**STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION MINUTES**

**November 27, 2018**

I. ROLL CALL: Orialys Delgado was absent.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM November 13, 2018: Minutes were approved.

III. PUBLIC REMARKS: No Remarks

1. PRESIDENT'S REPORT: **Marcus DiBacco**
   1. I hope you all enjoyed your Thanksgiving Break and are looking forward to the next few weeks. I just wanted to take a momoment and congradulate all the members of *O Beautiful* shown two weeks ago. It was an incredible performance, as always, and I enjoyed it immensely.
   2. I am pleased to introduce Vice President of Administration and Finance Steve Taksar. Vice President Taksar has come tonight to discuss the budget of Westfield State. Additionally, Josh Hettrick and Andrew Mankus have also chosen to join us this evening. We are particularly grateful that they found the time to speak with us about their budgets. Before I invite them up to speak, I just wanted to note that almost everything done at the University is budget driven and the significant attention and questions should concern not only the budget but finances as a whole. Please welcome our guests for this evening.
2. **Vice President Taksar**: see attached presentation.
3. **Andrew Mankus**: I want to discuss the current financial state within Dining Services and what FY20 looks like and what is driving that budget. This year, we had a successful meal plan implementation of the unlimited plan and on the go plans. They resulted in an on target participation rate of 63.5%. Two thousand eight hundred twenty three students are on meal plans. However, due to a decline in enrollment, as well as a deficit within housing, we are actually seeing a decrease in dining service’s overall revenue. With that decline in revenue, dining services still has operational costs and financial commitments. Items like debt services, the expansion of Tim and Jeanne’s Dinning Commons, we carry debt services on that and any internally funded projects that we are working on. And other union negotiated contracts other than labor, including clothing allowances, equipment leases, licensing contracts, all things that we are locked into regardless of dining participation rates. Consultant services, as well as university commitments such as dining scholarships, and other University returns.
4. In addition to the fixed cost, we also have to manage non-fixed operational costs, such as food, labor, and equipment repairs. About 75% of our budget is spent in just food and labor costs.
5. To try to offset some of these costs, we look at ways at increasing non-fee revenue; we look at external catering businesses, summer conferences, weddings, single day conferences. We do this by building relationships within the community and building relationships with you all now, as well as through Alumni Relations. We also look into grant writing and funding. We received a grant in the amount of $250,000 a couple years ago, and partnered with Smith College this year who received the $250,000 grant this year, so we are getting indirect benefits from that as well. We will continue with this in the future.
6. We also look at ways to combat some of the non-fixed operational costs. We continuously monitor the fluctuation in the pricing of market goods we read market trends and market forecasts. We have to be proactive, so sometimes when you see things on the menu it is because of some of these factors. We also look at extending the seasonality of some of the local products. If we can get products locally, and we get them cheap, we look at flash freezing them and spreading them out throughout the year. We also look at increase spending in technology to make things more efficient.
7. We look at meal plan access, with extended hours in the DC and late night grab and go options. We are still trying to do all this to fit your needs. We also continue to employ 60 Westfield State students, and will do so in the future as well.
8. In terms of FY20, the budget is trending in the same direction. We are seeing a decline in revenue, with a continued increase in expenses. We are expecting a decrease in overall projected budget and revenue, due to a projected housing occupancy decrease. With this decrease we expect a decrease of about 100 meal plans.
9. We are also seeing a continued inflationary increase of operational costs, in food and equipment. We also have an increase in contractual obligations. We have contracts set in place, those fees go up. And another large factor is payroll infringe, we have union and contracted workers. The salaries of union employees are negotiated yearly, with an increase ranging in about 2%-3% each year. And the minimum wage goes up.
10. With all of this being said, we want to continue to offer University Scholarships, employing students, as well as enhance the dining program for all of you. We also want to stay true to our mission of local and sustainable initiatives.
11. **Josh Hettrick**: Gave a presentation about the Residential Life Budget and housing.
    1. **Sam Tsongalis:** You mentioned a fee increase of 2.75%-3.75% would that be for the FY20 year?
    2. **Stephen Taksar:** Correct.
    3. **Sam Tsongalis:** Is there a reason that we saw a surplus, and what exactly happened to this surplus?
    4. **Vice President Taksar**: We ended last year with a surplus. Surpluses go directly to a savings account, but we really cannot rely on them to cover our costs. We can use them on a temporary basis to dig ourselves out of any holes, like Res Life will be doing next year. But it is never a good long term strategy. The more you empty your reserves, the smaller the savings account becomes. Using surplus money is a bridge strategy to get you out of a tough time, but it goes away once you start spending it.
