

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION AGENDA
January 31, 2023

- I. ROLL CALL: Cade Leavens, Kaitlyn Egan and Loïc Black were absent
- II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM: January 24, 2023 Minutes were approved
- III. PRESIDENT'S REPORT: **Aaron Lessing**
Hi everyone, our guest speakers tonight are Vice President of Administration and Finance Steve Taksar, Director of Dining Services Bill Connor, and Director of Residential Life John Zocco to discuss fees for the upcoming academic year. Please refrain from asking questions specifically related to dining services & res life as I am planning on asking them individually to come down another time. Adam is also doing a food services report so you bring up anything for dining then.
Chloe and I are meeting with President Thompson this Friday, so if you have any questions, comments, or ideas to bring up to her please let one of us know!
Last week, Dan mentioned in his presentation about refugees living on campus, there is a lot to talk about this and I am currently working to schedule VP Forster down to discuss it as there will need to be discussions and planning involved for this to work smoothly. Personally, I am in support of this idea as I believe it will be beneficial in both the short and long term for the university but we will have a further discussion in the near future.
Regarding the email for interviews for positions it should hopefully have gone out or will be going out as soon as possible. Next week's guest speakers will be Associate Dean of Students Shannon Green to update us on changes to the Substance Advisory policy that will be going to the Board of Trustees. Also coming down will be Raven Burrell to discuss Fresh Check Day!
Once again, my office hours are MTWH 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM.
 - A. Vice President of Administration and Finance: **Steve Taksar**
Gave a Presentation
 - B. Director of Dining Services: **Bill Connor**
Gave a Presentation
 - C. Director of Residential Life: **John Zocco**
Gave a Presentation
 - i. Emily Fluet: I don't know who would answer this question but I was just wondering, you talked about there being like a 3.5% increase. If you could kind of give some context to the years past as to whether that is a much bigger or smaller increase than normal.
 - ii. Steve Taksar: There is a slide that shows that if we could turn to it. In 2019 it was 7% and in 2020 it was 0. So it depends on the year and just what's going on how much things are going to change.
 - iii. Levi Ekstrom: I'm curious about the \$1 amount for everything. Like is it one dollar spent but how much money is that 60 cents. Everyone uses the one dollar amount and I'm just curious.
 - iv. Steve Taksar: I don't have those numbers in front of me as I was asked to bring the dollar to cent figures. But what I will tell you is that the overall campus budget is about 100 million dollars and roughly 50 million dollars of that are spent on compensation and benefits, roughly 20 million dollars is spent on the operation of the residence halls, and about 10 million goes into dining and about 12 million dollars to run the CVCE program. But I would have to get back to you for exact numbers or dollar amounts in each category and this is the simplest way of

- presenting the information. I would be happy to send the other information over though.
- v. Bill Connor: Simplifying it down to the dollar gives it a perspective that a lot more people can understand. I'll get a grocery bill from one vendor for \$18,000 which for a lot of folks is an incomprehensible amount of money that you really can't comprehend so breaking it down to the dollar amount makes it more digestible but if you multiply it by 10 it would give you a general idea of our budget. We simplify it to give more transparency about where all the money goes.
 - vi. Aaron Lessing: Regarding the FY24 major projects increases, I know that debt service increase was a huge thing so with talks of having people come and live on campus. I wondered if we considered talking to the state about potentially assisting in other areas such as debt services.
 - vii. Steve Taksar: I'm not directly involved with that but as I understand the conversation is that there will be a kind of per person per rate cost for housing on campus for facilities and those funds can certainly go towards some of those cost increases, I would imagine. But for RES Life it's fairly significant there is a 4-million-dollar loss so until we get some closure as to what the state is willing to do. I don't think that they are going to give us a blank check so I'm not exactly in the know right now but we'll see what comes next in those conversations.
 - viii. Maggie Balch: Hi Everyone. I would agree with Steve. Right now we are not even sure really where we are in the process. Obviously, we would welcome anything that could help us on campus in any way shape or form. I do know that we are also thinking of having some events in the summer which could also help with some of that as well.
 - ix. Bill Connor: We start the consulting process at the end of February and many people in the back are included in that to explore summer conferences and opportunities for us to bring in additional revenue that can be given to the university to reduce the need for some of these operating increases from year to year. We had an initial year last year and were able to show some favorable numbers which helps to grow and develop that program and use the facilities year round to maximize revenue and minimize the cost to students. We will explore that in the month of February and talk about a plan to hopefully grow that to a point where it can contribute back and hopefully contribute to costs.
 - x. Steve Taksar: On the last 5-year projection that we did, at least in RES-life the costs aren't really going away since this is a structural issue rather than a one-year issue so it's not really going to go away so we need to think of a way to think more creatively to either repurpose facilities or come up with other strategies to reduce our costs. Even if we get some support from the state its not really going to solve the longer-term problem.
 - xi. Chris Lannan: Hi. I have two things. The first is for Steve or John. How much debt is Dickinson being off-line causing the university like monthly or by semester. Also can you clarify how much the price of a premium single is going up in a traditional dorm hall.
 - xii. John Zocco: I'll answer the second question first. Basically, the premium single is not going up in terms of a rate. The premium single model is staying the same and there is just going to be that additional 1,000 dollars to the price to buy out the room. So like it was 4,250 for the double per semester and then 5,250 for a premium single. As for your first question, I don't have the exact numbers that you are looking for but debt is still being paid on the building but there are the savings on expenses

