UASRA General Election Candidates Statements

April 2017

President

Helena McDermott

Hi! My name is Helena and I am running for President as I still believe, passionately, that UASRA can do so much more to build a vibrant, thriving community here, and to support and advocate for residents.

UASRA basically currently delivers events. The difficulty with that, as the recent fee hike discussion showed, is the numbers don’t stack up. Buying food is expensive – and not only that, isn’t particularly effective in building community.

If I’m elected, I will work to completely reimagine UASRA programming to make it financially sustainable, but also to offer more. First, by diversifying events away from food and entertainment toward real community support – creating regular spaces where we can meet each other, and programming to help with immediate practical needs, such as healthcare and childcare. I would also love to explore a grant based system for residents to lead their own events, allowing us both to support residents directly, and to distribute UASRA’s budget fairly across our community. And second, to lead a Board that is an advocacy body, and stands up for affordable housing, healthcare and childcare.

These are some pretty bold changes, but if properly thought through, I believe could really ignite the vibrant, thriving community that residents nurture here. I strongly believe that I have the right experience to guide the Board: a degree in public policy from Oxford, and a professional background in government policy and management consulting.

Perhaps more importantly, I know from personal experience how isolated and distressing the first months, or more, at UAS can be, and how much some of us struggle. Most of all, I’d love to lead a Board that supports residents when they need it most.

Vice-President

Negar Omidakhsh

Hello friendly neighbors! My name is Negar Omidakhsh and I am running for UASRA Vice President. I have served on the UASRA board for two years and, as your VP, will work towards increased community engagement, the efficient dissemination of relevant information and will be your advocate in talks with UCLA bodies and management. As a data scientist, I know the importance of understanding the collective needs of this community and reaching out to both Village and non-Village residents. To foster a greater sense of community I will encourage unit representatives to engage with residents in both formal and informal ways and to connect you with your neighbors. To help keep you well informed of what’s happening in the community, I will ensure that the UASRA website is up to date and contains new content that is relevant and useful for both local and international residents. Most important, I will act as your voice in meetings with management and will advocate tirelessly for the issues that are important to you. Thank you for voting!
Treasurer

Wan-Chu Liao
Hi~ I am Annie. I accomplished my degree of MSc in Management in UK, and I have been certified as Project Manager Professional (PMP) since 2010. I worked in Human Resource field in Taiwan and have volunteered for Red Cross in LA for several years. Based on my knowledge and experience, I am confident of fulfilling administrative and financial tasks to meet Treasurer’s requirements.

Money related issue is critical to the autonomous society, especially UAS which residents have limited income and resource. Residents’ need is increasing while the UASRA’s budget is decreasing year by year. Our monthly fee deductive to UASRA should be used in a more meaningful way to contribute to all UAS residents except for spending on food or supplies for events’ attendants only. If I am a Treasurer, I will do my best to manage UASRA’s bank account effectively, to interact with UASRA officers or UAS management team closely, to monitor UASRA’s budget and payment proactively, and to evaluate every UASRA expense is worthy for all residents’ benefit and welfare.

As a Community Center Coordinator 2013-2014, I am pleased to work for UASRA again as Treasurer 2017-2018. Your support and vote for me is very much appreciated. Thank you.

Tracy Martison
I am running for re-election for the Treasurer position. My time working with the UASRA, first as a Unit Representative and then as the Treasurer, has shown me how special this community is. Last year I worked with the board to find a way to increase community engagement by funding classes taught by our neighbors, showcasing the diversity and expertise of our community members. I would like to expand this initiative next year. Before moving to L.A. and starting my family, I worked for 10 years as a consulting engineer and project manager. I have developed and executed budgets up to $1.4 million and have extensive experience tracking expenditures, approving expense claims and prioritizing spending. Last year I delivered a balanced budget which included a range of services, training opportunities, and community-building events.

I am one of the few current UASRA board members who is running for re-election, which will help to provide continuity to the newly elected board. I look forward to continuing to serve as your treasurer as we work to meet the needs of all of our community members to make this an even more welcoming home for all.
**Secretary**

**Tracey Brown**
Hi Everyone, I'm running for Secretary for the 2017-2018 year. If elected this will be my second year as Secretary and third year working with UASRA (previously as a Unit Rep). Aside from my experience on the UASRA, I have been an Executive assistant for many years with high profile companies and elected officials. Please elect me to continue progress on improving our community and UASRA as a whole!

**Jeff Hedrick**
Hi Bruins, I’m Jeff Hedrick. As an attorney and corporate secretary at a multinational public solar company, I believe strongly that my legal experience will help me evolve UASRA into a more effective organization that truly advocates for you. My years of legal practice have shown me what makes for an effective board and, if elected, I will prioritize transparency, clear two-way communication with residents and organizational efficiency.

When my wife and I first moved to U Village, it was several months before we learned that there was an association here that represented us – you may have had a similar experience and I will absolutely change that by ensuring that UASRA more proactively engages with residents so each of you can (1) get involved in our housing community, (2) stay informed and (3) take full advantage of available resources.

