

# Newly-Elected Junior Senators Roll Up Sleeves and Get to Work

By ELIZABETH BEYER

This September, six juniors were elected as senators to represent their class. Since then, the new senators have transitioned from ardent campaigning, to assuming their new role in NCSSM's Student Government Association (SGA). Stephanie Yao, Giovanni Leone, Aman Singh, Wesley Block, Shiv Patel, and Lu Cao have begun work to improve the academic programs and community at NCSSM to best serve the junior class.

The junior senators were not met with a formal induction ceremony, but with a job to do. The first steps of rising to the challenge involved sorting the senators into committees. For Yao, this was the Academic Calendar and Schedule committee.



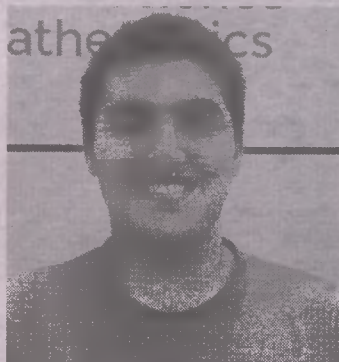
Stephanie Yao.

Her position on this committee allows her to meet with faculty and talk about changes the SGA wants to make in the academic calendar. Additionally, she has already set plans in motion for delivering on one of the promises of her platform at the time of this publication, SmathTalks, similar to TED talks but tailored to the NCSSM community, is planned to be chartered soon by Yao, who will start recruitment shortly.

Other candidates are making efforts to show the community who they are and what they plan to accomplish. Leone, for instance, had set plans in motion even prior to his election to create a school alma mater, or song. He has initiated discussions with band director Phillip Riggs about holding a contest for students and alumni to submit their proposed alma maters. Leone plans to set a due date for submissions near the start of 2017.

"I'm really trying to build on community and communal pride. We already have this fantastic community; I really just want to wrap it together," Leone said, regarding his motivations for creating the alma mater and becoming a junior senator. He wants to use support from the SGA to promote communal pride with ideas such as having themed nights for athletic events. Furthermore, Leone wants to expand the way in which students are kept healthy by

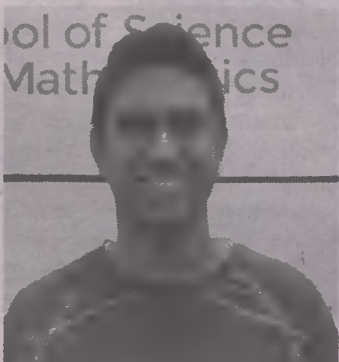
having supportive and open discussions about mental health.



Giovanni Leone.

Leone is part of the Student Activities committee and Governmental Affairs committee. Through Student Activities, Leone works to upkeep and improve the campus and other aspects of life which students encounter on a daily basis. The Governmental Affairs community allows Leone to explore and revise older bills and laws of SGA.

Between the junior senators, there is some overlap in committees. Aman Singh is also a member of the Governmental Affairs, helping to make sure the senate is following the proper laws in its conduct. Singh is involved with the Academic Affairs committee, which is currently working towards increasing grade transparency.

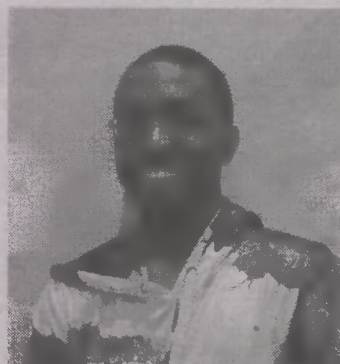


Aman Singh.

Unlike other candidates, Singh did not have specific goals for how he would use his position as junior senator to improve the school. Not wanting to promise something he could not deliver, Singh maintained the broad idea of strengthening the community. "I want to make sure that if any junior has an opinion about something that they want to share, they can tell me and I will be able to voice their opinions at the senate meetings," Singh said. Now, with a better idea of his capabilities as a junior senator, he wants to collaborate with the Programming committee to plan events that bring students together.

One SGA member Singh may be working closely with in that goal is Block. Block has been working on a variety of events as part of the Programming committee, including October's Fall Festiv-ALL and SGA Lock-In. He is also a member of the

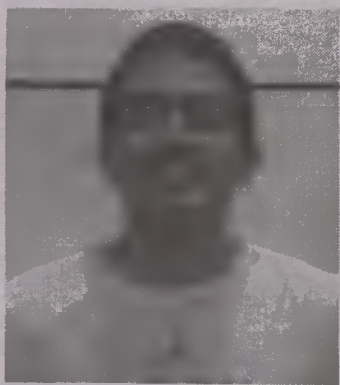
Student Affairs committee, which falls in line with his original goal of getting longer hours in the PEC and library. Although he has yet to set these times, Block is working on achieving the same effect in other ways. For example, he wants the basketball hoop outside of the cafeteria fixed for students to play. Block is outgoing and passionate about meeting people, and he believe this will help him "advocate for students" as a junior senator. He understands the consensus of the general population, making him an effective leader for the school.



