

Executive

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had the most influence on her passion for the job.

"Race and gender issues were a very important aspect of my family life," she said. "Working on issues of oppression and dynamics of power were a part of my life from day one."

She added that because her father died several years ago and she grew up in a multifamily unit in Seattle with gay parents, her sense of family is a little different than it may be for others. Her surroundings as a child also taught her that some people do not tolerate "different" families.

"Because my parents were openly gay, I learned pretty quickly that that wasn't always accepted by everyone," she said. "As hard as it is to see people have a hateful response to people I love and adore, that inspires me to work towards educating people and working to make homophobia less prevalent."

Now a planning, public policy and management major at the University, Brooklyn took a year off to travel after graduating from high school in 1997. During her journeys, she lived in Thailand for a summer and in Guatemala for a few months, and she also visited New England and Europe. She only came home in between her trips to work — usually as a maid because it was the easiest job to find for short time periods.

Brooklyn's first year of college was in her hometown, Seattle, where she attended the University of Washington.

But Brooklyn had already decided that Husky life would be temporary and only to fulfill some general requirements. It was the University of Oregon's 1999 student sit-in at Johnson Hall, when students demanded the administration create specific diversity objectives, that made Brook-

lyn sure she wanted to be a Duck.

"At UW there's not a real sense of student activism," she said. "I really liked that here there were some students who cared so much about the University that they were willing to sit in at Johnson Hall to make improvements ... I wanted to come

personality. We can spend all day together working and then still go home and laugh on the phone for a good three hours."

After a year of working side by side with Nair, Brooklyn asked her to run with her in this year's ASUO election.

"All the characteristics I wanted



Tom Patterson Emerald

Nilda Brooklyn and Joy Nair take the reins as ASUO executive today.

be a part of the action."

And that's when she first set foot through the doors of the ASUO office as a volunteer, later becoming an intern, then a staff member and finally a candidate for ASUO president.

"The second I came to the UO, the ASUO was an outlet that allowed me to work on the issues that were important to me," she said. "It gave me the skills to work on things effectively and to make real change."

And that's also how she first met Nair, who later turned into one of her close friends. "She had a great smile," Brooklyn remembers. "She just has this way of making people feel comfortable and at ease immediately, and she just has a great per-

sonality. We can spend all day together working and then still go home and laugh on the phone for a good three hours."

Nair's first response, however, was not very encouraging.

"I was like, 'Yeah, that's funny,'" Nair said. "The [executive] always got made fun of, and I was like, 'I don't want people to make fun of me — that's lame.' I just didn't want to end up like that."

But after some consideration — and after former ASUO President Jay Breslow told her not to run — she finally accepted Brooklyn's offer.

"Jay told me not to do it, and that made me want to do it even more," she said. "And then specific people told me I couldn't do it, and that really made me want to run."

Nair, who was diversity recruitment and retention director this year, also realized she shared many common goals with Brooklyn, especially as far as diversity was concerned.

Born in Fiji, but of South Indian descent, Nair recognized diversity issues through her personal experience as a resident of Hillsboro, Ore., a predominantly white area. She observed how much she felt the need to adapt herself in particular situations.

"I knew I was different because I would dramatically change my personality from home to school, and I noticed that a lot of students of color did that," she said.

Realizing the importance of having a community within the high school for people who experienced the same thing, Nair became president of the diversity committee and head of the international program in high school. But in college, she saw that diversity issues reached an even greater level.

"It was something I was always passionate about working on, and when I got to school I realized it was a lot more political," she said.

Now a sophomore business major at the University, Nair has held positions in the Ambassador Program, Students of the Indian Subcontinent, and the ASUO Executive, which is where she met Brooklyn.

Nair said because she had seen how hard Brooklyn worked in the ASUO, she was intimidated to run with her.

"I felt like an idiot compared to her ... I was like, 'I don't want to do this. I'll be the dumb-ass in the group,'" she said. "She has to be the most amazing person I've met on this campus."

ASUO Legislative Organizer Melissa Unger said she has witnessed how strong the pair's relationship is, and that this will be beneficial to their presidency next year.

"They work really well together and respect each other an immense amount," she said. "They also have

complete trust in each other ... You need that to do the job."

Even though it took some persuasion to run, Nair said now she sees how her and Brooklyn's different experiences and personalities will make them a strong, "awesome" team next year.

"The more I worked with her, the more I realized her strengths are my weaknesses and my strengths are her weaknesses," she said. "We complement each other perfectly."

Calendar

Friday, May 25

Sociology Colloquium: Michael Dreiling, Sociology, discusses "Corporate Political Action and Global Trade Regimes: Fortune 500 Firms in the U.S. Trade Policy Formation Process." 3-4:30 p.m. Room 332, Gilbert Hall. Free. For information, call 346-5366.

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