians work on a prototype of the NEXT propulsion engine.

photo courtesy of Phys.org

## the signs as NCSSM faculty

aries: Dan Teague

taurus: Michael Bruno

gemini: John Kirk

cancer: David Cantrell

leo: Sam Wheeler

virgo: Sarah Shoemaker

libra: Kyle Hudson

scorpio: Amy Sheck

sagittarius: Martha Regalis

capricorn: Sam Boyarsky

aquarius: Zodiac Webster

pisces: the registrar