**Students In Conversation: Learn More About Associated Students With An Ha, Associated Students President Episode 179**

00:00:00 **An**

Because we're so diverse and we're so rich in different ideas, different initiative, a lot of our activities, our events, our advocacy work really center around being inclusive, creating that inclusive space for student to feel like they're welcome at Mt. SAC, that they're being celebrated at Mt. SAC. And it's only because we are such a diverse group of student leader.

00:00:30 **Christina**

Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

00:00:31 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzell and you're listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast.

00:00:35 **Christina**

Our mission is to find ways to keep your ear to the ground so to speak by bringing to you the activities and events you may not have time to attend, the resources on campus you might want to know more, about the interesting things your colleagues are creating and the many ways we can continue to better help and guide our students.

00:00:52 **Sun**

We bring to you the voices of Mt. SAC, from the classroom to completion.

00:00:56 **Speaker 1**

And I know I'm going to achieve my goals and I know people here are going to help me to do it.

00:01:01 **Speaker 2**

She is a Sociology major and she's transferring to Cal Poly Pomona, Psychology major, English major.

00:01:07 **Speaker 1**

I'm transforming part-time into full-time.

00:01:10 **Speaker 1**

Really like the time that we spend with Julie about how to write a CV and a cover letter.

00:01:17 **Christina**

Or just finding time to soak in the campus.

00:01:19 **Speaker 1**

Think of the natural environment around us as a library.

00:01:22 **Christina**

We want to keep you informed and connected to all things Mt. SAC, but most importantly we want to keep you connected with each other. I'm Christina Barsi, Mt. SAC alumni and producer of this podcast.

00:01:33 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzell, Learning Assistant Faculty and Professional Learning Academy coordinator.

00:01:38 **Christina**

And this is the Magic Mountie Podcast.

00:01:45 **Voiceover**

Welcome back to the Magic Mountie Podcast, today our host, Tania Anders, speaks with An Ha the Associated Students President. Listen in to learn more about the work the associated students do, how they fit into the ecosystem of Mt. SAC and An Ha's role, enjoy.

00:02:07 **Tania**

Welcome to the Mount San Antonio College Podcast, my name is Tania Anders, your host for today's episode. My guest is An Ha, Mt. SAC's current Associated Student President for the academic year of 2022/2023. A student of business administration and recent awardee of the Phi Theta Kappa, all USA, all California academic team and New Century Pathway Scholarship.

00:02:34 **Tania**

I am visiting with An today to learn more about the work of Associated Student on our campus, in particular under her leadership and how her engagement with associated students has helped her as an individual and shaped her as an individual. So, hi An welcome.

00:02:54 **An**

Hi Tania, thank you for having me.

00:02:56 **Tania**

Oh, I'm excited to chat with you, really appreciate you being here, I know you're very, very busy. So, before we talk about your engagement on our campus, would you please be so kind and introduce yourself to our listeners?

00:03:08 **An**

Yes, hello everyone, my name is An and I'm in my third and final year at Mt. SAC. I'm studying business administration, I'm currently a participant in the honors program, EOPS, ACEs and a formerly promised Plus program.

00:03:27 **An**

I'm also a peer mentor with EOPS to support fellow low-income and first generation college students. And like Tania mentioned, I'm also serving as your Associated Student President to advocate on behalf of the student body, thank you for having me.

00:03:45 **Tania**

Wonderful, thank you for your kind introduction. So, for those of our listeners who are not as familiar with the work and the role of associated students on our campus, could you please briefly explain the structure of associated students? So, for example, how many senators serve on associated students, how are they elected and how does it fit in in general with the governance structure of Mt. SAC?

00:04:12 **An**

So, as some of the audience may know that Mt. SAC, you know we love shared governance, so we have the board of trustee, we have academic senate, we have faculty association, we have everything right but what about the student body? So, the student body play a role within the associated student on our campus and that is pretty much our umbrella.

00:04:36 **An**

And under each separate branches of Associated Students we have our executive board, our senate, our inter club council, our student court and our college-wide committee. For our executive board members, we are elected by the student body.

