

# STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

## AGENDA

Tuesday, February 20, 2024 @ 5:30 pm

Ely 017 (SGA Room)

I. ROLL CALL: Isabella Catao, Gage Glanville, Naomi Brito, Patricia Sowa, Benjamin Burnham, Jakayla Leary, Eri'yan Baker, Abby Glasheen, Haley Kane, Miles Jordan, Austin Morgan, and Daniel Lyons were absent.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM: February 05, 2024 Minutes were approved

III. PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Nicholas Smith

A. Director of Residence Life: Chris Willenbrock

*Chris Willenbrock, Director of Residence Life, gave a presentation*

Chris Piro: I just want to talk a little bit about housing selection. A lot of students have brought up the ideas for LLCs such as a rainbow floor or an LLC for Sober living, Banacos Housing that is similar to honors housing. Courtney becoming a first year dorm is a great idea. I think especially the rainbow floor as a safe space for the LGBTQIA+ community would be appreciated and would do a lot to help with students in those communities feeling safe on campus which they currently don't.

Anderson Dallaire: For the Sensory Friendly LLC do you have any idea on what dorm that would be in.

Chris Willenbrock: I would lean towards something like a Lammers especially like the A tower which is already sort of isolated above the counselling center.

Anderson Dallaire: For the gender inclusivity floor where would that be and would it also include students who are trans and non-binary?

Chris Willenbrock: I would think it would be in university or Lammers.

Joseph Bonilla: One concern I have is the singling out of an entire group if this was public information. I would suggest New hall or University hall for the bathrooms so that there is more than one bathroom in the space given the scope of the Diaspora where it would be hard to fit students into that area. I would think about surveys to get input from those groups.

Gavin Fazio: As a first year, I was wondering about Lammers hall and why it was closed and what has changed to warrant it reopening. Also what would happen with the mailroom?

Chris Willenbrock: The mailroom will likely be moving. Lammers was closed due to a lack of need for beds and it saved money. We reopened in order to allow more housing options. There is also a refresh of Lammers that is happening with new paint and floors and new appliances and furniture. It will also allow for living close to others while having your own room.

Sarah Harrington: What's the plan for Welch? It's been grad housing but it hasn't been used so it would be optimal if there was an ability to select that space during the housing process as the past two years that option has eventually become available.

Jacob Constant: Did we ever get the results from the housing fast pass contest.

Chris Willenbrock: Yes, if John helps maybe we can announce that later in the meeting

Sasha Moro: For Junior and Senior Housing would I as a sophomore be able to live there with my upperclassmen friends.

Chris Willenbrock: Yes.

#### IV. BOARD OF TRUSTEES' REPORT: Daniel Currier

The Board of Trustees met on Thursday, February 8th and held five committee meetings and one full Board meeting. A lot of information was shared and many motions were adopted, but here are just a few highlights from our meeting:

- It was announced that the reconstructed Division of Graduate & Continuing Education will be led by Interim Dean Nora Padykula, who previously served as a faculty member in the Social Work Department. Jessica Tansey will be moving on from her current role in Enrollment Management to become the Assistant Dean of Graduate & Continuing Education. These appointments follow a detailed review conducted by faculty members Dr. Kim Tobin and Dr. Robert Hayes regarding the aftermath of DGCE's separation following the UEAAC process, and the Provost's subsequent recommendation that DCGE have an administrative structure.

- Our branding study with BVK, a national marketing firm, is continuing, though progress has been slow. Our Integrated Marketing & Communications Department continues to work on advertising Westfield State University to various audiences, including online and through billboards, which many of you may have seen in our local area. An additional Spanish-language campaign is underway along with an advertising campaign utilizing PVRTA buses in Holyoke and Springfield.