My priorities would include:
- Strong, effective advocacy for you, bringing my experience as a practicing attorney
- Fostering ongoing dialogue between UASRA and residents
- More effective use of existing monthly dues rather than fee hikes
- Proactive engagement with new residents
- Better balancing of UASRA activities among U Village and mixed use housing
- Promoting housing affordability
- Improving healthcare access
- Strengthening security and safety
Event Coordinator

Iara Mantenuto
Hi! My name is Iara Mantenuto and I would be honored to serve as event coordinator. I am originally from Italy and I am currently a graduate student at UCLA in the linguistics department.

I have learned to be creative with a small budget and to be an active listener through various experiences organizing social and cultural events, festivals and educational programming for the Italian Culture Institute in Tokyo, UCLA, Fulbright, Syracuse University, among others. The most important part of my job will be to learn more about the unique needs of each community within ALL UAS apartment complexes and to elicit feedback in order to organize and tailor events accordingly.

I believe that events can be an avenue to help build a stronger community. My main goal is to have an inclusive and supportive community. Inclusive for everyone since we should take advantage of our diversity. Supportive, because I believe that there should be a balance between fun events (i.e. social events to meet our neighbours) and informative events that serve community members’ needs (i.e. job networking or how to access specific services inside/outside the community).

Thank you for reading this statement and for finding the time to vote!

Green Coordinator

Jda Gayle
Hello neighbors! My name is Jda Gayle, and I'd like to serve our community as Green Coordinator. My goal for this position is to coordinate and advocate for services that help our community live healthier and more eco-friendly. For example, having access to a recycling container in common spaces like the playgrounds and bbq area, will encourage us to recycle, as will ensuring that signs for trash and recycling are explicit and comprehensive.

Beyond promoting the "reduce, reuse, recycle," lifestyle, this position will allow me to build on the success of our produce program: eliminating long lines and ensuring residents from all the UA housing communities can receive a share. Additionally, I'll work with residents and management to plan events and disseminate information that's relevant and has a tangible effect on our lives. Issues like improving our indoor air quality, composting, green cleaning, and reducing our energy bills. Thank you for taking the time to read my statement. I hope these ideas resonate with you, and I look forward to working on your behalf.
Newsletter Editor

April Duggan
My name is April Duggan and I want to serve as your UASRA Newsletter Editor. I moved to the university apartments about two years ago and I am ready to help foster community through this position. I believe that communication is one of the most important pillars of community, and I am confident that I will be able to improve the way in which information is disseminated to the residents. I plan to link the monthly newsletter to its own active website, which will enable the residents to access The Bear Facts at their convenience. Considering that events and services sometimes fluctuate throughout the month, I believe the website will ensure that all information is kept current. This separate newsletter website will ensure that everyone will have a clear site that is not necessarily linked to a social media platform. Having worked extensively in the service industry and in sound engineering, I have always valued the importance of team work, which is why I am excited to work with the new UASRA board to enhance the living conditions of our community’s residents. I am also eager to hear all of the amazing ideas from our residents to improve the newsletters.

Lisa Rodriguez
Dear Neighbors,
It has been my pleasure to serve on the UASRA board and create the Bear Facts Newsletter for our community. The past few months, I have wholeheartedly enjoyed designing the template, adding new components, and meeting residents during the process. I would be more than honored to have your vote in order to continue my position as newsletter editor for the 2017-2018 year. With your support, I plan to expand the newsletter in several ways. First, the Just for Fun page would not only shed light on residents, but UAS staff as well. Second, I’d like to create additional pages that are resourceful and informative for UCLA families during this transitional period in our lives. Some of these ideas include motivational stories, study tips, and where to find insurance or financial help. Third, I’d like to reach out to local businesses for advertisement purposes that benefit both parties. Lastly, I would welcome and encourage all feedback from residents about the newsletter in hopes of creating one that our community takes pride in. Thank you for your support thus far and thank you for your consideration.
**Unit Representative Mentone/Clarington**

**Aleksandar Kondic**
I have been the Keystone Unit Representative for 4 months and I have been really enjoying it. I am grateful for the opportunity to be an active member of my community because I like to change things for the better. The same applies to the monthly meetings, where I met great people! Being a Representative of a mixed housing community has challenges of its own, since it is not so easy to create a platform where all these different people could meet, but I like to be challenged, so I would be more than pleased to be given the chance to continue my work as a Mentone/Clarington Unit Representative.

**Unit Representative Venice/Barry**

**KT Bender**
I’ve been living in Venice Barry since before the construction began, and have been informally involved with UASRA for a number of years. As VB fills back up as construction moves toward completion, many incoming residents will be living alone, are new to LA, and new to the US. It’s easy to become isolated, so I want to make space for people who are interested in building community with other residents both in VB and in our neighborhood. I also want to use this position to help UASRA become a stronger advocate for housing affordability. Contrary to popular belief, UAS gets no subsidies from the university for grad/family housing. I’m troubled by our annual rent increases in our rapidly gentrifying city, and hope to work with others in UASRA in a more official capacity to build up our internal organizing capacity as residents as well as build stronger links to other orgs such as the student-worker union.