00:04:54 **An**

So, we have our president, vice president, two senate chair, two inter club council chairs and one student trustee. And they are comprised of the executive board where we ratify our legislation that come from the Senate. And for Senate we have two chairs, 14 senators, so that equal to 16 seats.

00:05:20 **An**

They are appointed to represent different interests like arts, environmental, political, STEM, campus community, activities, faculty relation, student services, finance, and there's a bunch more out there. And then what about the clubs? Our student organization, we have these inter club council that represent the interests of them.

00:05:41 **An**

And then what about check and balances? Because we are a student government, so we have our student court who pretty much ensure that we follow our constitution and that if there is any grievances or hearing and they do those sessions to address these check and balance issues.

00:06:00 **An**

And then finally, this is a pretty large ranch, it's called the College Y Committee. We appoint student representatives who may be not interested in committing a lot of time to student government, but they are seeking leadership opportunity just to learn about Mt. SAC.

00:06:17 **An**

We provide college-wide committees for them to join such as task force governance groups so that they're addressing different issues that they may be passionate about with fellow Mt. SAC like manager, deans, vice presidents, staff member. And they get to talk about interests from professional development for faculty to how is Mt. SAC addressing our vision as a college.

00:06:33 **An**

So, that's pretty much the basis of associated student in terms of our structure. We also do funding such as campus activities, so recently we hosted the games around the globe where students get to participate in different games from each culture from different continent and learn about them. So, we really want to address diversity within our own student government as well. So, we try to align to the college as much as possible.

00:07:13 **Tania**

Thank you so much, it really is amazing all the work that you do and your group does and I'm sure you know how very, very much the student voice is appreciated and really wanted on our campus. So, we appreciate and thank all the students that volunteer their time to this important task. I'm curious now, what got you interested in becoming part of Associated Students and what was your personal journey within Associated Students?

00:07:43 **An**

So, it's kind of a little funny story. I was still a senior in high school, it was during the pandemic. So, I was already interested in attending Mt. SAC at the time. And I received a planner that Mt. SAC gave out to students and I was flipping through all the different resources and opportunities and Associated Student was on one of the list.

00:08:08 **An**

And I was also on a phone call with my now vice president, we went to the same high school and I told him, "Let's join associate student so that we can obtain leadership opportunity and just get to know the campus." So, we kind of like, "Yeah, let's join together." And one year passed we didn't do it, but then opportunity presented itself. I met one of the former senate chairs and she was recruiting for interim senator positions and I was like, "Okay, you know what, I said I was going to join so let's give it a try."

00:08:42 **An**

And I reached out to her and she told me that, "Oh we have a position called student services." And at the time I already found a job with EOPS, who were under student services and I was very passionate about advocating for stronger student services to students. And I thought, you know what, "Since I'm under student services already, I might as well join associated student as the student services senator to continue advocating for them through legislation, through voting." So, that's how I got started and my friend that I was telling to join, he actually ran with me.

00:09:23 **An**

So, I ran for president and he ran for vice president and then we won and now we're working together and he does his own campus activities and I'm more on the policy side so we make a good partner because we already had like this promise back in high school like we're going to join and it came full circle, now we're leading the organization together.

00:09:43 **An**

So, it was really cool to become an elected officer because I was very worried about running, I didn't really participate in student government in high school. So, coming to Mt. SAC with such a big student population, I was very nervous but it all worked out and I'm like very happy and I learned so much just by taking that chance, that opportunity.

00:10:08 **Tania**

That's a beautiful story, so since I'm not on the student email list serves, but is that the successful way in which you guys recruit new students to want to join Associated Students through your student email lists or ...

00:10:24 **An**

So, a lot of our officers join through word of mouth because like I mentioned earlier, our marketing is not the best, it should be improved and it's going to be a long process. But a lot of us joined through maybe our friends who were already involved or we know a mutual acquaintance who were involved in who was recruiting.

00:10:46 **An**

So, I happened to know the former senator through another program called Global Pals, it's under international student and then she was announcing like, "Hey, AS is looking for officers, so who wants to join come message me," and that's how I got involved. And as far as I know for the past two years I've been with AS, a lot of people have had kind of like, "Oh I know Associated Student because my friend told me about it." So, word of mouth is a very big important method for us to recruit.

