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DSU Student Government Says "Smart is the New Cool"

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The 2009-2010 Student Government Executive Council is already uniquely distinguished from those of previous years due to their relative youth. The SGA leadership group has traditionally been filled by seniors, but this year?s SGA Executive Council are all juniors.

As unique as that is, these top-level student leaders are also distinguishing themselves by their major focus on encouraging academic excellence among the students they serve.

The theme of the 2009-2010 SGA: ?Smart is the New Cool.?

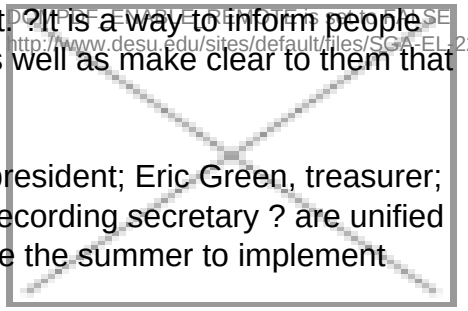
In a departure from the traditional Student Government Association emphasis on social events, SGA President Kathleen Charlot said that many DSU students need to be encouraged into a mindset that will help them achieve academic excellence and propel them toward professional success.

?We have some students who have mediocre mindsets towards academics,? says Ms. Charlot, a Dover native and 2007 Dover High School graduate. ?Everyone comes from different backgrounds, and some come from backgrounds from which they have a hard time breaking from old habits and pursuits.?

The SGA president said that HBCUs like DSU give students an opportunity that they might not have elsewhere ? an opportunity that should not be taken for granted. She said it is the SGA?s role to be a positive force in promoting the primary purpose for being at DSU ? to attain knowledge and establish a foundation for future professional success.

?Sometimes you have to set the new ?cool,? said Ms. Charlot. ?It is a way to inform people and push them further beyond what they think they can do, as well as make clear to them that is not a geeky thing to put academics first.?

The rest of the SGA Executive Council ? Devin Wilkins, vice president; Eric Green, treasurer; Eric Smiley, corresponding secretary; and Raeshawn Horry, recording secretary ? are unified on this theme. These student leaders have been working since the summer to implement ?Smart is the New Cool.?



Emmanuel Lalande (3rd from r) director of Student Leadership and Activities, works very closely with the SGA Executive Council.

The SGA Executive Council have designed and posted posters throughout campus that advocate the theme. They have also made their presence known with the student population beyond their successful election campaign last spring.

The 2009-2010 freshmen class were introduced to the theme from the very start, as the SGA

Executive Council participated actively in the Welcome Week Events and got to know the newest members of the campus family. The student leaders were there to help acquaint them with the campus, understand the registration requirements and make them aware of the academic calendar.

As the fall semester has gotten underway, the SGA Executive Council has worked to connect with their student constituents by making frequent visits to residential halls and engaging students in dialogues about study habits, time management, financial literacy, counseling services, career services, and anything else that can help address the holistic needs of the students. The SGA Executive Council also conducts a study hall at the library every Wednesday evening.

The student leaders have served as a positive element between students and administrators by bringing the two groups together for a Sept. 2 town meeting where concerns were discussed and questions answered. Ms. Charlot said the SGA also wants to promote unity among student organizations.

The SGA president said that Executive Council understands that it is their responsibility to understand the needs of the students they serve.

?We will be working to continue to build relationships and to collaborate with other student organizations,? Ms. Charlot said. ?We need to show effective leadership and show our students that we care.?

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