

Murray State University Alliance

SGA Presidential Candidate Questionnaire

Murray State University



Murray State University (MSU) Alliance is a registered student organization that supports the needs of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students. As a student organization, Alliance is highly interested in each SGA Presidential candidate's viewpoints on issues that concern us, not only issues in fairness and diversity, but also as a student organization in general. Please answer the following questions in the amount of detail that you feel is necessary, and return to Anthony Jones, MSU Alliance Secretary, at anthony.jones@murraystate.edu by April 16th at 5:00 PM. Your responses will be communicated to our membership, as well as any other interested students, for informational purposes only. As an organization, we are not seeking to endorse or advance any specific candidate over another. Thank you in advance for your participation!

General Information:

Name: **Jonathan Burdon**

Class Rank: **Junior**

Major: **Organizational Communication**

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1. Recently, the MSU Board of Regents included the term "sexual orientation" in the University non-discrimination policy, bringing MSU in line with every other public University in the Commonwealth on this issue. Do you support this change? Why or why not?

I definitely support this change! I remember discussing this topic in a SGA meeting and I thought it was completely ridiculous that sexual orientation was not included a long time ago. The Student Government Association's DUTY is to serve every student who can call them self a Racer, I believe everyone should be represented equally.

2. MSU Alliance, as a student organization, has been assigned a Senator as part of the core groups system. However, typically that Senator, this year and in past years, has been almost impossible to reach, with actual group visits being very infrequent. This causes many members of our group to feel unrepresented on the SGA. It also causes our group to tend to have to find solutions to issues on its own that could easily be handled through the resources of SGA. What would you do to improve this system to better increase representation of student organizations like Alliance within SGA?

For 21 years the Student Government Association has been operated by Greeks. Although it is important for Greeks to be represented, it is equally important that the remaining 90% of the campus receives equal representation. My slogan is, "Putting the student back into Student Government." and if elected, I will do just that! SGA should be representing ALL students and should not expect students to come to us with problems, instead we should go to them. One of the three parts of my platform focuses directly on this topic and how I plan to solve this problem. You can view my platform at JonathanBurdon.com.

3. Many members of Alliance have expressed concern that the view of diversity on campus is strictly limited to race, excluding sex, gender, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation. While there are many organizations in place to support these diverse people, there is no centralized place for these groups to unite and discuss common issues facing them. There also seems to be a lack of recognition or support of students other than students of varying race. What initiatives would you take to alleviate this problem?

I will do whatever I can to help your cause. The problem with our university is that students very rarely grow passionate about issues on campus. I am encouraged to see a group of students (Alliance) who are willing to work hard to achieve their mission. I would gladly open up a time slot each week that a representative from your organization could personally come to my office, let me know what is going on with your organization, and then tell me what I can do to help. If senators have proven unreliable in being your representation I would gladly stay in direct contact with your group to make sure your voice is heard.

4. As SGA President, you also serve as the student Regent on the Board of Regents. Would you be able to vote for or against an issue in which the students have clearly spoken their opinion on (with or without a vote from the SGA Senate), even if it went against your own personal viewpoint?

Politicians vote for personal advancement, representatives always vote with the majority and put personal opinions aside. I am running to represent EVERY Murray State student and I pledge to always vote with the majority of students on campus even if it is against my personal viewpoint.

5. In the current SLIP fund system, SGA provides grants of \$250 to student organizations as reimbursements for expenses in producing events. However, money is not always the most needed resource for a student organization. Are there any other areas of support that you feel that SGA could contribute to student organizations?

The number one thing that SGA needs to do and will do if I am elected is show that we actually care about every organization and student on campus. Communication is essential. As student body president I would create a Google Calendar and would give the presidents of every student organization the rights to edit the calendar. If an organization is holding an event that they would like a SGA Representative to attend they could list their event on the calendar and it would then be our duty to send representation.

6. A major issue that has been raised this year in the state legislature is Domestic Partner benefits for public Universities in the Commonwealth. Currently, the University of Louisville offers such benefits, as does the University of Kentucky. Although this issue is not one that directly impacts Murray State at the present time, do you feel that these healthcare benefits are a positive or a negative issue for a University?

I believe that everyone deserves to be on a level playing field. I am unfamiliar with this legislation so I am uncomfortable with responding to this question at this time. Although I would love to tell you what you want to hear, I would rather not say something unless I can support what I say. I do plan on attending your meeting on Wednesday, although I may be late, but I will look into this legislation between now and then and I will respond at that meeting.

7. Recently, a lawsuit was filed against the University of the Cumberlands, a private, religious University in eastern Kentucky, to block state funding from being appropriated for the construction and operation of a pharmacy school. This issue concerns Alliance for two reasons. Alliance does not feel that any private University should receive state money, when such a pharmacy school could be constructed and operated by one of the public Universities (such as Murray). Alliance is also concerned because The

University of the Cumberlands has a history of expelling its students because they are gay. This appropriation was recently ruled as being unconstitutional; however, the University is appealing the decision. As a potential student body President and Regent, do you feel that such money should be rerouted to a public University?

Absolutely! I am glad that this survey ended with an easy question.. Haha.

Private schools should be treated as their name states as a “private school” and should not be awarded any state funding, at all. They raise a lot of money with high tuition and should not be awarded our tax money. I would do anything in my power to push this at a state legislative level.