00:11:22 **Tania**

Okay, wonderful, thank you for sharing that. So, what would you consider some of the greatest accomplishment , that an associated student has had in the past few years? And then maybe more specifically also under your leadership, what focus areas stand out to you as far as these accomplishments over the last years?

00:11:44 **An**

So, over the last few years, I can recall two things. The first accomplishment is establishing our land acknowledgement. One of our priorities in Associated student is DESA, so diversity inclusion, the rest of the acronym anti-racism is part of it as well.

00:12:03 **An**

So, one of our former officer drafted a bill saying that at every public meeting that associated student hosts or any major event, we're going to be our land acknowledgement to acknowledge the land that we're on and to acknowledge different groups of people who sacrifice for our country.

00:12:26 **An**

So, we have our own version of it and we say it at every single meeting and I think it's important to do that and to continue supporting other student population that may be ignored on campus. And although we are a very diverse group of student, we can be even more diverse of course. But having that land acknowledgement as the basis of our meeting is one of the greatest accomplishment that we have. And not every program does it on campus, we're one of the few that has been consistent with our acknowledgement.

00:13:02 **An**

And then the second one is compensation. AS is a lot of time commitment and then you have to understand how to manage your time, schedule classes that are not conflicting with AS activities. So, as a way to recognize the hard work that our officer do, we have established a stipend for all officer within the organization.

00:13:26 **An**

Previously it was only the president and vice president, but now as long as you're an official officer, everyone get a stipend. And although it may not be a livable rate, but it's still something that we're awarding to our officer for their hard work, for the commitment and for the advocacy that they're doing on behalf of students. So, those are the two greatest accomplishment overall that I believe AS have had.

00:13:54 **An**

But specifically under my leadership, I have two that I really want to bring up. One is our bill and resolution to implement a mandatory sexual harassment prevention training to all enrolled student, to all officer in AS and to all officer in the clubs and organizations.

00:14:16 **An**

The reason why I think it is something that we know it stands out because a lot of the time student are giving so many resources to get basic needs, enroll in classes, to access a counselor, but sometimes we ignores the most important things which is feeling safe on campus. And we have had several cases, or several reports that people are facing harassment on campus and they had no idea how to report, they had no idea how to reach out for help and because those were brushed under the carpet or they're forgotten and no one knows about it.

00:14:57 **An**

So, we decided to recommend to the college to implement a sexual harassment prevention training to all student so that you know, we're using education as a way to empower our student to look for resources to ensure that they're safe on campus and that they don't have to worry about going to classes at night and feeling like they don't want to go anymore because they don't know where to find help.

00:15:20 **An**

So, the purpose of that is to inform them like, "Hey we have our campus safety officer, we have a Title 9 office that you can report cases to. You have this phone number that you can call and that you're not alone and that we acknowledge the experiences and the feelings that you have had gone through as a result of intruders of people that you didn't want to interact with." So, that's one thing.

00:15:44 **An**

And the second thing under my leadership, I feel like I love this one because as a peer mentor in EOPS, I have the opportunity to work with certain student-parents, specifically single parents in the program. And a lot of their experiences really remind me of my own experience living with my single mother.

00:16:05 **An**

And my mother didn't really have the chance to go to college because she has to continue working and making sure that I get to go to school. So, now I am in college, I have the leadership skill, I have all these resources, all these support system, I really want to advocate for other single mothers, other single parents out there who are trying the best to come to Mt. SAC to achieve their goals.

00:16:33 **An**

And although we have a large population of student parents on campus, we don't have anything parent dedicated to serve these students, we don't have a parent center, we don't have a family resource center. So, I decided to construct a resolution to recommend to the college that, "Hey, these are the data that we have and every student-parent is demanding for a student study space, a student-parent dedicated study space, student-centered so that they can feel like they could find a community that understand their unique experiences and that they're supported by the college."

