

Topic: Sophomore and Junior Experience

Relevant Administration: Mary Pat McMahon, vice provost/vice president for student affairs; Sue Wasiolek, Dean of Students and Associate Vice President for Student Affairs; Jordan Hale, Associate Dean/Director of New Student Programs; Nicole Ponticorvo, Assistant Director of New Student Programs; Morgan Barlow, Director for Administration and Program Development in the Office of Undergraduate Education

Proposal:

Every time I hop on a C1 to go to a class or visit one of my first-year senators, I am reminded of the great community that East Campus fosters. Many of us came to Duke nervous about the four years to come. Being on East Campus—where inclusive community-building was purposefully constructed—made finding our place so much easier.

The sophomore experience on West Campus, for many students, is very different. Gone are the mentors meant to guide you through the process of becoming a student, gone is the intentional, insulated community of your first-year, and gone is the spontaneity of running into your closest friends in the most random places at the most random hours. As DSG President, **I want to make the transition into sophomore year easier for students.**

To help first-years transition onto West Campus, I will work to implement a **West Campus Faculty Adoption Program**. Similar to Faculty-in-Residence programs on East, this program would join upper-class house councils with faculty at Duke and put on consistent programming that **helps students connect with potential guides and mentors.**

Beyond that, we are proposing that Student Affairs and New Student Programs—in collaboration with the Sophomore Class Council—allocate resources to create a **pre-fall semester program meant to build community in students' second year**. Similar to existing pre-orientation programs, this program is meant to introduce sophomores to each other and to the parts of Duke they may have not previously interacted with. This program will be the first step in DSG's partnership with Duke's administration to **combat the [sophomore slump](#)** that so many of us experience. Beyond that, I will work with relevant administration to implement a **fall-break trip for upperclassmen** to bring students across grades together to better understand their peers in the Duke Community.

I understand that the slump does not solve itself once sophomores become juniors. Dealing with the difficulties of junior year becomes even more complicated when so many of our peers go abroad. While it can seem like many of your friends have disappeared, **junior fall presents an opportunity for that year's class to bond**. As DSG President, I will negotiate with Duke's administration to hold an event—similar to E-Ball or the 100 days ball for seniors—so that the **juniors who remain on campus in the fall can get to know each other.**

Duke has a long way to go to make all of its spaces as inclusive as East Campus. However, there are tangible steps we can take to make students feel included throughout their time at Duke, not just in their first year. As your DSG President, I will work to make community-building a more intentional aspect of everyone's Duke experience.