Student Government Association

General Meeting

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

Meeting Minutes

Peter T. Mazza Student Government Association Room

Ely Campus Center

A livestream of the meeting for public viewing took place on YouTube.

Members Present: Justin Wald, Travis Mcloughlin, Jacob Constant, Barney Garcia, Luke Stehley, Matthew Crusha, Christopher Lannan, Zara Rivett, Alyssa Hanafin, Maria Renta-Marrero, Angelina Cassella, Celia Rocino, Adian Gomez, Karlie Beamenderfer, Will Onorato, Cole Dos Santos, Brenna Guliani, Ali Sutherland, Dianyeliz Ozuna Sandoval, Lorraine Fernández, Melissa Kuzmeski, Fabian Morales, Julian Auger, Eli Baez

Members Absent: Raul Rosario, Raymond Croteau, Sofia Rudenko

Call to Order: President Justin Wald called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. It was announced that the meeting was being live streamed and recorded. Members were asked to review the meeting agenda, and a roll call was taken of members present (listed above) Also, participating was advisor Matthew Dellea and Guest Speakers Vice President of Finance and Administration Steven Taksar, Director of Dining Melissa Sikes, and Director of Residential Life Christina Makensie Willenbrock.

Approval of the Minutes: The minutes from the December 9th, 2025, meeting were approved pending minor edits.

President's Report: Justin Wald welcomed the Senate back for the first meeting of the spring semester and introduced the returning guest speakers, Vice President Steve Taksar, Director Melissa Sikes, and Director Chris Willenbrock, for their presentation on fees and tuition. He noted the ongoing upgrades to the SGA room and announced a new partnership with the Springfield Museums Educational Partner Program, which now offers free admission to five local museums for students and staff with a valid ID.

Wald encouraged senators to participate in the RED Friday bracelet-making event hosted by the Veterans and Military Center this Thursday in Scanlon Hall to honor deployed service members. He reported on a successful Club Fair, where he engaged with student organizations about utilizing SGA finance proposals to fund their growth. addressing the vacancy in the Vice President of Finance role, he stated that the search for a replacement is underway and announced the formation of a temporary Ad Hoc Committee to review finance bylaws. He then formally appointed Celia Rocino as the Vice President of Community Engagement and Outreach and moved to appoint Eli as a Representative at Large. Finally, Wald announced an upcoming advocacy trip to the State House, organized with Attorney Phelps, to allow students to network with legislators and advocate for campus issues.

Finally, Wald, asked if there are any nominations for Parliamentarian.

- Angelina Cassella nominated Karlie Beamenderfer
- Karlie Beamenderfer Accepted the nomination.
- Melissa Kuzmeski Motioned to Cast a Single Ballot.
    - Travis McLoughlin explained that this was so we could do a vocal vote for the single nominee.

MOTION to elect Karlie Beamenderfer as the Parliamentarian for the remainder of the 2025-2026 academic year PASSED unanimously by a VOCAL VOTE.

Guest Speakers: Vice President Steve Taksar, Director Melissa Sikes, and Director Chris Willenbrock for a second presentation on the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 tuition and fee recommendations. The presentation detailed that while state-approved tuition is expected to remain flat, the university is recommending a 2.5% increase in mandatory fees and a 3.0% increase for both residential rents and dining services. These adjustments would bring the total cost of attendance for a full-time residential student to $27,599, representing an overall increase of 2.8%. The proposal includes specific room rate changes, such as a $270 annual increase for standard doubles and higher adjustments for single and premium single rooms.

The update also highlighted several enhancements to campus services, including a new "21 Flex Plan" and a restructured "Commuter 80" meal plan designed to provide more flexible dining options. Residential Life shared survey data showing that student satisfaction remains at or above goal levels across major indicators, while emphasizing that Westfield State's housing rates continue to be among the lowest compared to peer institutions. Additionally, the President's Cabinet recommended several new or adjusted course and lab fees to support materials and technology in departments such as Art, Biology, and Business. The Board of Trustees is scheduled to review these mandatory fee recommendations for final approval.

