

Orion Whitcher

Senate Goals 2020-21

1. Equitable

- I will Communicate at least monthly with leaders of the IME affinity groups.
 - a) The purpose of communicating with the student unions is to expand my own knowledge about the needs of those students within the union, as well as to understand the purpose of the unions, and what they may need from me as a senator.
 - b) I specifically plan to talk/meet with the leaders of Adoptee Club, ASU, BSU, DSU, FSU, GLU, NSU, QSU, Kapamilya, Kitchen Cabinet, Hawaii Club, and Mixed LC.
 - c) I will make myself available to meet with any other affinity group or club who wishes to get in contact with me, besides those directly funded by IME.
 - d) I will communicate relevant information in senate meetings both to and from these affinity groups.

2. Transparency

- I will organize weekly or bi-weekly meetings to meet with fellow students, either in person or over zoom.
 - a) These meetings will be intended for those who are in close proximity to me (my pod) and anyone else who chooses to join; we can find a place to meet outside if necessary.
 - b) These meetings will be intended to discuss how student government can improve student life, and consider what students may need from ASLC.
 - c) People who come to these meetings will not be given more information than is sent to the general public, and anonymity will be respected if students have concerns that they would like me to address in senate.

3. Justice-Driven

- I will talk at least monthly with the head(s) of IME.
 - a) The purpose of meeting with IME is to discuss what long-term plans will be for IME, and for the affinity groups associated with IME. This differs from my first goal, which is intended to individually address the immediate needs of each of the affinity groups.
 - b) I intend to form a strong connection between ASLC and IME, which will hopefully build a foundation for greater equity and diversity in the long-term for Lewis & Clark.

Fall 20' Semester Updates

1. Progress on Equitability:

Ultimately, I was unable to follow through with monthly meetings with IME affinity groups. Within the first two weeks of being a senator, I reached out to each of the IME Affinity groups that I said I would in my goals, namely the Adoptee Club, ASU, BSU, DSU, FSU, GLU, NSU, QSU, Kapamilya, Kitchen Cabinet, Hawaii Club, and Mixed LC. I made it clear that I was available to talk with and assist in any way possible. Below is the email that I sent:

My name is Orion Whitcher, and I am an ASLC Senator this year. As a Senator, it is my duty and privilege to make sure that every Student Union, and all students from all backgrounds, have access to Student Government, and have an equal representation in Student Government. In order to make this happen, I wanted to reach out to all of you as leaders of the IME Affinity Groups and let you know that I am here as a resource should you need me. What this means is that I can collaborate on senate bills, I can bring up your concerns in senate meetings (if you cannot/do not want to do so yourselves), and I can inform you to the best of my ability on upcoming ASLC events and proceedings, as well as anything else you may need from me. I look forward to hearing from you and working with you all this semester, and I hope to be an ally in your collective cause!

Please feel free to reach out to me at any point via email:
orionwhitcher@lclark.edu

About two weeks after sending that email and receiving no responses, I reached out to the IME office itself. The IME office responded quickly, and asked me if I would like to put my information down in their newsletter. I agreed, giving them my LC email address and availability. I received no emails or contact from any IME-affiliated organizations or unions after that. The only other contact I had with any of the student unions was attending a BSU event hosted by Sunny Matthews early in november. From this

experience, I have learned that the student unions and affinity groups seem to be, and rightly so, more concerned about the members of their unions and groups rather than about expanding and trying to merge with other organizations like ASLC. I have realized that should any of these affinity groups or student unions need anything of ASLC, they will be the ones to reach out and contact ASLC. I have also realized that I may very well not be the first road of contact that an affinity group or student union would go through to contact ASLC, as the President or Vice President would be much more capable and knowledgeable on any such subject. Nonetheless, I will continue to remain an open option for the IME groups that may need me, and I hope to build a closer working partnership with student unions the longer I am in ASLC. I will continue to make sure that my information is available to all IME affiliated organizations in the newsletter, and continue to show my support by attending events hosted by student unions and affinity groups.

2. Progress on Transparency:

I succeeded in bi-weekly meetings with my constituents, but the attendance was often limited. About one week after finishing my Senate goals, I began looking into ways in which I might reach large groups of people and let them know about bi-weekly meetings that I would host about anything ASLC. I communicated with my AD, who let me put my LC email as well as my office phone into the hall newsletter, which he sent out monthly. Ultimately, I was able to organize a meeting time via email with some of my constituents, but only those in my immediate vicinity, including those in my hallway or a floor below us. These meetings were extremely valuable, but I was unable to ensure consistent attendance, so some weeks there would be four or more people, whereas others no one

would show up. Nonetheless, I tried to be consistent in my emails and meeting times, making it clear to everyone that I would always be willing to schedule a meeting that works for them. I primarily organized in-person meetings, as I recognized that many of my constituents had Zoom fatigue, and were tired of online meetings. I will try to organize Zoom meetings next semester as well as in-person meetings, if people express enough interest. I plan to continue with these bi-weekly meetings next semester, but I would very much appreciate some suggestions on how to keep people motivated and in attendance. I am well aware that ASLC is far from the forefront of people's minds, but their input is extremely valuable in bridging the current gap between the student government and the student body.

3. Progress on Being Justice-Driven

As stated above in Equitability, my communication so far with IME has been limited, and I was unable to meet with the heads of IME monthly. I think that being in the IME newsletters is a good start to forming a strong bond with IME, but I understand that I must do more to reach out to the necessary people and offices to learn more about IME and OEI. As a next step, I plan to communicate with the Office of Equity and Inclusion, specifically with Tori Leder, Mark Figuero, and Casey Bieberich, to learn more about their strategic plan, in the hopes of closely aligning their goals with those of the Strategic Direction Task Force. I realize that scheduled monthly or bi-weekly meetings may be more pressure than necessary for many people in OEI and IME, so I will instead plan to reach out to them by email bi-weekly, and make myself available if they want to meet.