- of not having to have people work in the building and also in utilities by not having to run the whole building. That building is actually saving revenue but we still pay debt on it.
- xiii. Steve Taksar: I will tell you that the projected debt service and payment to the MSNCBA for 2024 is 12.4 million dollars. The way this works is that there are two forms of debt with one of them being by building. Years ago they didn't issue debt by build but instead for the collective of all campus so it was not a per building charge and then there are a couple of buildings that they have issued debt specifically for that building. There's a lot more detail behind it and if you are really interested we can meet and I can show you exactly how much debt there is behind it.
- xiv. Daniel Currier: Steve, I just have a quick question on the state appropriation. So it hasn't been set yet as the Governor hasn't released her budget yet but of course question 1 passed in November which would potential give more money for public higher ed. So have they been giving any numbers as to how much the state appropriation could go up as a result.
- xv. Steve Taksar: So you are talking about the Fair Share Amendment? Does everyone know what the fair share amendment is? By law there was voted to create a special tax for those who made a million dollars or more and that tax is supposed to yield 1 to 1.5 billion dollars a year and the focus of the use of that money is support state transportation and public higher education. There is a lot of conversation about it right now. There is a lot of conversation about how much is coming in and how the pot gets divided between transportation and higher education and how much money is given to the UMASSES, all the state schools and community colleges. There is not really a lot of clarity on that right now. My estimation is that we aren't going to see anything for this year and then we will talk about how the money gets separated out in the state budget and you can track it. The Board of Higher Education is also putting forward strategies and recommendations that align to increase in financial aid for students and giving state institutions a little bit of general money to support operations and how that's going to shake out I really have no idea. But you probably won't hear anything about that for at least 6 months as a best guess.
- xvi. Sarah Harrington: Going back to the discussion about the debt being paid for buildings. Is that all active buildings or are we still paying it for things like Dickinson and Parenzo that are off-line.
- xvii. Steve Taksar: We only pay for residence halls so there is nothing for Parenzo but we are still paying for debt whether we use the buildings or not. I believe that we have specific debt on University Hall and New hall so we are responsible for that debt directly but everything else is in proportion to how beds we have on campus as a percent of the total which is called system debt. When they used to group the debt together you might have had 5 campuses participating to borrow money and then if you build something new or have maintenance done they calculate what the percent of the total debt that we have. I can bring back specific numbers but I don't have them now. If you are really interested, I suggest that you come to my office and I can give you more of what you are looking for. But we are paying for debt on most of our residence hall spaces.
- xviii. Aaron Lessing: I'm sure that Dan could get those numbers from vice President Taksar.
- xix. Chris Lannan: I just have something for Bill. I know that you broke down the dollar amount for the food and there were 29 cents of the dollar for food. I was just wondering if there was a budgeting reason why there is more unhealthy options than healthy options in the DC and if that's a budgeting issue like we can't

have healthier options especially vegetarian or vegan options or something like that.

- xx. Bill Connor: I can touch on why food is there but in terms of choices, I just emailed Adam yesterday to set the time for when we will start food committee next week on Wednesdays at 10am. Come and have a conversation about the selection and the percentages of what is offered. One thing to understand is that when you look at this dollar, food is 2.9 million dollars worth of our budget. Almost 3 million dollars of all of our revenue that comes in goes toward the food that goes back out on your plate. What it essentially boils down to is that the students make the choices. This is your program and hopefully Adam and Tim will attest that we make the choices based on what you want and when you provide feedback we provide the solution. Just like the chairs, we brought them down and everybody hated them so we went back to the drawing board and got rid of that choice because you didn't like it. I think when it comes to that regard there is that piece. I will tell you the difference between the University and dining we are an enterprise and provide a service. Our people piece is our most expensive part of the budget which partially goes down to the collective bargaining agreement and raises but also the health care and retirement plans for the University so we spend about another 50 cents on every dollar that I spend for benefits. So if an employee makes \$100,000 a year, I pay another \$50,000 on top of it for benefits because dining has to cover that instead of the state as it would be for the university. People costs are very expensive and wages are driven by the collective bargaining agreement.
- xxi. Chris Lannan: Readdress. So the 29 cents what is that going to in terms of food.
- xxii. Bill Connor: All food spent. So anything that you can consume 29 cents of every dollar goes to that as something you can eat or drink.
- D. Presidents Council: No Report
- E. Items not listed on Agenda: No Report