- The Board had an in-depth discussion regarding academic advising, including faculty advising. It was suggested by Trustee Martin that all first-semester, first-

year students have their First Year Journey instructor assigned as an advisor in order to foster a stronger faculty-student relationship. The Board learned of discrepancies between how various academic departments conduct advising, and it was requested by Trustee Martin that faculty recognize that advising is not just related to degree progress and registration, but also career exploration, resource referrals, and much more.

- The Board approved a new Master of Arts in History degree, which will now be transmitted to the Board of Higher Education for approval.

- An update was provided regarding potential renovations to the Ely Pool. A full renovation would cost between \$24 and \$28 million. An external review, however, found that minor renovations of a few million dollars would result in a twenty-five (25) year extension to its useful life. The Board will receive a recommendation at its next Board meeting.

· The University had a clean Uniform Guidance audit, which explores the University's spending of federal funds. An audit of the Office of Grants & Sponsored Programs is nearing its conclusion, with our internal auditors still meeting with principal investigators for some of the grants awarded.

· Finally, you likely have all seen the video trailer posted to Facebook and Instagram for our celebration marking the University's 185th anniversary. I encourage all of you to join us in celebrating this incredible milestone. To the seniors in the room, you're not off the hook! I hope to see you all again in the fall at the Blue Diamond Ball being held at MGM in Springfield. You can find out what will be taking place at [westfield.ma.edu/185](http://westfield.ma.edu/185).

The Investments Subcommittee met the following day, Friday, February 9th, and reviewed quarterly and calendar year earnings. We have exceeded our benchmarks for the year and continue to outperform expectations due to our large percentage of holdings in the 'Magnificent 7' - a group of tech stocks that have grown exponentially over the past year. We will be looking to move the majority of our equity holdings to a passive investment model, while these seven stocks will continue to be actively managed in order for us to receive the best return possible in this tech-driven economy.

We also heard a report regarding our new fixed income market account, which the Board authorized a minimum of \$20,000,000 to be transferred from lower-performing bank accounts to this new account. Our investments in fixed income assets, particularly bonds, will allow us to 'lock in' historically high interest rates over a longer period of time, allowing the University to maintain its strong financial position.

Finally, I want to note that the Board will likely be meeting in executive session next Tuesday, February 27th, from 3:30pm-5:30pm by Zoom. In accordance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, the Board is authorized to enter executive session when it believes that an open meeting would be detrimental to its position on a particular matter. An agenda will be posted stating the reason for our executive session next week in accordance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. I know that executive sessions bring with them lots of questions, but the matter to be discussed is confidential and I will be unable to answer any questions pertaining to our meeting.

#### A. strategic Planning Committee: Daniel Currier

After three successive full day sessions with SME Strategy Consulting totalling over twenty-one (21) hours of in-depth discussion and insightful exercises, the Strategic Planning Committee has aligned around three central institutional priorities to focus on in the next five years. These institutional priorities include (1) campus culture and collaboration, (2) student value (which is in relation in stronger enrollment and relevant academic programs), and (3) financial stability. While we noted several priorities to focus on, our consultants recommended sticking with three priorities, as focusing on a smaller amount of key priorities should translate to stronger results. Important themes and values for the University will be woven into the fabric of each of these three priorities, including the University's commitment to JEDI principles. The Committee, which is being co-chaired by Dr. Kevin Hearn and Dr. Sabine Klein, met again last Thursday to debrief the three days we spent together and chart a path forward, with the hope that we can have a draft of the Strategic Plan ready for review by campus constituents prior to the end of this semester. Three subcommittees will be formed, each aligning to one of the three institutional priorities we came up with. Over the next several weeks, these subcommittees will be meeting to develop goals and objectives for our respective institutional priorities. One of the concerns raised by the Committee was the

lack of faculty buy-in to the process and that only one faculty member showed up for the three day session held earlier this month. In response, the President has appointed two additional faculty members to the Committee and we aim to have our work done as soon as possible to allow faculty members time to review our draft plan before they leave for the summer. Likewise, student buy-in will also be essential. I have been tasked with providing this body with pertinent updates and information regarding the new Strategic Plan, and SGA will be expected to develop a strategy for communicating information to students, including, but not limited to, what a strategic plan is, why it is important, and more. I will be connecting with our Executive Board to formulate our plan moving forward, but this will require all of us. Unless all community members, including our students, believe and buy in to this plan, then we might return for Homecoming in 2029 and see little in the way of progress. Communication with students, whether on social media, via email, or through individual conversations, will be essential, and I ask you to join me in this effort. Please stay tuned for further updates and information, and I will be reaching out to you all soon regarding a communications strategy.