**Edgar Rios Piedra**
Looking to be the representative for the building again to continue helping rely our concerns to the housing administration and promoting community integration through social events and other activities.

**Unit Representative Sawtelle A (3100-3140)**

**Mindy Patterson**
My name is Mindy Patterson and I live in Sawtelle A with my husband and our two redhead daughters. During my nearly four years in University Village, I have come to know neighboring families very well. If elected, I intend to continue our conversations while representing the interests of residents in 3100 through 3140 Sawtelle Avenue. As your representative, I look forward to building community, both among the buildings in Sawtelle A and across all the University Apartments South residences. I will welcome new residents individually with conversation and information about life in University Apartments South. With the Event Coordinator, I will plan activities in our residences and in the larger community, including events such as beach trips through which new and current residents can meet their neighbors while having fun in LA. I will strive to include all the families in Sawtelle A – whether they are married couples or domestic partners, single parents, or families without children. I plan to continue efforts to improve our outdoor spaces, making them more conducive to work, play, and conversation, while providing even more shaded spaces. With your support, I will faithfully represent the interests and concerns of all families living in Sawtelle A at the UASRA General Assembly meetings.
Unit Representative Sawtelle B (3150-3180)

Congli He
Hi, my name is Congli He. I am running for the position of Unit Representative of Sawtelle B. I have lived in UCLA family house for more than 3 years and I have been a representative of our unit in last year. During the last year, when I am a representative of our unit, I have organized two parties successfully in our unit. All of my neighbors had a great time and enjoy them very much. I also feel very happy to be involved in our community and give my contribution. I love this position. It would be my honored to have this opportunity to serve my neighbors.

Unit Representative Sawtelle C (3210-3240)

Talya Cohen
My name is Talya, I live in University Village with my husband and two-year old son Eitan. I am passionate about being active in the community and meeting new people. In the past year, I have been the unit representative of Sawtelle C. I have organized two great events, made sure that the unit is safe and that there are no safety hazards, and represented the unit in board meetings. If you vote for me, I will organize fun events and work on creating connections between neighbors and increase our sense of community.

Unit Representative Sawtelle E (3310-3360)

Janae Bunker
As the Sawtelle E unit representative, I look forward to working hard to planning inclusive events and keeping lines of communication open as we work together to keep our community strong. The people that live here are amazing and I am eager to do my part to ensure that everyone has a place in our diverse and vibrant apartment complex. Our family has been a happy part of the University Village community for almost 3 years and I have seen how our prior unit representatives played a role in fostering that sense of community among neighbors. It would be my honor to carry on that same tradition during this upcoming year.

Phil Chung
I like to think of myself as a very active member of our UA South community as I try to engage residents of our community whenever possible. I would love to take on an active leadership role with a team of other leaders in order to bring our residents and families closer together, build a stronger sense of comraderie and fellowship, and be a voice for our unit within UA South. I have assumed several extracurricular leadership positions throughout my life including associated student body ambassador in high school, associated student body freshman president in dental school, and resident advisor and executive board member of pre-dental honor society in undergrad). I also play a critical leadership role in my daily life as a pediatric dentist. Sound leadership is crucial for both of the roles I play in my professional life - senior associate dentist and assistant clinical professor of pediatric dentistry at USC's dental school. I would love your consideration for Unit Rep and look forward to an opportunity to serve our community.
Unit Representative Sepulveda B (3175-3195)

Magdalena Cline
Hi! It is a great honor to run for the Unit Representative for our complex. While I do some photography on the side I am primarily a proud stay-at-home mom for Marcus, our 2 year old son. In our time here my husband (a neurology resident) and I have grown close to many of you as our neighbors and often catch up on the playground as our kids run about spending what seems to be endless energy! As Unit Representative, I would be fully available and eager to hear your suggestions and concerns to continue to make our community the best and safest place for our families. This community has been an amazing blessing - something I couldn't have imagined being so special. With this position, I look forward to working together with you to make it even better.

Unit Representative Sepulveda C (3241-3255)

Natalija Markina
My name is Natalija and I’m the current unit representative for Sepulveda C. I have been working as unit rep for two years, and it’s been a real honor for me to be able to improve our community by following and reporting our residents’ concerns and inputs. There is still much work to do and I would be really happy to represent you and be your connection to the UCLA village management for the following year. Also, I really enjoyed organizing our playground parties and I would be very glad to continue to do it. This is a job I like to do and I do all my best. Please vote me!

Unit Representative Sepulveda D (3261-3281)

Jian Liu
My Name is Jian Liu and I would like to apply for the position of unit representative for Sepulveda D. I have lived in the University Village for four years and I love this wonderful community. If I have the chance to be our unit representative, I will try my best to provide effective communication between the Association and our unit residents, bring feedbacks and thoughts to the General Assembly meetings, and also host family-fun events for our neighbors. Thank you!