IV. BOARD OF TRUSTEES' REPORT: *Chloë Sanfaçon*

- A. All University Committee: No Report
- B. Student Advisory Council: No Report

V. VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT-STUDENT LIFE:

- A. Student Affairs Committee: No Report
- B. Food Services Committee: **Adam Carpenter**

Hey Senator Squad,

Welcome to food services but the fun type of food services where you just angrily yell at me about your numerous complaints about food. We will have our first meeting of the semester next Wednesday. Also I'm just going to be taking over this report for the rest of the semester in the absence of a VP of Student life since I already sat on the committee much like how Napoleon took power from the vacuum in revolutionary France. So if you have something to say either good or bad ask me so I can bring it up at our next meeting.

- i. Sarah Harrington: Can you just get a more definite date regarding the Sushi place.
- ii. Adam Carpenter: Yeah, I plan on asking about that.
- iii. Chris Lannan: With Spring and Fall sports starting up, I know athletes have to go to the bistro after the DC closes. So is there anyway the Athlete or maybe the entire campus community can get a meal swipe at the bistro because I know that a lot of people are asking about that.

iv. Adam Carpenter: I will say that we have our helpful program that we started instituting where you can order ahead from 8 to 9 at the bistro without using dining dollars. Or a meal swipe specifically so that's something in the right direction that we are doing but I think that it is going to stay the way that it is.

v. Tim Allen: You can actually order your meal swipe before 8.

vi. Adam Carpenter: Yeah, you can plan ahead a little bit.

- C. Substance Advisory Committee: No Report
- D. Student Athletic Advisory Board: No Report
- E. Veteran Affairs Report: No Report
- F. Enrollment Management Committee: No Report

VI. VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT-ACADEMIC LIFE: **Emily Fluet**

- A. Academic Policies Committee: No Report
- B. Curriculum Committee: No Report
- C. Special Committee on Reforming General Education (SCORE): No Report
- D. New England Council of Higher Education (NECHE) Self-Study Committee: No Report
- E. Parking Control Board: No Report
- F. Parking Appeals Board: No Report

VI. VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT-STUDENT EQUITY: **Rodney Duteau**

- A. Diversity and Inclusion Committee: No Report

VII. VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT-FINANCE: **Daniel Currier**

Daniel gave a presentation

- A. Finance Committee: No Report
- B. Foundation Report: No Report
- C. ITSAC Report: No Report

VIII. VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT - PUBLICITY: **Elizabeth Mercer**

- A. Neighborhood Advisory Board: No Report
- B. Community Relations/Fundraising Report: No Report
- C. Spring Semiformal Committee: No Report
- D. Blue Key Committee: No Report

IX. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORT: **Adam Carpenter**

Wow two reports from me in one meeting. It must be someone's birthday or something. Laura, Aaron and I met today to discuss the Spring SGA elections a little bit. More information will come in the near future but for now a little teaser is that signature papers will be available on March 27th which is a Monday. Finally, the joke for the week. Q: Why did the Banana go to doctor? A: It wasn't peeling well. Ba-dum pst.

X. PARLIAMENTARIAN REPORT: **Liam Connor**

- A. Rules and Regulations Committee: No Report
- B. Constitutional Review Committee: No Report

XI. COMMUTER COUNCIL AND CLASS COUNCIL REPORTS:

- A. Commuter Council: No Report
- B. Senior Class: No Report
- C. Junior Class: No Report
- D. Sophomore Class: No Report
- E. First Year Class: No Report
- F. Apartment Complex: No Report
- G. Courtney Hall: No Report
- H. Davis Hall: No Report

- I. Dickinson Hall: No Report
- J. Lammers Hall: No Report
- K. New Hall: No Report
- L. University Hall: No Report

XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: No Unfinished Business

XIII. NEW BUSINESS: (Requires majority vote to be opened)
No New Business

XIV. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Liam Connor: Can I see everyone on the rules and regs committee after the meeting.

Nick Palumbo: The class of 2025 is having a sports trivia tomorrow night. Whoever wins gets a jersey of their choice. It's in Uni.

Alan Blair: Tomorrow is Westfield Wednesday so wear your swag.

Elizabeth Mercer: Blue key committee and owl ball committee see me after the meeting.

Nick Smith: On behalf of Katie Egan and the class of 2024, thank you if you participated in our luggage drive. We had a great turn out.

Dan Currier: The accounting club will be hosting a letter writing event on Friday to try to get a handwritten letter to every accounting student to try to increase enrollment.

Mikayla Evans: There are 108 days to commencement.

XV. ROLL CALL: Cade Leavens, Kaityln Egan and Loic Black were absent

XVI. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 until Tuesday February 2nd

Please also note that for accurate record keeping purposes, SGA meetings are recorded and kept on file by the SGA Executive Secretary.