

# STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

## AGENDA

Tuesday, January 23, 2024 @ 5:30 pm

Ely 017 (SGA Room)

I. ROLL CALL: Isabella Catao, Justin Wald, Crystal Mills, Patty Sowa, Jakayla Leary, Eri'Yan Baker, and Miles Jordan were absent.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM: December 05, 2023 and December 12, 2023 Both sets of minutes were approved.

III. PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Nicholas Smith

President Nick Smith announced that his office has moved from its previous location to the office space right as you enter the SGA room. His former office has become the office for CAB exec. This is a positive opportunity to develop the student leadership skills of all of the student leaders on campus. Laura Cafaro's office has also moved to be down the CAB hallway. Wem will be electing our Parliamentarian today. The role of Parliamentarian was described detailing the responsibilities of the job such as

A. Westfield State University President: Linda Thompson

President Thompson started with a land acknowledgment to honor the fact that land was taken for Native Americans and looking into grants or some way to ensure that indigenous people would be able to attend Westfield for free. President Thompson discussed that it is the 185<sup>th</sup> year that Westfield state University has been around and that will be celebrated in the coming year. Westfield has been aggressively and intelligently seeking grants. We are working on a few key facilities projects such as an electrical car charging spots on campus. President Thompson discussed that the Vice President of JEDI LaRue Pierce had his last day on Friday and that staff will be temporarily reporting to Student Affairs.

i. Questions:

President Nick Smith thanked Senate and inquired about what plans are for the 185<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Westfield State.

President Thompson is very excited.

Questions arose about the recently vacant position of the Vice President of JEDI. There will be some sort of search committee which will have a student position on this committee.

IV. BOARD OF TRUSTEES' REPORT: Daniel Currier

On December 13th, the Board held it's routine committee and full Board meetings. Just a few highlights from the meeting:

- President Thompson has approved a revised organization chart for the Division of Graduate & Continuing Education. As some of you may recall, the UEAAC Committee (which was formed to address the need for budget reductions following the pandemic) recommended that a separate Graduate & Continuing Education operation be disbanded, with responsibilities sent to other offices. While back office operations will remain in these offices (such as the Registrar and Student Accounts), all academic

functions will now be under a Dean of Graduate & Continuing Education. More details will be announced as the new structure is implemented.

- We voted to award faculty and staff emeritus status to three distinguished former employees of Westfield State University, including Barbara Hand, who served as Advisor to the Student Government Association for over 31 years prior to her retirement in Fall 2021.
- The University will be working with BVK, a leading advertising agency based out of Milwaukee, to conduct a comprehensive branding study and determine how Westfield State can effectively market itself to prospective students, donors, and community members.
- The Board has approved Preferred & Chosen Name Policies for both employees and students, empowering individuals to provide their preferred or chosen name for campus applications. Guidelines on utilizing legal names as required by law are included.
- Finally, the Board discusses at length the need to repair the Ely Pool, which, as many of you know, has been overheating and is not up to code. The Administration recommended a bandaid fix of approximately \$2.5 million to keep the pool operating for 5-7 years. The Board inquired about whether or not a full rebuild, estimated at about \$20 million, would be the best option given rising costs. We will hear more about this during our February Board meeting.

The Investment Subcommittee met on December 15th and voted to update our Investment Policy in line with investment advisor recommendations. In addition, we made a decision, which was ratified by the Board's Executive Committee on December 22nd, to authorize the Administration to transfer \$10-15 million of money market funds to a new bond account with our investment advisors. Given that interest rates are likely to fall this year, the Investment Subcommittee believed that it would be prudent to lock in rates with a bond over a longer period of time.

I am pleased to report that departments are beginning to post on-campus student jobs on Handshake.

A. Common Hour Policy Task Force: Daniel Currier

The Common Hour Policy Task Force met on Monday to discuss feedback received from the Provost and the Student Affairs Committee.

Sarah, Jack & I will be attending a meeting of department and program area chairs on Monday, January 29th to briefly discuss our draft proposal and to acquire feedback. We anticipate that there will be considerable debate regarding the time we have proposed for a general common hour – Tuesdays from 11:15am-12:30pm – given that this is a popular time for faculty to teach their courses.

We will be reaching out to other groups across campus, including the faculty union, to gauge their feedback. In addition, we will be working to develop an IRB-approved survey for the campus community to gauge their thoughts on our proposal.

V. VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT-STUDENT LIFE:

A. Food Services: Jack Guindon

Boba tea has come to Wild Blue. The herb garden was harvested for the first time on 1/19 aka Friday. There will still be a 5% increase due to declining enrollment and less of a budget. They are looking into how to make the DC better furniture wise, as the current stuff is around 30 years old. So that could mean

new tables or chairs, they are working on this currently. The new silverware is out and it is a lot cheaper than the old stuff.

#### B. Student Affairs Committee Meeting: Austin Morgan

The Student Affairs Committee met Friday, January 19th at the common meeting hour time. The meeting opened with discussion on an event to help bridge the gap between faculty, staff, and students. The previous meeting discussed an idea where faculty and staff would tour the residential buildings and learn a little bit about what their students who live on campus experience on a day to day basis.