#### B. Common Hour Policy Taskforce: Jack Guindon

Last week Common Meeting hour taskforce met at 12:30 on Wednesday. We discussed the Policy and the Letter we plan to submit with Matt Dellea, and he gave some feedback. After that we discussed questions for our IRB survey. And the ones submitted on our shared doc for this. Additional questions will be added this week and discussed during our next meeting. Lastly, we discussed input from the rest of campus and different groups we might not have talked to yet. I was put in charge of coming up with questions to ask club leaders and a focus group for them. As well as seeing if anyone on SGA wants to be in a focus group so we can gather feedback from some senators before we do a full presentation to the full senate. If you are interested in this please let me know after the meeting and I can find a time that works for everyone.

#### V. VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT-STUDENT LIFE: Jack Guindon

Good evening SGA, hope everyone had a great snow day last week, I know I did.

I was going to do two separate reports besides the common hour; however, Student Affairs committee and Food services did not have a lot to report on. We mostly discussed two things one is our idea (more on this in March). However, I do have a few points from this one we discussed how to get build engagement. We also discussed how to use emails and social media to build engagement and make the whole campus aware of this event. Our tours of the res halls for faculty and students will be March 19th and 20th. Times announced soon, Residential life has been working to find rooms to use during this tour, shoutout Sam.

Right after that meeting I had food services, it was a short meeting as there wasn't a ton to talk about. Silverware is being washed differently, that should help with the problem of dirty silverware that a lot of students came up to me about. However, with the cheap metal used on the silverware water spots will remain, however those aren't anything that affects the cleanness of the forks and knives. Some food updates coming to owl café soon are yogurt parfait, and fruit cups. Also it seems each week light night will have it's own special. This week special is Jumbo Pretzels, other specials coming up are Calzones and baked potatoes. Also the last thing I have is due to shortages strawberries won't be in the dc for a while due to cost.

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

### A. The Special Committee on Reforming General Education: Sarah Harrington

Hi everyone! Dr. Megan Kennedy and I met on Wednesday, February 7 to discuss SCORE updates and what is in our future. I wanted to meet with her in order to give you all a more in-depth update than I would have been able to provide based on the couple of meetings I've sat in this semester. There are three main areas that we discussed, the first being courses. They are currently prioritizing First Year courses. They continue conversing with various professors about courses they may be interested in teaching. My biggest takeaway regarding courses is there is no need to panic or worry about whether or not all of the courses will get into governance in time. Some governance committees have extended meetings or are looking into doing so as well as batching proposals together to get more passed at once. A lot of the courses that are occurring already exist. It is mostly just name changes, they will have the same course number to look up in the system. These go through smoothly in governance. They are open to new course ideas so please reach out to the GenEdReform email or me if you have any ideas! The Taylor Swift course will be occurring because there was so much interest. Behind me is a list of the courses that have either been passed in governance or they are looking to develop. (Scroll through) The second area we focused on is policies. APC passed a transfers in transition policy that will help transfer students, transfer credits more easily and set up a plan moving forward. There will also be a continuation of the substitute policy in the new GenEd that allows professors to have another fill-in for their class. The third area we discussed was outreach. SCORE has met with Student Affairs, Advising, and Dr. Kevin Hearn to see their opinions and ideas. They are looking into adding support during orientation. In our last meeting, the idea was brought up to have their own section during orientation, we will be looking more into it. They are also planning on building a student focus group to collect data and build off of said data. We also discussed having sessions for demos on accepted student's day. This could be something like a look into first-year journey or an introduction to GenEd. Overall, it is super exciting to see SCORE underway and all of the major steps that are being taken. It is disappointing that I will not get to experience this reform but comforting to know that incoming students will have the ability to take enticing courses. There has been major support from all areas of campus such as the Provost, President, and many in governance. If you have any more questions regarding SCORE feel free to ask or shoot me an email to [vpacademiclife.sga@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:vpacademiclife.sga@westfield.ma.edu) Thank you!