00:17:14 **An**

So, although I will be pretty much transferred before I get to see the establishment of the student-parent center or space, I'm very happy that I get to plant the seed for future student-parent advocate to continue this work because we have so many of them on campus and they're often invisible because you don't go around and tell people you're a student-parent unless you are comfortable in sharing it.

00:17:41 **An**

Because student-parents themselves especially feel kind of ashamed for coming back to school since you know, the notion is that they should be working, they should be taking care of their children, like why are you coming back to school? So, they don't share that experience because of these guilt.

00:17:57 **An**

But hopefully within next few years when we do have a student-parent center or a space that more people will be open to come to Mt. SAC and find themselves succeeding at Mt. SAC, and it's just like one of the incentive for the college to really focus on that population.

00:18:17 **Tania**

Thank you, I think all of those examples that you shared are so important, so crucial and it really touches on something that I was going to ask you next and I feel like you've really already addressed, that thinking about equity, how Associated Students plays a role in this and the importance of it and how you can make your voices heard.

00:18:39 **Tania**

So, you've addressed a lot already as far as what you are doing. Is there something you wanted to maybe add a little bit more as how Associated Student plays an important role in making the student voices heard?

00:18:53 **An**

Yeah, so I'm very proud to say that AS is a very diverse group of student leaders, we have international students, we have disabled students. We have ESL, student-parent, first gen, low-income student from different majors who are here in AS to represent and advocate for our student population.

00:19:20 **An**

Because we're so diverse and we're so rich in different ideas, different initiative, a lot of our activities, our events, our advocacy work really center around being inclusive, creating that inclusive space for student to feel like they're welcome at Mt. SAC, that they're being celebrated at Mt. SAC, and it's only because we are such a diverse group of student leader.

00:19:46 **An**

Also in addition to having the opportunity to serve on college-wide committees with our college presidents, vice presidents, deans, managers, staff member, faculty, we get to hear about each different constituent group, and because we learn so much from different perspective, we get to use our perspective as students to answer confusing questions that other groups of people might be pondering about.

00:20:20 **An**

So, we place a very important role when it comes to equity because sometime people who are making decisions for us aren't student anymore. But because we're given the opportunity to be on the same table as other groups of people of decision makers, we get to bring our diverse backgrounds like international student, different disability, different language learners, different demographics to address these concerning questions, these confusing issues that may be going on on campus.

00:20:53 **An**

We want to do more by hearing more, so we just love being in AS and playing that role to help student, and we love being reached out to because although we are a very big group of student leaders, Mt. SAC has almost 30,000 students and I don't think we truly represent all 30,000.

00:21:16 **Tania**

Sure sounds like it.

00:21:18 **An**

I know.

00:21:19 **Tania**

Amazing and of course other groups on campus aim to do the same that you are so intentionally doing, so I really applaud you for that work. And thinking of one of our listener groups, which is faculty like in a nutshell, if you had one or two advice for faculty, what would you say? How can they support your work?

00:21:40 **An**

Thank you for that question to all the faculty listening, first of all, thank you for hearing us and thank you for your collaboration with us because as much as we want to do so much on campus, we don't know everything. We don't know a lot of institutional policy, how things are being carried out. So, having faculty as our partner is really amazing because when we have an idea we can always reach out to faculty for help and that's why we have associate student, we have academics on it.

00:22:12 **An**

So, please continue doing what you're doing already, you're amazing. But if you would like to, I guess, seek improvements, one of my hope is that you would continue to advocate for student leaders to be compensated for the work that we're doing. Because most of the time, like we all want to get involved, we all want to commit to different task force, committees and addressing a very big issue.

00:22:39 **An**

But a lot of the time we're still student, we're still trying to complete our courses, work to support ourself and our family, and so being an advocate on campus is not an easy job for a lot of student. And I have had AS every semester we always have at least one or two people leaving due to other commitments that they need to fulfill. And advocacy work is not as consistent as we want it to be.

00:23:07 **An**

So, compensation can really relieve a lot of financial issues that certain student leader may be facing and that can continue assisting them, stay consistent with AS and continue to advocate for the issues that they're passionate about.

