

SG candidates debate to win

Last week, the student body presidential candidates debated wide-ranging topics, including communication, mandating midterm grades and Title IX policies.

Each candidate stressed the importance put on reaching out to the student body to hear its ideas and concerns.

“Our platform is ‘Your UT’ because your experience at this university matters,” said Cameron Forsythe, a second-year mechanical engineer major. “We want your voice to be heard, and we would like to be your representatives in the year going forward.”



Jared Enoch, a fifth-year double major in mechanical engineering and political science, stated that communication goes further than just talking to students; it's also

informing them of SG's actions.

"We plan to include more student voices, not only in the decisions we are making but also in what student government is doing," Enoch said.



Jimmy Russell, a second-year political science major, said he offers any student to "take a walk" with him in order to hear students' concerns. He also said that in order for communication to improve, transparency must as well, with Russell promising to post weekly updates.



Each candidate agreed that there should be a mandate requiring professors to post midterm grades.

However, the question arose about how these candidates would realistically mandate professors to post grades, when many professors do not even use Blackboard as their primary mode of communication.

“This is something I am passionate about,” Enoch said. “One of the concerns was that professors didn’t know how to use the system, so I think that is something we need to look at, making sure professors know how to use these things.”

Enoch added that working with the provost would help implement this change.

Russell argued that the best way to tackle this issue is on a department-by-department basis instead of starting from the top of administration.

Forsythe said that this is an issue he is currently working on. He said he has submitted a proposal to senate faculty stating that midterm grades need to be posted somehow, whether on Blackboard or on another platform for the time being.

Since October, there have been four reported sexual assaults within the UT community. Sexual assault and harassment is another issue the candidates took a stance on.

Forsythe believes that students need to know the resources available to them. He said that he is currently working on make Title IX access and resources available through Blackboard.

“That way when you log in, the resources will be there,” Forsythe said. “Admittedly, you’ll probably ignore them most of the time, but when you need them, you’ll know where to look, and you won’t have to go searching through a million different websites.”

Russell stated that sexual assault awareness needs to be increased on campus. He suggested confidential and anonymous meetings for those who have been victims.

“We need to work with the administration and make sure they know that there is a zero-tolerance policy on this campus for anything like that,” Russell said. “This university is a place for anyone and everyone.”

Enoch also stated that it must be made clear that sexual assault and harassment are not tolerated on campus, and they are punishable.

“Any cases that are being reported need to be taken seriously so that students feel comfortable coming to these resources and utilizing them,” Enoch said.

Russell also plans to implement a service award on campus, which he said would provide students with a cutting edge to

land jobs more easily.

“Basically what that would look like is, throughout your time here at UT, you would fulfill so many requirements and then basically you would get a physical award of some type, and then on your degree it would say ‘graduated with a distinction in service.’”

Along with the service award, Russell added that another large goal of his is to gain TARTA access for students, which would allow students to use TARTA buses to get into the city easily.

Enoch, too, wants UT students to obtain access to TARTA buses, claiming that most metropolitan school already use this system.

“Our platform is centered around three main ideas: inclusions, communication and improvements,” Enoch said.

Enoch promised that communication, school spirit and pride will improve if he is president.

“We want Student Government to be there for the students, and we want Student Government to be more reachable,” Forsythe said.

Voting began on Monday and will be open via OrgSync until April 13. A post-election festival will be held Thursday in Student Union room 2591 at 4:30 p.m.