**Legislative Update:**

The Senate is off to a terrific start this semester with the completion of many important projects and initiatives. This semester I have been working on a few projects with fellow SGA members. In collaboration with UHS, CCPH, and the Center for Health Promotion we have finalized the charge for the Student Wellness Advisory Board. The board will focus on conversations around health and wellness on campus and implementation of new policies and initiatives around these topics. Applications are due this week for spots on the board and the first meeting will be before Spring Break. I have also been working to assess the quality, affordability, and accessibility of the Amazon textbook ordering service at UMass. I have been in conversation with administrators from the Administration & Finance department to reach out to students about their experiences and how we can improve the service in future years.

I am conducting an SGA Agency Evaluation for all 11 of our agencies. I will be evaluating the charters of these groups, assisting in creating advisory boards, and ensuring that the SGA is a valuable resource. Finally, I have attended multiple meetings this semester, namely the Student Affairs Advisory Board, March 5th Planning meetings, and the Diversity Strategic Plan Steering Committee. I am excited to continue the trend of collaboration in the SGA in my re-election as the Speaker of the Senate for next year. Go UMass!

This semester, the SGA welcomes Emmi Beuger, Steven Bowe, Adison Brown, David Hulme, Conrad Joyal, Andrew Keezer, Shannon Nagle, Zareb Noel, Bright Osajie, and Kamilla Silva as members of the Undergraduate Senate. I would also like to congratulate Speaker Lauren Coakley on her re-election and Senator Elise Mann on her election to the position of Associate Speaker of the Senate. Last semester, the Senate amended our attendance policy to include a requirement for all voting members of the Legislative Branch to attend two (2) Established Student Organization Events per semester. This requirement went into effect at the start of this semester. Through this attendance policy change, we aim to improve outreach to Established Student Organizations to find out how the SGA can best serve their needs. This semester, members of the SGA and I helped organize a Tampon Drive to benefit Craig’s Doors. We are hoping to continue this drive in the future to obtain important hygiene products for women that are often overlooked as a necessity. My biggest project for the remainder of the semester will be to help evaluate the Center for Early Education and Care, alongside Student Trustee Emily O’Neil and members of various graduate student organizations, to determine how the SGA can play a part in improving conditions.
AA is continuing to update and evaluate our bylaws. We are in the process of re-evaluating the Senate’s Committees at this moment. We have Executive and Subsidiary Governance Bodies left. I am evaluating the communication and outreach between the administration and the students and the communication student to student to figure out better ways to go about this. If there are any concerns/suggestions/solutions please email sgaadminaffairs@umass.edu.

Chairwoman Amy Gebo

This semester, the Outreach and Development committee has worked on a series of professional development workshops for SGA members, but will be expanding workshops to the Student Body. These workshops will be held on April 12, 13, 19, and 20th in the Campus Center: details to be announced! There will be a forum following these workshops. A goal that ODC has this semester is to build greater transparency and a higher rate of returning members. JJ Seah, one of our committee members, is creating an anonymous suggestion button that will be put on the website soon to allow feedback. This semester, we are also starting an alumni spotlight in the newsletter. In addition, we will be interviewing alumni about their time in the SGA and their advice for new SGA members; the first posting is in this newsletter, so make sure to check it out!

Chairwoman Emily Spiewak

The Undergraduate Experience Committee has been hard at work undertaking two major initiatives of sustainability and safety. For sustainability, we are working with the Secretary of Sustainability to find avenues to get composting more prevalent on campus, and to get rid of all plastic bags on campus. On the safety side of things, we are working with members of the University’s I.T. department to pick sights for new blue lights on campus. Furthermore, we are creating a strategic plan to revitalize the police’s free walking escort service. These critical initiatives will make a real difference on campus, and hopefully help a lot of people.

Chairman of Undergraduate Experience Committee Mark Hochberg

Executive Update:

This semester has been filled with a lot of work! I’ve been actively attending and working on issues of diversity with administration within the Diversity Strategic Plan Steering Committee and the Chancellor’s Diversity Advisory Committee. In these spaces we are taking a deeper look into the strategic plan, evaluating its progress, and looking to conduct a campus climate survey. I’ve also been actively involved in discussions surrounding the Super Bowl and March 5th weekend. The SGA successfully lobbied administration to take away a lot of the restrictions for Super Bowl weekend and allow students to travel to any building on campus, rather than being restricted to their own residential area. With March 5th conversations, I am frequently meeting the administration to ensure a strong student voice is heard while decisions are made around guest and security policies. The SGA will also be co-sponsoring Mullins Live! which will be an annual concert. Finally, I’m excited to announce that the SGA will be sponsoring the 2nd Annual Student Business Week this spring. Keep a look out on our social media pages for what will be going on, and make sure to visit all seven student businesses if you have the chance. With elections coming up, I hope every student decides to get involved and ask questions about candidates for all of our elected offices - President, Vice President, Student Trustee, and Class Senators. It’s important that you trust the people that will be representing you to administration, town and state officials over the next year. If you have any questions or concerns for me, please email me at sgapresident@umass.edu and I will be sure to get back to you as soon as possible!

