

FORWARD  
MARYLAND



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# RESEARCH & DATA ANALYTICS

PROPOSAL BY

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## CREATE A QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH TASK FORCE

When it comes to SGA, too many things do not add up. The current SGA has students from a variety of backgrounds and has a variety of ideas about what the student body wants. But we believe that this conversation, though well-intentioned, too often assumes the interests of students. We are here to represent the student body, not to think for them. As a result, we propose to create a Quantitative Research Task Force under the Office of the President. Not only will such a task force draw on the strengths of our nationally recognized computer science, engineering, and business students, but it will also enable us to gain deeper insights into how we can advocate for students.

## MAKE 'WHAT TO FIX UMD' A CONSISTENT CHANNEL FOR STUDENT CONCERNS

'What To Fix UMD' or more commonly referred to as WTF UMD is a new method that the SGA launched this semester to gauge student concerns on campus. WTF is an open Google Form where students can relay their concerns about anything going on on-campus, from opinions on dining hall food to reporting mold in their dorm rooms, and everything in between. After a complaint is submitted, SGA works to provide students with a point of contact on who can best solve their problem in an appropriate time frame. Unfortunately, only a handful of students have used it so far; out of a university population of over 30,000. While this system is great in theory, there are definitely ways to improve it. WTF UMD currently does not have an official dedicated structure to curate and follow-up on complaints. We hope to implement such a structure while also mandating that legislators utilize WTF UMD in their constituent outreach. We also hope to work with the Department of Resident Life and the Office of New Student Orientation to ensure that WTF UMD is as advertised and well-known as other campus services like 4-WORK and NiteRide.

## PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN CAMPUS SURVEYS



One of the top four pillars of Forward Maryland is being data-driven. What this means is using real information from students to enact policy changes. We hope to do this by providing incentives for the student body to complete university surveys. Most surveys that are sent out by the university typically receive very low student participation, even if they directly deal with issues that students care about the most. By providing Terrapin Express credits to students in exchange for their honest opinions on the most pressing issues affecting our campus, not only will survey participation substantially increase, the usefulness of that data will increase as well since we will be reaching a wider audience of students that are statistically representative of the university as a whole. Furthermore, academic research departments should provide the consistent usage of extra-credit-micro-incentives (ECMIs) to students to complete course evaluations. Studies have shown that this improves course eval response rates by over 30%.



## TRAIN LEGISLATORS TO BE EFFECTIVE CANVASSERS

SGA Representatives should be a student's first point of contact whenever they have an SGA-related issue on campus. A way of ensuring this is to train legislators to be effective canvassers. SGA members have experience with canvassing when election season comes around, but those skills seem to disappear once they are elected to the body. We must change this. We will work with the newly created Director of Outreach to mandate that each and every legislator is canvass-trained in order to ensure that they are effectively reaching out to the campus community and are able to collect useful qualitative data that will be put to use in making actionable policy changes. Further, we hope to mandate that every representative must hold at least a portion of their legislative office hours within the communities that they represent (i.e. the Business Reps holding their office hours in Van Munching, the South Hill Rep holding their hours in Annapolis Hall, etc). Lastly, ensuring that Finance Committee members hold office hours not only in STAMP, but all around the campus, to ensure that SGA funds are accessible to all students.



## CONNECT STUDENTS TO MORE STUDY SPACES AND STREAMLINE ROOM RESERVATIONS

Finding quiet, adequate spaces to study on campus can be a challenging task for many students. Sure, there are McKeldin and Hornbake Libraries, but good luck finding spaces to study when midterm and finals seasons roll around. Additionally, even when those libraries have spaces to study, it can be difficult for many students to get to those places throughout the day because of a difficult class schedule, not living on-campus, or a disability that may affect their mobility. To combat this issue, we hope to run randomized traffic analysis of empty classrooms in populated buildings, enabling students to find study spaces more easily. Classrooms are a great resource for this, as they are usually unoccupied during the evening hours, which studies have show is when most college students tend to study. Further, the room reservation process for student groups is an utterly disorganized mess. Students have to navigate through several ancient websites to be able to book a room, and even when there, the sites are not user friendly. We will encourage the administration and university departments to revisit a unified, streamlined room reservation system where students can access the reservations to all campus rooms in one place. This will help all clubs and organizations that wish to hold meetings on-campus as well as no longer scaring off students who want to start a new club but worry about finding a place to meet.

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SGA Elections April 22-24