



## *State of the Student Senate*

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Every year there's a new administration with a goal of making as many positive changes as possible in the short amount of time they serve. This year is no exception and when you break it down (take away the one month for winter break, the one week for spring break, and a lengthy summer vacation) one academic year is only a matter of a few productive months.

With this being said, I couldn't be more proud with what we've accomplished so far. We are a professional student organization. We advocate, we represent, and finally we serve. We serve in many ways – whether by providing a plethora of budget news to students or by renting textbooks that would otherwise cost our students hundreds of dollars per semester. Let's celebrate what we've accomplished and move forward inspired to continue our mission to represent, advocate, and *serve*.

On the topic of the Textbook Loaner Program, we've grown the program by over 500% this year. We have over 160 people enrolled in the program this semester alone! Over 200 books have been checked out. The program is funded by the Las Positas College Foundation and made possible with the assistance from library staff. On behalf of the students, thank you! Although there are still a few quirks that need to be resolved, I think we have a lot to be proud of. Let's move forward mindful of ways to make the program more sustainable as we serve a greater

number of students. I'm sure the program will continue to gain traction in the coming semesters and grow to levels unforeseen.

When it comes to the increasing costs for higher education, I'm proud to say we have not sat around idly. Our dissatisfaction with the increase in unit costs or cuts to financial aid has triggered frequent advocacy days. We've been at the forefront of creating petition drives and consistently passing important resolutions that define our purpose. I'd like to express my special thanks to our dedicated members for all of their hard work with passing a record number of resolutions. The resolution passed in support of Planned Parenthood on campus would benefit students greatly. Beginning next month, these services are expected to start and will be offered weekly – every Friday. Students will have more access to contraception and women will have greater access to health services. That's something to be proud about!

Under this administration I am proud to say that we've been able to increase the student activity fee. This is something that has been an ongoing goal for a few years but finally something that I am pleased to say is a goal accomplished. It required a cooperation and a good relationship with our sister college and Chabot's respective Student Senate. This increase in the student activity fee has allowed the Student Senate to accomplish a goal of giving back to the students in many forms. We've already begun impacting students positively. First, we're able to provide more scholarships for students by doubling the number of eligible recipients for the President's award. We've also doubled the number of department scholarships available to students. I'm proud to serve the students in this way. We're able to use the extra funds to help make standing signature programs like the Textbook Loaner Program more sustainable; additionally, we're able to donate to worthy campus projects including online tutoring now being offered to students. Lastly, the increase in the student activity fee allows for us to take on longstanding projects like the ASLPC web site. Even though we are encountering challenges, I am confident that the district and administrators will eventually understand that the Senate is hoping to use the web site as a means to streamline many of our processes. I'm hoping that every consideration will be given to this web site as it is one of my top priorities.

One very important aspect of business is branding and marketing. This year the Senate has taken this on by working diligently to get a web site that can eventually serve as a forum for students as well as a formal, professional way of communicating with the student body. We're even looking at the possibility of streamlining the Textbook Loaner Program by using the web site to allow for electronic submissions of applications with the necessary bookkeeping. Further, we created a Twitter account, we're reshaping our Facebook account, and we are making a commitment to do more to use social networking to target our highly technological students. The Inter-Club Council and Associated Students use Facebook strategically to inform students of campus events such as Club Day. I'm hopeful and confident that this hard work will continue throughout the course of this semester and beyond.

Let's not forget about our beloved college mascot! Before this year, LPC did not have a mascot. Now we have a big hawk that walks around campus putting smiles on the faces of students and faculty. This not only boosts college spirit but overall morale in times of difficulty. Kipanga is a great addition to the college and something to be proud of.

This semester the Senate decided to take on many worthy projects, and we did this by organizing into small cohorts. Some of these cohorts were inspired by resolutions passed, such as the study abroad cohort. We'll work hard to create a robust study abroad program on campus. Other community colleges have such programs, and it's time we rise to par. Our sustainability cohort is working on projects such as bringing compost to our campus. The overall goal is to bring student involvement to new levels. I think we've done this and will continue to do this. We've stood up against the waitlist, demanded that construction workers respect the right students have to a smoke-free campus, stood up against racial profiling of Middle Eastern students, and we are now beginning to tackle a grievance process which is confusing and arduous to navigate.

The Senate is also privileged to have attended and participated in many worthy leadership conferences including the American Student Association of Community College conference in Nashville, Tennessee and the UC Berkeley CA Leadership and Diversity conference – both of which help to keep the Associated Students dynamic and ready to tackle issues relevant to community colleges. In the coming months, we'll also have the opportunity to advocate on behalf of students on Capital Hill with members of congress and staff from the Department of Education, possibly even the White House. Additionally, we can expect a couple of trips to Sacramento to meet with aides and members of the legislature about higher education issues. There's still a great deal of work that needs to be done, and I intend on using every bit of time to accomplish as much as we possibly can. I need your help to make this year a year to remember. *Word of Mouth* is one of the most proven ways to increase awareness about campus events. Please help make announcements about March in March. Tell students that this is a day of action against all cuts to higher education.

Our state of the senate is strong and only growing stronger. I'm confident that we'll use the remaining few months of the semester to advocate, represent, and serve the students in the best ways possible. I'm calling on the Senate to remain strong and to continue your hard work – not letting anything get in the way of business and representing the diverse and deserving students at Las Positas College.

**Thank you.**