President Síonan Barrett
This past month President Barrett and I appointed a new Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Samarii Ijezie. We are confident that she will be a great addition to this organization, and that she will strengthen the relationship between SGA and the veterans community in the valley. I am pleased to announce that Chancellor Kumble Subbaswamy has appointed me to the Diversity Strategic Planning Steering Committee, tasked to identify and recommend the best method through which the campus can field a comprehensive, campus-wide climate survey, consider necessary revisions to the goals and action plan outlined in the 2015 Diversity Strategic Plan in light of feedback received in the Fall 2015 listening sessions and discussion forums, and consider the creation of appropriate metrics to ensure accountability for the goals and recommendations identified in the 2015 Diversity Strategic Plan. I am happy to serve and represent the student body, and make sure that these tasks are completed before I leave office, and graduate. Now that the nomination period for the SGA Spring Election has ended, I encourage you to attend all the meet the candidates events, debates, and ask them questions. Your vote makes sure that the next SGA will have your best interests in mind and represent YOU!

I am a third year Political Science and Economics double major and honored to be representing students who have served our country as newly-appointed Secretary of Veteran Affairs. My mission for veterans and the entire spectrum of military students is to ensure that this community is receiving full education benefits, academic assistance, health and wellness, and any other service that will guarantee a greater college experience for the veterans in our community. My passion for veterans has stemmed from my mother serving 10 years in the U.S. army reserves, which I am immensely proud of her for. Her dedication personally inspired me to commit my time to assisting the brave men and women who serve the United States of America. Incoming student veterans need role modeling and guidance. School is a different kind of battlefield, and it requires an entirely different skill set and mental map. I am determined to assist veterans here on campus to achieve their personal goals and to get the most out of their college education. I will provide additional support, resources, information that meets the needs of our student veterans. Currently I am working towards implementing parking discounts for our veterans and donating funds to active members in the military today. I would love to discuss the needs of my constituents! I have office hours daily in the SGA office, located at 420 Student Union. I can be contacted at Sgaveteransaffairs@umass.edu.
Over the past few months I have worked on various projects shaping how students utilize and engage with technology on campus. I have worked with many student technology groups, seeking to find better avenues to ignite interest in STEM topics on campus. I also reviewed the IT Strategic Plan and gave feedback focusing on emphasizing student input and feedback on decisions choosing new technologies used on campus. Additionally in the plan, I helped write a Student Engagement section. I encourage all students to read and give feedback to this draft, which can be found on the IT website. Lastly, I have worked in collaboration with many SGA members on using iPads during the upcoming SGA Spring Elections. For instance, in preparation, I have optimized the SGA website to be mobile friendly. We hope this initiative will not only increase voter turnout, but will help the SGA better connect with students on campus. We will be having kiosks around campus where students can learn more about SGA and give us feedback on how we can better represent & advocate for students.

The Sustainability Task Force for Athletics has started this semester and will result in a complete set of recommendations that shall encompass opportunities both short and long term for the department. I have hired a new undersecretary, Mei Rockwell-Postel to help out with projects this semester; she and I have been finalizing the new charter for the Student Sustainability Steering Committee. I have also been working with great members of the Undergraduate Experience Committee on researching a plastic bag ban for campus and opportunities to increase compost, as well as Senator Bates who is working on integrating sustainable concepts in RSO finance. Finally I have been working with President Barrett and many in the SGA on the Mullins Live! concert on March 5th. The second half of the semester will see finished projects, a new Bikeshare manager for the office and an amazing Earth Day celebration!
This semester I've attended both the Chancellor's Diversity Advisory Council and the Diversity Steering Committee meetings held on February 5th and February 12th respectively. We will be having our next Diversity Steering Committee meeting on February 27th at 10:00 AM. Chairwoman Maddie Goldstein and I played also played a role in revising the letter sent out to the student body regarding the recent hate speech incidents on campus. In addition, I helped host the first Student of Color Caucus Meeting, a group formed by representatives from SGA, CEPA, and Student Bridges with the purpose of mobilizing students of color and promoting engagement in the political process. Educating students and recruiting them for the upcoming 2016 Advocacy Day hosted by Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts (March 7th) was one of the primary goals of our first meeting. Advocacy Day has been something I’ve been helping plan this past month, in conjunction with CEPA and other members of the SGA.

Alumni Spotlight: Diego Fellows

When were you involved in the SGA and what was your position?
I was involved in SGA from 2012-2015. When I was in SGA I maintained my seat as Senator for multiple residential areas, assisted the Student Trustee & became an office manager of sorts. Through all of that I focused my attention on the Ways & Means committee which I sat for two years and the Finance committee which I sat on my senior year.

What was your favorite part about SGA?
My favorite part about SGA was the mentorship program where I was able to meet new SGA members and help them get associated with the ins and outs of the SGA.

How did the SGA shape your college experience?
It allowed me to meet so many people across campus & it allowed me to really find out who and what I wanted to be.

What skills did you gain from the SGA that you value? I value the ability to work with others, set agendas and goals & maintain a positive attitude.

Anything else? Go UMass!