- Jacob Constant asked if it would be possible to get the presentation for all senators and send them the presentation.
- Luke Stehley asked if Courtney and Davis will be staying as the First-Year halls
    - Christina Makensie Willenbrock it is what is going to be moving forward.
- Christopher Lannan asked if there could be info sessions for all students to know where they're dollar is going. As well as if there is any data from the First-Year honors housing in Davis.
    - Christina Makensie Willenbrock mentioned that they can go back into the SkyFactor survey to check the data. As well as explaining that the people in the Davis honors housing are very interested in continuing their positions in Honors and moving onto the next Honors Housing in University Hall.
- Zara Rivett asked a question regarding the Apartment Complex and what the plans are for them.
    - Christina Makensie Willenbrock explained that the Apartment Complex's are not getting renovated, but they are getting repaired. The hope is to finish all the rest of the Apartment Complex buildings over the summer and have everything already in the fall.
- Dianyeliz Ozuna Sandoval asked if the rates are the same for Graduate students.
    - Christina Makensie Willenbrock explained that they are except if you are in the PA program and it is because their classes look different then the tadeonal student.
    - Steven Taksar explains that for the Pipe Breaking to see what they are doing with Insurance for example.
- William Onorato asked a question about JEDI housing.
    - Chrstina Makensie Willenbrock mentioned that they will get more of the specific data, but they have not had much of a push for BIL specific housing this year, but they are continuing to work with their campus partners.
- Fabian Morales asked about the overall bill increase and how it doesn't match the expected inflation rate.
    - Steven Taksar explained that the rate they are proposing is about equivalent to the current inflation rate. However, the campus leadership is just starting discussions about what to do about making the difference.

    - Ali Sutherland asked how the student population count towards the rate.
    - Steven Taksar explained that we are pretty much on track for what they predicted this year.
- Fabian Morales asked about the Art Studio fee to see a breakdown.
    - Steven Taksar asked for is contact information to get the information and let him know.

Board of Trustees Report: Barney Garcia reported on the Board of Trustees meeting held on December 18, 2025, which included discussions on rebranding the university's image and a major capital campaign for the proposed Human Health Hub. He explained that while the BRIGHT Act could provide significant state funding for the $120 million facility, the Board authorized $3.1 million over five years to support the university's required $20 million contribution and to foster long-term alumni philanthropy. Garcia noted that enrollment has leveled out and retention metrics are showing signs of recovery due to support services and SUCCESS Grant pilot funds.

Regarding the university's financial status, he shared that while the institution is in a modestly healthy position, external factors such as debt, deferred maintenance, and the closure of residential facilities remain significant threats to the bottom line. He announced that the Board is restructuring its governance by condensing seven committees into four to streamline operations, a move re-confirmed during a special meeting on February 2, 2026. Finally, Garcia called for student volunteers to help organize a Western Massachusetts SGA summit focused on shared issues like deferred maintenance and encouraged underclassmen to consider running for the Student Trustee position as his term nears its end.

Vice President of Student Life Report: Travis McLoughlin announced the launch of the Downtown Shuttle, a new service operated by Public Safety that provides transportation to Stop and Shop and Walmart on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday evenings. Starting February 10th, the shuttle will run a loop from Scanlon Hall to provide students without vehicles easier access to groceries and food downtown. He also promoted the upcoming Student Leadership Awards, noting that nominations for individual student leaders and organizations are open to the entire campus community until February 20th.

In athletic news, McLoughlin shared a new partnership with The Pickler in downtown Westfield, allowing students to play pickleball for $5 an hour on Wednesday nights from 8:00 PM to 10:00 PM. Finally, he requested student volunteers to participate in lunch interviews for the Counseling Center’s open Outreach Counselor position, with the first session scheduled for Thursday, February 12th in the Dining Commons.

- Christopher Lannan asked if the shuttle would be able to be tracked
    - Luke Stehley gave a point of information that it is already set up.

