

To the Class of 2021,

My name is Nadia Shahab Diaz, and I am running to be your First Year Class President. I am from Princeton, New Jersey, I was raised in a bilingual multicultural family, and I eat apples from the bottom-up and straight through the core. To start, I would like to thank everyone who signed my petition to run, whether it was an interjection in the middle of a conversation, an awkward approach during dinnertime, or a knowing look as soon as I pulled out a paper full of signatures... I understand that the election process is especially awkward considering that it falls so class to the beginning of the year and most of us can barely make our way to the HUB (let alone explain what we want to change about our campus), but I appreciate your help so much and hope to alter the election process in the future so that the student body can better get to know who they are running for and what Student Senate responsibilities entail. On another note, I apologize in advance for the length of this Letter of Intent, but hope that I have been able to convey my ideas to you in detail rather than through vague promises or generalizations.

The Dickinson Four encourages our First Year class to “Make Dickinson [Ours].” I wholeheartedly believe that such a task can only be achieved in a push-and-pull relationship, wondering what it is that Dickinson can provide us with and what we can give back to our school and community. Throughout high school, I served my community by reading to and assisting children in underprivileged areas with their homework; teaching kids in bilingual summer programs in both my local library and in Madrid, Spain; and tutoring high school students. I brought my perspective outside the classroom through the African Latin American Society, GSA, and a mixed heritage affinity group. In my junior year, I was elected by my peers as Co-President of the Student Activities Board, a position in which I exercised my leadership skills in leading meetings for event planning, assigning tasks and responsibilities to board members, and helping set and clean up weekend activities. Developing leadership skills, teamwork, perspectives, and connections throughout high school leaves me ready to take on this campus and give back to our new community; I hope I can do so by serving as your Class President, and would like to share some ideas that I can contribute.

On community living: Residential life can sometimes be difficult compared to the luxuries of home, so it is important to create as comfortable an environment as possible for all boarding students. I hope to improve residential life while upholding Dickinson’s mission towards an environmentally-conscious lifestyle. In order to further sustainability in residential housing, I believe that all dorms possible should incorporate automated lighting in their bathrooms. By doing so, we decrease the electricity lost throughout the day, when students forget that they did not turn off the lights before rushing out in the morning, as well as in the evening, when the lights stay on all night because no one is quite sure who will be the last person to shower. Additionally, I think that electric hand dryers should be installed in as many dorm bathrooms as possible. Most residential bathrooms do not have either paper towels or an electric hand dryer, which generally leads to someone consistently buying paper towels, or awkwardly running back to their dorm room to dry hands with a body towel. Installing electric hand dryers would sustainably avoid the use of paper towels in dorms, as well as adding convenience to dorm residents and guests alike.

On community health: Transitioning to college can be an overwhelming and stressful endeavor, academically, emotionally, and socially, and I cannot emphasize enough the importance of taking care of ourselves and our mental health during this time. But there is no reason to do it alone. Everyone has moments and challenges that can be difficult to talk about, but processing the experience with someone else can help with understanding the situation, airing frustrations, and gaining new perspectives. Often, this is effectively done by speaking to friends and family, but it can

occasionally be helpful to talk to someone more removed from a friend group, family, or social scene. I would like to create a student-to-student peer listening group for the Dickinson community, consisting of undergraduate students who are trained through the Wellness Center in listening skills and crisis intervention. Peer listeners would be trained to listen and respond to situations ranging from daily frustrations to serious concerns without giving advice, instead, helping students explore their thoughts and feelings and come up with their own solutions. Additionally, I intend to work with our Student Senate to reduce the social stigma surrounding both mental illness and seeking recovery by facilitating the process by which students seek help. Setting up a counseling appointment, opening up to a professional, or switching counselors (in case someone has not found the right one for them) are sometimes difficult steps to take; in order to help students feel more comfortable opening up to adults about their struggles, I would like to work with the Wellness Center to select and train student liaisons to aid the transition. As many students may feel more comfortable reaching out first to their peers, liaisons would receive them and gradually connect them to adults and other resources on campus. Overall, our mental health is essential to our everyday performance, and to our happiness and well-being; I want to foster positive mental health in our community, in all ways possible, and hope I can further that movement as your Class President.

On community events: Class of 2021... I cannot count the number of times that we have been described as the most diverse class in Dickinson's history, and I cannot be prouder. And so, as your Class President, I intend to celebrate it. I would like to work with the Student Senate, MOB, W.I.N.D., and other campus cultural organizations to create an annual World Fest. This event would feature the many cultures and backgrounds represented within our community with a food table per country, sponsored either by students, clubs, or local restaurants; cultural vocal, dance, or theatrical performances by volunteers and/or performing arts organizations; and general community spirit. Such an event can also be contained to specific continents or areas. Additionally, apart from the Winter Formal and Greek life parties, I would love to collaborate with MOB to organize themed dances. For instance, a Latin Arts dance dominated by *reggaeton* and Latin music, showcasing Dickinson dance teams, and hiring dancers to perform and teach salsa or bachata throughout the event. A Pride Weekend that brings additional schools and communities together by beginning with a Pride Parade and ending with an interscholastic GSA Dance. The ideas and possibilities are endless. Such on-campus events would encourage collaboration between clubs and organizations, bring fun and people together, and celebrate our community's diversity. Whether it is where your family comes from, who you love, or how many hours it took you to fly to our small college town, we are youth from all corners, and I want to show it off.

However, I cannot take full credit for all of these ideas, as many of them were inspired by *your* conversations with me and *your* contemplations on what could be changed even though the school year has just begun. I do not want to preach what my sole vision should be, because this is *our* time at Dickinson College. Your Class President is a representative, so I would, first and foremost, be a messenger for your voices, your thoughts on what should be changed or implemented, your ideas on how to create a healthy, comfortable, enjoyable community for everyone. And I am all ears, anytime.

So, once again, thank you to everyone who helped further my petition in whatever way; I am grateful for your consideration. Thank you to everyone who has supported me; I infinitely appreciate your help and encouragement. And, thank you to everyone who has read this far; have a gold star! ★

I hope to make you proud.
Nadia Shahab Diaz '21