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The Student Government Association (SGA) held a candidate debate on Monday Feb. 20, 2017. This event gave the student body the opportunity to hear from those among them wishing to obtain positions on the Executive Board and Senate. Students heard from 12 candidates in person and then a written statement from one candidate who was not able to make it to the event.

The event was set up more as a forum rather than a debate, because all positions, except At-Large Senator, had only one person running for the position. Student candidates were given a few minutes to make opening statement before they received questions. Questions were asked initially by the moderators and then by the audience. Jacinda Jones (President), Sofia Rosales (Chief Activities Officer), and Alan Ward (Chief Financial Officer) were the three members of the Executive Board who moderated this event and asked questions.

There were seven candidates for Senate seats that participated in this event. The candidates all spoke of what has made them run and what will be their legislative goals in SGA. Brittany Stowe, candidate for Senior Class Senator, sees this as an opportunity to learn and grow and also make SGA more in touch with student body. Sophomore Senate candidate Colleen McNickle, wants to focus on retention of students especially moving from freshmen to sophomore year. Borian Moffo used his unique story to explain what has made him want to serve as Freshman Class Senator. Originally from Cameroon, and a member of the United States Army, he placed importance on making Radford University a more family like atmosphere. His experience with the Radford University soccer team has made him want to extend the family like qualities across campus, and especially for the class of 2021.

The debate portion of the night came when the candidates for At-Large Senator came on stage. There were four candidates for the two positions, so two candidates at a time came on stage to answer questions, and also respond to their opponents' answers. The first two candidates were Kendall Mallory, incumbent At-Large Senator, and David Prine. They both spoke of what they would like to focus on. Mallory would like to continue the progress he has made on mental health in the Senate, and Prine wanted to focus on green energy outreach programs. The next two candidates were Brady Guertin and Victoria Leeks. Both

spoke of how to reach those who are not heard as often and suggested more meetings with diverse groups of students to gain different perspectives from individuals on campus.

The candidates for the Executive Board all had prior SGA experience, meaning that they knew what to expect from this night. They also knew it was important to establish their qualifications for the office they sought. Brock Barnes, the only candidate running for Chief Financial Officer, set up his credibility for the office by explaining how he is currently a member of the Student Finance Committee as an SGA Senator. Barnes expressed his “immense interest” in finance and also his focus on the “obligation to manage and be financially responsible.” Kylie Knudson, running for Chief Financial Officer, stated that one of her main focuses was to keep SGA growing, and as Chief Financial Officer would use student activities to complete this task. SGA Vice-President is the head of the Senate, so there is an emphasized need for advanced skills in working with others. VP candidate Cody Hartley spoke of how he has worked with others in high school and here at Radford. Hartley expressed the importance of working together, but also “learning together.” The final position on Executive Board is President, and the current Vice President, Julianna Stanley, is seeking this position. Stanley wants to continue moving forward with the inclusive and diverse campus Radford University has become.

The most important thing to all student candidates running for a position this year, was clearly to make sure that their fellow student voices were heard by them and also were shared with the Radford University administrators. While being an elected member of the SGA will be good for the individuals to work in a governing association, almost every candidate made it explicitly clear that their main goal was serving others. Brady Guertin said it best that “the most important thing is serving others.”