Dining Services Report: Angelina Cassella reported that the Dining Services Committee met on January 30th to discuss several improvements and schedule changes across campus dining locations. The Common Goods Pantry has expanded its service to include Friday afternoon hours, and the dining commons has adjusted its dessert offerings, making the soft-serve machine available on weekdays and novelties available on weekends. Quality enhancements to the daily menu include the introduction of homemade soups, freshly sliced deli meats, Tuesday sushi lunches, and Thursday hot sandwich lunches. Upcoming specialty events include a sweet potato bar, eggplant dishes, and new chili options, while retail updates include better pricing at the Marketplace due to a new vendor and Valentine's Day specials at the Owl and Harvest.

University Curriculum Committee Report: Melissa Kuzmeski reported that the University Curriculum Committee met on December 19, 2025, and approved several course updates and new offerings across various departments. The Environmental Science department saw several changes, including the advancement of a new 1.5-credit WISE inclusive course, Nature and Wellness, and the approval of new courses in Intro to Horticulture and Wetland Plant Identification. Revisions were also passed for existing ENVS courses to update student learning outcomes and adjust credit structures for added lab portions. Additional approvals included a new Data Analysis in Nutrition course,

several updates to Spanish language and culture courses to meet general education requirements, and minor revisions to Philosophy and History courses, including the removal of prerequisites for Native American History.

Vice President of Student Belonging Report: Lorraine Fernández reported that the Belonging Committee will hold its first meeting of the semester on Friday, February 13th, via Zoom to continue discussing initiatives from the previous term. She noted that the second collaborative volunteer trip between SGA, Veterans & Military Services, and the Interfaith Center to the Westfield Soup Kitchen is taking place today, February 6th, at 4:00 PM. Additionally, she stated that the Blue Key Committee is still seeking a first-year representative and a sophomore representative for its initial meeting on February 11th. This committee will oversee the selection process for student leadership awards to be presented at the year-end SGA banquet.

Campus Activities Board Report: Matthew Crusha reported that the Campus Activities Board held its Winter Wonderland events on January 22nd and 23rd, which included a Night Owl Breakfast at the Dining Commons attended by 256 students and an Icy Nights event in Scanlon Hall with 55 participants. He noted that Bingo was hosted this past Friday, January 30th, in the Scanlon Banquet Hall. For current programming, a Trivia night is scheduled for 7:00 PM tonight in the Owl's Nest. Looking ahead, the signature event for February, titled Amore Galore, is set for the weekend of February 20th.

- Travis McLoughlin asked to explain what drag bingo is.
    - Matthew Crusha explained that it is like regular bingo but with a drag queen.

Senior Class Report: Dianyeliz Ozuna Sandoval reported that the Class of 2026 Council hosted the "100 Days Before Commencement Toast" on February 5th at Westfield River Brewing Company to celebrate the senior class's final academic phase. The event was free for seniors aged 21 and older and featured continuous shuttle transportation from Scanlon Hall to ensure student safety and accessibility. Attendees enjoyed music by DJ Prince, catering by Hamels, a 360 photo booth, and various raffles for prizes such as a free cap and gown or a diploma frame. Additionally, the first 150 seniors received a Class of 2026 travel mug as the event provided a meaningful milestone for the class to gather and reflect before graduation.

- Lorraine Fernandez congratulated Dianyeliz Ozuna Sandoval on her first report!

Announcements: The following announcements were made:

- Fabian Morales reminded everyone about SAIL's new SOAR program.
- Justin Wald reminded everyone about the Ad Hoc committee.
- Dianyeliz Ozuna Sandoval reminded everyone that there is 102 days till commencement and reminded everyone about 100 days till commencement next semester!

Adjournment: There being no further business, Justin Wald adjourned the meeting at 6:48 pm.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the approved minutes of the Student Government Association (SGA) general meeting held on February 03, 2026.

Executive Secretary Jacob Constant