These tours would be guided by an RA and have a couple students who live in the halls just to show off what they have to offer. The students want to highlight some of the things that the halls have, like the art in University or the computer lab in New, just to name a couple. This idea hopes to make a better connection between the three, down the line there are hopes that some faculty may hold events in common rooms in residential halls for their students. The goal is to have this event in March, preferably the 19th and 20th.

Next Dan Currier came as a guest speaker to the committee meeting and discussed the plan for the new common hour policy that the task force hopes to complete. The committee offered feedback, mainly some faculty concerns with it being a very popular teaching time as well as athletics concerned with it hindering athletes. Overall the committee liked the idea and agreed that this new common hour could give a much needed boost to student engagement across campus. If you have anything that you would like brought up at the next student affairs meeting, which is being held Friday, February 16th, please come see me after the meeting.

#### VI. VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT-ACADEMIC LIFE: Sarah Harrington

Hi everyone! I hope you all had an enjoyable, restful break. I am looking forward to another successful semester with all of you. I am happy to announce that this semester my schedule allows me to sit on SCORE. In deciding the general education reformation, it is extremely important to have student input and voice sitting on the committee. Lucky for you all, there is still another spot open for another student. This semester SCORE is only occurring on Tuesdays 9:45-11. If you are interested please let me know. In our meeting this morning, they asked me to relay any interest in new course ideas for the new GenEd. Is there any topic that you always wished you could take a class on that you think others would too? Is there a professor who you would like to teach this course? The next topic of discussion was on Professor Evaluations. At the end of last semester, I had multiple students approach me saying that they knew of or had seen professors handing out their own evaluations. If you did not know, professors are supposed to have a colleague or the department chair come in their class to pass out and collect the evaluations. Professors should not be passing their own evaluations out, staying in the room while they are being completed, or having access to the scantrons before they have been processed. I would like to formulate a flyer or email to be sent out to professors reminding them of what the evaluation process should look like. The good news is that they are looking into a different process for evaluations, most likely starting Fall of 25. These evaluations would be online through PLATO. At the end of the semester, you would receive an email letting you know that the evals are open and you would go in through your course. There is a committee including 6 faculty and 6 administrators across the 9 sister campuses which is in the process of reforming the evals. They are reconsidering what questions should be asked for the most beneficial reception of information that professors can use to improve. These evaluations don't just go back to the professor at the end of the semester, they are also used when being considered for promotions, position changes, and tenures. This is another reason why they are so important. My next meeting with the Provost is on February 21.

#### A. Academic Policy Committee: Brandon Rita

Hello, everyone! My name is Brandon Rita, I serve as a Student Representative on the Student Government Association. I am an accounting major here at Westfield and I also serve on the Academic Policies Committee (APC).

Due to the heavy snow closing our last meeting I will be merging two reports. The Academic Policies Committee (A.P.C.) on December 15th, 2023, and January 19th, 2024, met in the classroom during the Friday common meeting time of 1:40 – 2:55 PM. Joseph Bonilla, me, and many great staff members of the committee met to discuss five main issues.

The first point on our agendas was to pass the minutes from the 12-1-23 and 12-15-23 meetings, which passed with only a few modifications. Secondly, was to have an update from the subcommittee of the Academic Policies Committee (A.P.C.) on the current academic dishonesty policy and Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) APC discussed how the members were doing and how the work was progressing. The work with the subcommittee has been going well and growing and has reached a point where the subcommittee is now looking for opinions and reviews from the stakeholders. The subcommittee wants to know if the work they've done properly represents those involved and that it is an effective plan for both staff and students.

The third point discussed during the meeting was the Health Science's Transfer Credit Policy. Due to the wrong policy being submitted to APC the committee had to reject it in order to receive the proper policy to review. The fourth point was Social Work's Academic Review Committee Policy. Due to APC worrying this was an internal department policy we gave advice on edits and the wording of the policy and are waiting to see if our committee is the appropriate one to make this decision. Lastly, APC was able to look over the Transfer Credit Policy the Special Committee on Reforming General Education (aka SCORE) has been working on. APC was able to give advice on wording to make it easier to understand and gave advice on parts of the policy we saw future problems may arise from.

All in all, APC had very productive and busy meetings. We will continue to keep you updated on the work APC does and may even have a few questions for you about the work we've done. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to either Joseph @vpequity.sga@westfield.ma.edu or myself @brita5341@westfield.ma.edu or after this report.

