



Associated Students of
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Abdul-Malik Ford assumes role as 2020-21 Associated Students President

Bellingham, WA — On Friday, August 8, 2020, the Associated Students of Western Washington University (ASWWU) Executive Board of Directors unanimously appointed Abdul-Malik Ford to the position of AS President. Ford’s appointment followed the Board’s consideration of three finalists, who each delivered prepared presentations on their goals for the position and organization. Ford is currently a fifth-year student, seeking two bachelor’s degrees; one in Spanish and another in business and sustainability. Ford’s term is effective immediately until the end of spring quarter, 2021.

Ford has served in numerous leadership roles on campus, including as the President of Western’s Black Student Union (BSU) for two years, an elected student senator for the College of Business and Economics, and as the Vice President of Hall Representation for his first-year on-campus residential community. In an interview following his appointment, Ford noted, of all his leadership positions on campus, “BSU had a huge impact,” on his desire to serve as the AS President. As President of BSU, Ford created a leadership position within the club that focused on retention and outreach. Ford also indicated, “I was motivated to pursue and fight for [the AS President] position due to the strength of those around me.”

More broadly, Ford centers much of his advocacy work around sustainability, ensuring the work he does can lead to long-term, structural change. One of Ford’s emergent priorities for his position includes accelerating the ASWWU’s work in response to demands forwarded by WWU Black Student Organizations (BSO), specifically regarding the creation of a Black Student Coalition. “Making the Black Student Coalition a permanent thing and developing a space for Black students is something I feel, and a lot of us feel, is going to be very important for the future of Black students,” Ford said.

Ford’s goals as AS President include addressing demands forwarded to the ASWWU by the BSO on June 19, 2020. “I am essentially ‘Blacking out’ my agenda in order to prioritize Black students who are traditionally disregarded, disrespected, and placed at a disadvantage at this institution and in this country. My agenda items are going to be very in line and basically exact to what the BSO demands are highlighting,” Ford said. Ford is also planning to find organizational support for expanding assistance programs for students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing



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ambiguity within the AS elections process, advocating for campus-wide messaging for incidents of racist violence directed at campus community members, supporting mandatory training for campus community members related to bias or discrimination, and organizing a forum that focuses on accountability for each ASWWU office and position. Ford noted, “People need to know what we do; they need to know what we look like, they need to know we’re accessible in office hours and there are meetings they can come to and speak at.”

The AS President serves as the chief administrative and financial officer of the ASWWU; they also serve as the spokesperson and chair of the ASWWU Executive Board of Directors. The ASWWU is an organization designed and run by Western students. The ASWWU seeks to ensure a fulfilling college and academic experience for all university students through the many services, facilities and programs it offers. For disability accommodations, please contact as.doc@wwu.edu. Western is an equal opportunity institution. For more information, visit www.as.wwu.edu/about.

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