### B. Advisory Committee on Academic Planning: Joseph Bonilla

APC met the other day. The subcommittee on AI in the classroom was discussed. It seems like IRB process will not be required. This is because giving results to SGA is not considered "disseminating results" apparently. We tabled the review of the 2024-2025 academic calendar's finalization. We only got through the Fall semester. The first day of the semester will be a day of celebration of some sort for opening day. We voted in favor of minimizing exam periods to have students receiving results within 48 hours. We need to move a couple things around to hit the required amounts of Mondays and Thursdays in the academic calendar to follow federal guidelines.

Dan Currier: Do you anticipate the policy being ready for next year?

Joseph Bonilla: The hope is that it is done by the end of the semester. The committee is looking into what the best option is to continue forward.

Chris Piro: Is the day of service and day of dialogue coming back?

Daniel Currier: That should be on the academic calendar.

C. University Curriculum Committee: Scott Doan

Good afternoon everyone, UCC met last week to review and revise courses in Chemistry, Geology, Physics and Biology. With courses in Chemistry, courses 103, 109 and 315 were all having changing to course descriptions, except with 315 having a change to its prerequisites. With courses in Geology, courses 101 and 102 both had description changes, course 109 to be changed to course 111, courses 125 to have a title change and 205 introduced as a new course. With courses in physics, course 101 and 115 saw either title changes or course description changes. Finally Human biology in course 104 was considered for revision and then tabled.

Hyacinth Osei: What are the changes to CHEM 315?

Scott Doan: 315 was a biochem and it was just a prerequisite change.

Hyacinth Osei: Do you know what the prerequisite was?

Desiree Brown: For Biochem the prerequisite is organic chem 1, so I'm guessing that they changed that.

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

VIII. VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT-FINANCE:

A. Finance Committee Report: James McDonald

Finance committee met last Wednesday the 7th with the Anime club to review their proposal.

Our allocation pool is currently contains \$16,388.15.

Proposal S24-004

Today's proposal is from Anime Club. The club is requesting \$78.95 for an on-campus event being held by the club. The funds would be used towards the cost of on-campus catering. The request is within limits of the finance bylaws. The Finance Committee decided unanimously to accept the proposal as is.

I motion to accept the Anime Club proposal of \$78.95 for the purchase of on-campus catering.  
**Motion passes.**

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

Over the weekend, the Owl Ball committee met and we discussed theme, decorations, marketing ideas such as raffles and suggestion boxes on Instagram, picked out the glasses and designs for giveaway gifts, and have drafted a few flyers ideas. We are excited for how it will turn out. Thank you everyone on the committee for your ideas and I look forward to meeting again to discuss food, and advertising. Owl Ball will be on April 5th and further information regarding prices will be shared when it's solidified.

X. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORT: Adam Carpenter

## XI. PARLIAMENTARIAN REPORT: Justin Wald

Good evening everyone, two Fridays ago the Rules and Regulations Committee met and in a unanimous decision, they voted to deny Turning Point from becoming a Student Recognized Organization. I want to extend my gratitude to Laura and Ryan for their unwavering support as it was of great help and importance in the past few weeks. Furthermore, I wish to commend the hard work and determination of the Executive Board, whose backing was paramount in ensuring this was a student made decision that followed the process laid out in the Constitution.

