Dear students,

Happy last day of classes!

2016 has been an incredibly eventful year at WashU and around the world; some have called it the year of the unexpected. For many students, including myself, this semester has felt more draining than many semesters added together (talk about bang for your buck). As the year comes to a close, I would like to update you on the initiatives Student Union has instituted and completed this semester.

Early this semester, SU Execs released a strategic plan and an open letter outlining a list of ambitious initiatives to realize our vision of “a campus for all students”:

- To create an **Opportunity Fund** that will ensure that students from low-income backgrounds will not be excluded from having a full undergraduate experience
- To convene an **It’s On Us 2.0 Task Force** to strengthen our efforts to combat sexual violence on campus by unifying our resources and creating a WashU-tailored curriculum for Bystander Intervention Training
- To begin a **Campus Safety Task Force** -- in light of the shooting on campus last semester -- to communicate emergency procedures to the student body and provide students’ feedback to the Emergency Management office
- To pass a **Freedom of Speech Resolution** -- in response to WashU Faculty Senate’s Statement Regarding Freedom of Expression -- to create a vision for discourse at WashU
- To amend the **SU Constitution** to improve accountability and transparency in the General Budget process and to ensure diverse student representation in SU

After two months of engagement, preparation, and debate, Senate successfully passed the **Freedom of Speech resolution**, which embraces empathy and mutual respect as prerequisites to open discourse. Several major Constitutional amendments were also passed -- one of which codified the new General Budget process to give all students a voice in the disbursement of the $3.2 million student activities fee.

Moving beyond the strategic plan, we also hit another milestone when our Diversity Affairs Council released the **inaugural SU Diversity Report yesterday**, moving us one step closer to our vision of a more diverse and representative SU. And for the first time in years, more than half of our Treasury representatives are women; **14 out of 24 Treasury representatives** identify as women (compared to 2 out of 21 in Spring 2014.)
I would also be remiss if I did not mention the hard work put in by students who served on the Presidential Debate Programming and Funding Teams to make SU’s debate engagement efforts (e.g. DebateFair 2016) a resounding success! Art Council, EnCouncil, and Social Programming Board also did an incredible job at the DebateFair with their Political Art Installations, Rock’em Sock’em robots, and Clementine’s Ice Cream Truck respectively.

On the top of the numerous initiatives that were introduced, we have also made great progress in our regular duties and responsibilities. This fall, we received a record number of applications for SU positions across the board. Senate has also passed three other resolutions, one of which called upon the university to improve mental health services and infrastructure on campus.

The school, the nation, and the world have changed so much since we started the year. Yet, looking back on what our students have been able to achieve and overcome, I feel a great deal of pride and hope for the future. Student Union, too, will continue our work. With our plans for the Opportunity Fund, Campus Gun Safety, and the new It’s On Us campaign, I am optimistic that the future of our community will be brighter, safer, and more accommodating for all of us.

I wish you all the best in your final exams; the end is in sight and winter (break) is coming!

Yours truly,

Kenneth Sng
Student Body President