

Claire (“TJ”) Querio For CAO

Hello there! My name is TJ Querio, and I hereby announce my candidacy for the position of Committee Affairs Officer (CAO) for the UCSA Board 2018-2019. As you can see, I’m also Claire. Why “TJ,” you ask? That’s a long story for another time. But I bring it up because I want to mention my flexibility. I, as we all do, have an identity that is recognizably me, and yet in various contexts may look different. I’m still me, whether I go by “Claire,” “TJ,” or occasionally from my family, “Bella.” I believe this quality is essential for CAOs, as well as board members in general. Board members may be listed by position, but they’re all on that board *together*. I believe versatility is key in any successful group effort, which is why, next to the directly CAO related goals, I also have general ideas for improvement how the UCSA functions. My main goals are as follows:

1. Take steps to improve mental health on campus, through two specific ventures.
2. Continue working on the website and improving communication and transparency between the UCSA board and committee boards.
3. Give committees the chance to network with each other, and provide tips through workshops and the website.

But before I get started on those goals and how I can see them being implemented, let me properly introduce myself. I’m 19, in my second semester at UCU, and Swiss-American. I was born in Michigan, but my family moved to Geneva, Switzerland when I was 7. After a year, my father was transferred to Lagos, Nigeria, where we spent 2.5 years. We returned to Geneva in January, 2010, and I began the IB.

But what have I done at UCU? In my first semester, I taught yoga, wrote for the Boomerang, submitted to Scope, became Chair of WordCo, attended the Queer Alliance meetups and joined the fundraising team, and participated in the Improv show and Super Sticky Surfaces. I also attended most Open Mics, which I have continued doing this semester, like most other extracurricular activities. I also modeled in the Fashion Show and am taking a weekly dance class. My favorite part about campus is how dynamic it is, and would describe my biggest weakness as a tendency to overload my schedule. However, I have robust agenda skills and have increasingly dialed back on my activities since I arrived at UCU. I read somewhere that your twenties are the time to be selfish. Take that roadtrip; confess those feelings; do that performance that scares you down to your toes. We’re incredibly lucky to have so many creative, talented fellow students willing to share their skills, passions, and hobbies - why not take advantage?

1. Improve Mental Health on Campus

This is a frequent party line, and it’s incredibly vague. That’s why I hope with these two specific ventures to take concrete steps in the right direction towards ameliorating the current situation on campus.

1. Put up permanent posters and a page on the website with information for students about the process of getting a GP/psychologist, the contact information for the UU Psychologists, Peer Support hours, and even potentially a hotline that they can text/call. Information like this is currently accessible but difficult to find. I spoke to Peer Support about this and they are willing and excited to work together with the UCSA to make it happen.
2. Set aside 1-2 hours during Wellbeing Day in Introweek, during/after the brunch with parents (where alumni letters have traditionally been read), and include a pamphlet with centralized information about how and where to get a Dutch bank account and phone, where the municipality is, etc. This information can also be made available on the website. I feel as though this will help International students in particular, but Dutch students as well who are perhaps living on their own for the first time. I believe this will help new students find their feet easier and will allow them to focus on their studies and the joys of campus right from the start.

2. The Website

The new UCSA website (ucu.community) is an exciting and fresh opportunity. Facebook, especially with recent media coverage, is frequently the cause of much consternation, and I have heard many students complain that they wished they could “just delete the app” but feel they’ll miss too much. And it’s true. I went off Facebook for *a week* in February, and I felt its absence keenly. This is not to declare Facebook poison. The goal with the website is to help it work in tandem with UCU Students and the other pages, so that students who wish to escape Facebook can still stay involved on campus, but the forum and discussion-based groups can still operate as they do now. If elected, I would push for a resource library on the website for campus, for the Wellbeing information mentioned above, tips for new/transitioning boards, and more.

3. Committee Support

Finally, I’d like to host a new event for board members at the beginning of the semester(s). Best described as a networking borrel, all boards would be invited to come and discuss their plans for the semester as well as get to know the other boards. Collaborations work well when they come from personal acquaintance, and I want to help this happen more often. More broadly, as CAO my main goal would be supporting and encouraging my committees, keeping them apprised of UCSA developments and working with them to achieve their goals.

I look forward to reaching out and hearing your comments, concerns, and feedback this coming campaign week! Follow me on Facebook at “TJ For CAO” (facebook.com/tjforcao/) and if you have any direct questions, please don’t hesitate to message me privately on Facebook or send an email to c.e.querio@students.uu.nl. See you soon!