## B. University Curriculum Committee: Scott Doan

Good Evening my fellow peers,

I like to start by giving a huge shout out to Liam and Sarah for supporting our sweatshirt fundraiser. Despite our sales not living up to the expectations we had hoped. It was a great learning point for our class council to grow and see what we need to do better in the future. After work shopping for our record long meeting yesterday we were able to unify and come up with strategies towards fundraising and best publicizing the activities we have going on. With all that said, We are now moving our focus to planning other fundraisers. Along with collaborating events with other groups on campus. That's all I got for now. Thanks

## VII. VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT-STUDENT EQUITY: Joseph Bonilla

I wanted to provide an update on the continued efforts with Gender Inclusive Restrooms on our campus and inform you all that the Campus Pride Subcommittee on Gender Inclusive Restrooms met last Tuesday at 2:00 PM to discuss and update the current map available listing available Gender Inclusive Restrooms. As is already known, every residential hall has at least 2 gender inclusive restrooms and so do most of our academic and co-curricular buildings. We have been in communication with Maureen Socha in Facilities and Operations regarding the developments of the Woodward Center's Gender Inclusive Restroom. Additionally, some ideas were circulated on how to update Bates Hall to include a Gender Inclusive Restrooms which will be discussed further during a follow-up meeting of the subcommittee later this week.

## VIII. VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT-FINANCE: Kaolin Westcott:

Just a few reminders/announcements. Finance Committee will be meeting Wednesday January 24th for our first finance proposal of the semester. So next Tuesday we will be having some fun voting. And this Thursday at 3:30 is the Club and involvement fair, which is happening outside of the wild blue on the first floor of Ely. I am look forward to seeing everyone there and if you are able to assist with set up and tear down it would be greatly appreciated.

## IX. VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT-PUBLICITY: Elizabeth Mercer

I hope everyone had a great break.

I am excited to share today, that the SGA is starting our Owl Ball planning committee. The Owl Ball is an SGA tradition where students dress up and go to the Tekoa Country Club in Westfield for dinner, music, and more. If you are interested in this committee where we plan the theme, marketing, and decor, please connect with me after the meeting. I hope this interests you because I'm excited for it.

Also, the Blue Key committee meets this semester. The Blue Key Award is the highest award given to students from the SGA. This award showcases the work a student does on campus outside of the classroom. If you are interested in learning more please see me at the end of the meeting as well.

Switching subjects, thank you CAB and everyone who helped plan and hold the events last week. The CAB team provided a great opportunity for students to meet at the start of the semester with their Winter Wonderland series of events.

Thank you!

## XI. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORT: No Report

## XII. PARLIAMENTARIAN REPORT: No Report

## XIII. COMMUTER COUNCIL AND CLASS COUNCIL REPORTS:

A. Class of 2024: Scott Doan

Good Evening, Everyone,

I am reporting tonight to update you all on 100 Days to Commencement and Senior Week.

Our 100 Days Toast is coming up fast on February 8, 2024. We have had to make a few slight changes to our original plan, otherwise we are on track to put on a great event. The time has shifted to 7:00-9:00pm at Westfield River Brewing Company, and we are now able to provide transportation to and from the brewery, with the buses making a few trips back and forth. We have chosen decorations and are working to gather everything that we need to make the room look picture-ready. Our class council is visiting the brewery this Thursday to take a look at the space so we can better plan our purchases. We are also working on the catering order with dining, and are hoping for a variety of appetizers like mozzarella sticks, chicken fingers, and pigs in a blanket, a veggie platter, and a sheet cake to serve everyone. Myself and President Thompson will be giving toasts and then we will have plenty of time to take photos with friends and Nestor, and enjoy the drinks at the brewery. Additional posts with the updated information will be coming out soon and we will be tabling in the DC tomorrow to share this information and information about senior week. Matt and Laura hosted a Senior Week information session for seniors to listen in or voice their questions and concerns. As a reminder, we have until March 1st to sell at least 150 tickets to host this event, so any help that you can offer to spread the word would be very much appreciated. Flyers will be hung around campus soon as well to get more attention to Senior Week.

B. Class of 2025: Nick Palumbo

Good Evening my fellow peers,

I like to start by giving a huge shout out to Liam and Sarah for supporting our sweatshirt fundraiser. Despite our sales not living up to the expectations we had hoped. It was a great learning point for our class council to grow and see what we need to do better in the future. After work shopping for our record long meeting yesterday we were able to unify and come up with strategies towards fundraising and best publicizing the activities we have going on. With all that said, We are now moving our focus to planning other fundraisers. Along with collaborating events with other groups on campus. That's all I got for now.

XIV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

XV. NEW BUSINESS: (Requires majority vote to be opened)

New Business was opened in order to elect a new Parliamentarian.

There were three candidates that were nominated which were Austin Morgan, Desiree Brown, and Justin Wald.

Each of the candidates provided a speech as to why they thought that they would be able to serve as an effective Parliamentarian for the rest of the academic year.

A paper ballot vote took place and the winner was Justin Wald.

Justin Wald accepted the role of Parliamentarian.

Justin Wald was approved as the Parliamentarian

It was moved to close new Business.

The motion passes.

#### XVI. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Adam Carpenter shared that the structure of the SGA minutes would be shifting from a word for word modality to a summary modality. He shared that a livestream was available should a word for word record be required and that he would be happy to answer any further questions.

Tim Allen announced that there are 115 days until commencement.

XVII. ROLL CALL: Isabella Catao, Justin Wald, Crystal Mills, Patty Sowa, Jakayla Leary, Eri'Yan Baker, and Miles Jordan were absent.

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at \_\_6:38\_\_ until the January 30<sup>th</sup> meeting.

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