In giving thanks, I cannot forget to extend thanks to the Turning Point group for adhering to the process and trusting the committee to follow it and do what is right. Yet, we cannot overlook the action taken by students, affinity groups, and faculty who allowed us to navigate our constitutional steps.

The fact that we can have these conversations goes to show the perseverance as a governing body and as a university community. Our generation is amenable to the conversations and we are willing embrace strenuous conversations and undertake challenging decisions. Our commitment to constructive discourse underscores our collective determination to progress. I just wanted to provide this update and thank everyone across the board for allowing us to do what we were elected to do.

Didi Ozuna: If Turning Point isn't a club, I would like to know why they are still allowed to have meetings in the SGA club room?

Laura Cafaro: Anyone can meet in that room but if a club needs to meet in that room the club will take precedence over non-club spaces.

Didi Ozuna: I also wanted to point out that even though they were denied they still have an Instagram account which claims to be the official chapter of Westfield State Turning Point USA.

Laura Cafaro: They kind of misspoke on that because they hadn't even started the process at that point. Unfortunately we can't really control what an external organization does but I am happy to reach out to them saying that they need to edit or delete it fully. They know that they aren't allowed to do that now.

Isabella Moniz: I would just like to clarify what Didi said, it's not a post it's their actual Instagram handle and page that says that. The bio and the username.

Guest question (Unable to discern name from audio): We were in the process of starting the yearbook up again and we were told by someone on SGA that we weren't allowed to make the account. But we had gotten approval from Laura. So I find it disturbing that we were told, and the majority of the people on the yearbook club are minorities. I find it disturbing that we were told that we aren't allowed to make our account but yet there is an account for a conservative group known to do things that the school says that they don't support.

Nick Smith: First and foremost I'm sorry that happened to you. I apologize on behalf of SGA. I wasn't made aware of that. I want to apologize and commemorate all your work because it is super exciting to have a yearbook back.

Laura Cafaro: I wasn't aware that happened to you either where you were told pump the breaks on that page. I actually just spoke to the University Photographer about getting Senior photos and things like that. I'll be emailing everyone on yearbook and we are trying to get you a camera right now.

Troy Thomas: I am the President of Faces which is a group which has historically met in the club room at the time that turning point has been meeting in there. We are looking to see if it could be made work to see if we as an SGA recognized club would be able to get our reservation of that room back?

Laura Cafaro: We will get to working on that.

Elizabeth Mercer: I want to thank you guys so much for coming out. This whole thing has been very stressful so my apologies for any stress this has caused. I know that this was more stressful for minorities and people of color so I want to reach out and thank you for coming because your presence means a lot

## XII. COMMUTER COUNCIL AND CLASS COUNCIL REPORTS:

Commuter Council: Fabian Morales

The Commuter Council met on February 7th at 3:30pm via zoom. All members were present, and we began finalizing our ideas surrounding our first event of the semester. The date chosen is March 6th from 11 am-2p pm. The event will be called "Commuter snacks and crafts" and take place in the Commuter Corner. This event will be bracelet and keychain making. String, beads and supplies will be provided. We will also have food, whoopie pies, cookies, iced coffee, and yogurt parfaits. We are currently working on getting our supplies, catering, and preparing an email and flyers to market this event. We are extremely excited and looking forward to it.

## XIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

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

## XV. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Sarah Harrington: Advising for Registration has started. It is currently Honors and Banacos Students.

Chris Willenbrock: The winners of priority housing are Katelyn Beddia, Allena Sullivan, Jillian Maloney.

Kaitlyn Egan: There are 87 days until commencement

XVI. ROLL CALL: Isabella Catao, Gage Glanville, Naomi Brito, Patricia Sowa, Benjamin Burnham, Jakayla Leary, Eri'yan Baker, Abby Glasheen, Haley Kane, Miles Jordan, Austin Morgan, and Daniel Lyons were absent.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 6:39pm until our next meeting on Tuesday February 27<sup>th</sup>.

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