00:23:20 **An**

But all in all, I think faculty is supporting us a lot and they've been affirming a lot of our legislation that we've been putting out for the past few years, so we're very grateful. But one thing is we just really want faculty to understand like, "Hey, we're a student, we have financial needs and we just want to be compensated for certain works that we're doing and we love to collaborate with everyone."

00:23:46 **Tania**

Thank you for that feedback, I really appreciate it. And some of our listeners may be students, so you were recently awarded and this is such a long title, the Phi Theta Kappa, all USA, all California academic team and New Century Pathways Scholarship.

00:24:01 **Tania**

So, I'm curious now, how your engagement on the Mt. SAC campus contributed maybe to the success that you received the scholarship and what advice you may have for other students. How they can make the best of their time at Mt. SAC and how can Mt. SAC and our faculty support their dreams?

00:24:23 **An**

I feel like I'm in a very unique position, because I took advantage of a lot of resources. I joined a lot of programs like EOPS, I'm involved in AS, so my advice would be to really narrow your focus and to know what you really want to do after transitioning out of Mt. SAC for me is transferring to a four-year institution.

00:24:47 **An**

I'm studying business, I love leadership opportunities, so when I think of those, I think of counseling through EOPS, I think of joining AS for leadership opportunities. So, my advice would be just narrow your focus, have one or two commitment under your belt and do really well in them. And when you are very committed to one or two activities, you get to know the people that you're collaborating with, the faculty, the staff member, your advisor.

00:25:21 **An**

And once you spend enough time, those relationship will come out naturally and anything that you may be going through, you can tell the respective people to help you get through and overcome those barriers. Sometimes in order for you to seek help is for you to be involved and put yourself out there. So, as long as again, you find one or two activities where you can collaborate with people, those help will come eventually and all your hard work will generate the result that you want. So, that would be my advice.

00:25:55 **Tania**

Fantastic advice, thank you so much for that. So, you already touched on it a little bit, but what is next for you? Where is your educational journey going to take you next?

00:26:06 **An**

So, I am very proud to announce that I will be transferring to UC, Berkeley, specifically Hass School of Business. I will continue to study business administration, I'll be earning a bachelor degree from them, that would be my journey so far.

00:26:23 **An**

I love planning but I am not an extreme planner where I have a tenure to plan down the line. But I'm just very happy to attend one of the most competitive business school in the state because this has been a big dream of mine.

00:26:38 **An**

When I was young, I never knew that UC, Berkeley would be a dream school, but when I was applying I was so stressed out, I'm like, "What if I get rejected," but I'm happy that as far as I know, one of four student who got into that program, so very, very excited.

00:26:56 **Tania**

Wow, congratulation.

00:26:56 **An**

Thank you.

00:26:56 **Tania**

And your scholarship is hopefully going to help with that.

00:27:01 **An**

Yes, it would definitely help.

00:27:03 **Tania**

That's amazing, your mom must be so proud of you.

00:27:06 **An**

Very, very.

00:27:07 **Tania**

That's wonderful, so to wrap things up, is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't talked about?

00:27:15 **An**

I would say enjoy your experience at Mt. SAC, whether you're student, faculty, staff, or a community member. I think Mt. SAC has a lot of doors open for everyone and as long as you have something that you're passionate about, Mt. SAC has something for you to join and be involved in.

00:27:33 **An**

So, really reach out to the people that have similar interests with you and of course join associate student because again, we have so many seats to fill and we always need students. So, yeah, just enjoy your time and I hope everyone are always happy because you know we're in a very strange world right now, it's hard.

00:27:56 **Tania**

It absolutely is, the world has certainly changed and it has been such a pleasure to talk with you. We are all so proud of you too.

00:28:03 **An**

Thank you.

00:28:04 **Tania**

We'll certainly miss you, and I love what you said earlier that you planted seeds and so we will continue to see your work in the years moving forward because of those planted seeds that will grow. So, thank you for taking the time to talk with me today.

00:28:21 **An**

Thank you Tania.

00:28:26 **Christina**

Thank you for listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast, and don't forget to share your favorite episodes.