Wesley Block.

Each senator brings something new to the table. Patel, like Block, wants to advocate for students, but also stresses that he has his own ideas he wants to implement. Patel was assigned to the Academic Affairs and Outreach committees, in the hopes that those committees would allow him to achieve his goals.

Through the Academic Affairs committee, Patel wants to enhance the course registration system. The Outreach committee, on the other hand, lets Patel make the SGA more accessible to the student population. Recently, a bill has been passed to grant the members of SGA laptop stickers. When a student sees this sticker, they can reach out to the member and discuss their opinions of issues in the school.

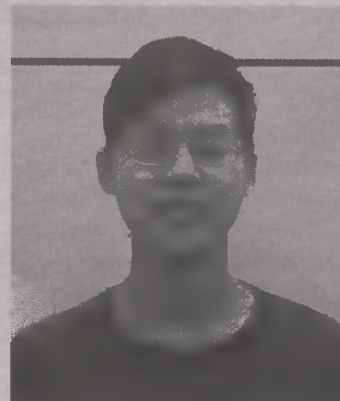


Shiv Patel.

This is just one example of the efficiency and authority of SGA in comparison to other schools. The junior senators each remarked on the differences of SGA at NCSSM. "It's more flexible. We're able to do a lot more things than we could at my old school. We have more capabilities," Patel said. Funding and lack

of interest are not a problem for NCSSM's SGA, and the junior senators have seen that they have the potential to make some real change in the community.

Cao has also seen this change. With his experience in SGA in the past, Cao knows what it is like to have limited power and authority in a school.



Lu Cao.

This year, Cao is excited to be on the Programming and

Student Affairs committee to further his original platform. Part of this platform was to create the NCSSM Human Library, where students can "check out" a fellow student to learn about their stories. Cao is hoping his work ethic, organizational skills, and level-headedness will help make him a good leader for his class.

Since their election, the class of 2018's junior senators have been hard at work, transforming the school and acting upon the goals they have set for the school year. With plans already set in place, students can look towards Yao, Leone, Singh, Block, Patel, and Cao for guidance and advocacy at NCSSM. To voice your opinion, contact any one of the junior senators through Facebook, email, or in person.

All photography courtesy of Elizabeth Beyer.

## SNAPSHOTS: NCSSM and Duke Wind Ensembles Play Joint Concert

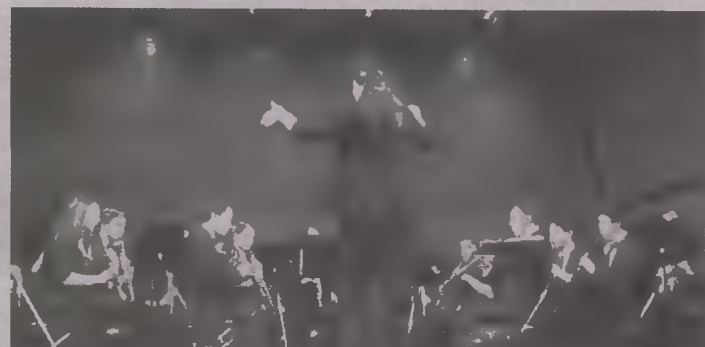
By AVRA JANZ

Members of the NCSSM Wind Ensemble traveled to Duke University's Baldwin Auditorium to join the Duke Wind Symphony in playing music by renowned composer John Mackey on Oct. 17.

Mackey was present for the Duke-NCSSM event, a version of which takes place every other year, and he introduced

each of his pieces that were played. Mackey also assisted the two groups in rehearsing his pieces on the Tuesday prior to the concert.

At the concert, students also played the piece *Nothing Gold Can Stay* by Durham composer Stephen Bryant. Bryant was also present at the concert, and students were able to meet both him and Mackey at its end.



RED DUTTA

NCSSM and Duke students join together to play John Mackey's *Undertow*, inspired by videogame *Legend of Zelda*, under Duke Wind Symphony conductor Verena Mosenbichler-Bryant.



KATHERINE BARNES

Christian DeSimone, Katherine Bennett, Savannah Cary, Katie Barnes and Nick Turecky join John Mackey after the concert.