

# 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](mailto:anthony.jones@murraystate.edu) by April 16<sup>th</sup> 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:

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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 absolutely support the change. Not only because of my personal opinion but also because it is overwhelmingly what the student body wanted to happen. Discrimination of any kind is an act of ignorance and should not be tolerated at Murray State.

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?

It is important to know that our by-laws state that the CORP Group representative is only required to meet with their CORP Group twice a semester although I know that does not always happen.

CORP Groups are always difficult to set up and maintain in the senate for multiple reasons. As SGA Secretary this year I took a serious look at the way our CORP Groups are set up and have come up with several ideas to help solve this problem.

- Speak with the staff members who compile the student organization list and try to receive the information earlier in the year. As it stands now we do not receive a list of the organizations until October.
- Eliminate the organizations in which senators are already a part of because those senators should already be relaying news back and forth between SGA and the organization. This will allow senators to focus more on the groups who do not have representation on the senate already.
- Create a better system for the executive council to monitor the work the senators are doing with their CORP groups. Hold every senator accountable and enforce the disciplinary actions when they do not visit their CORP groups.

By implementing these actions CORP groups should be more effective and help to represent the student body in the manner the program was designed to.

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?

Because I am not directly affected by these issues I do not think that I could plan any type of event, forum, or committee that would adequately help the groups that you mentioned without first meeting with organizations such as the Alliance,

the International Student Organization, and the Multicultural center. That would be my first step and from there I would take the information I gathered to help myself and others understand the trials these groups go through daily. I would also try to create a program to help unite and discuss the issues that you all face in day to day life.

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?

Absolutely and with out a doubt! My job as SGA president would be to represent the students meaning that I put my own views aside when necessary to represent the views of the student body.

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?

One alternate way to help organizations on campus would be to co-sponsor events through the Campus Activities Board, we already do some of this throughout the year (e.g. the Halloween showing of Rocky Horror Picture Show with Sock n Buskin). If elected I will be very open to any suggestions student organizations bring to SGA requesting support for events or whatever the case may be.

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 think this issue could be both positive and negative for a university. The positive is obvious; the domestic partners would be able to receive benefits. However some ultra conservative students, potential students, or parents could disagree with the proposal and decide that Murray State isn't the place they want to attend which could possibly have a negative affect on our retention and recruitment. If this becomes a stronger issue at Murray State I would have to do further research on the pros and cons of the topic.

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?

Yes, I believe that state money should go to state schools.