    5. **Thalita Neves:** Can you please mention how the priorities are established at the beginning of every year? Do those priorities change year to year, are they the same? And, can you give some examples of priorities that we have right now?
    6. **Vice President Taksar:** Processes change every year, so we establish the budget priorities with the board and with campus leadership to say these are the most important things that we need to be focusing on. For example, last year, we invested a lot into campus Wifi, in the residence halls specifically. We spent $8 to $9 thousand last year, and we are planning another round this year. Those priorities are established at the beginning of the budget cycle, and departments then have an opportunity to seek funding based on those priorities. Then campus leadership decides what we can and cannot do. What’s changing going into FY20 is that the strategic plan is the priority. The student experience, culture and resources are going to be the priorities for the planning process for the next few years. A lot of the details are being worked on now in terms of what that means. We need to improve the quality of education, we need to improve the on campus experience, we need to invest in enrollment recruiting strategies, we need to add more dollars to financial aid, and we need to invest in student technology. All of these things are being worked on and integrated now so that we have a plan moving forward and can make good investments along the way.
    7. **Maddy Scott**: When is Lansdowne’s lease ending? And how will that help your budget going forward?
    8. **Josh Hettrick**: Lansdowne’s lease with the University ends at the end of the 2021 academic year. Once that building goes away, we have some work to do in terms of talking to the students that have been living there to have them come back to the main campus. We don’t expect that all of those students will come back to campus, but we will be working on bringing as many back as possible and that will certainly help the Residential Life budget. Lansdowne is also its own entity that has to pay for itself, both budgets are suffering a bit, so once that goes away it will definitely help.
    9. **Cam Swan**: Point of information: Fees are voted on at the February board meeting, so there will be a clearer picture of what the fees are actually going to look like closer to then. So, questions about fee increases probably cannot be answered right now, because it is kind of an ambiguous picture.
    10. **Peter Lucey**: Whose salaries are being increased?
    11. **Vice President Taksar**: Most faculty on campus are on union contracts and increases generally range from 1-2%, and that would apply to almost every fulltime faculty on campus.
    12. **Peter Lucey**: Does this mean that the University is going begin to comply with union demands?
    13. **Vice President Taksar**: I don’t know the answer to that question; that is at the state right now. Once it’s resolved we will do what is necessary to fulfill our end of the contract.
    14. **Jake O’Kane**: Has Res Life thought of putting out premium singles in the apartment or suite style living? Could that increase revenue?
    15. **Josh Hettrick**: We have discussed that. However, that is the most popular housing on campus, so every bed that we take out is one more student unhappy about housing. Also, those rooms are already more expensive, so taking off a bed and only receiving $1,000 for it would be a big loss for the University overall, which is why we have done it in traditional halls where it is not as much of a financial dip.
    16. **Scotty Howe**: There was no specific day for each of the classes to pick housing this year. Why did we take seniority out of it?
    17. **Josh Hettrick**: We did not take seniority out of it, the selection times were still ordered by class year. We removed the restriction of students having an underclassman that impacted their selection time. Allowing them to live with whoever they want. There were 300 apartments selected with full or nearly full roommate groups. Within that 300 apartments there were 46 different combinations of class years. A group of all seniors or all juniors happened less than 2% of the time in the process. We found that students want to live with whoever they want to and that’s why it felt like there was no seniority.
    18. **Scotty Howe**: How did the system going down impact seniority?
    19. **Josh Hettrick**: We had the two selection days on the 13 and 15. When the system crashed, due to our software provider, I delayed all of the times. It took nearly an hour and a half for them to get everything back up and running, because unfortunately the server is not on campus, it is out in Denver so we had to wait for them to resolve the issue. As soon as we knew the problem, we froze everything. As soon as we knew what time the system would be back up I pushed back everyone’s times, holding the seniority the entire time. We maintained the order the whole time because that is something that has always been important to students.
    20. **Joey Joyal**: There is a tremendous amount of open spots in the traditional halls. Is all of that space going to be filled by the incoming first years?
    21. **Josh Hettrick:** All of it. It looks like there's a lot more open spots than there are because of the premium singles in Dickinson and Scanlon. So, it's a very big difference from when we convert a lot of the rooms down. What looks like a huge number of spaces has been drawn back significantly in making some of those changes. We do plan on filling the spaces with what we are anticipating as the number of first year and transfer students that we want to come into housing for next year.
    22. **Lucas Spearing**: How much money is coming from a state for the update of Parenzo Hall? How much is coming from the University? How will that impact the University's debt?
    23. **Vice President Taksar**: It is a debt free project. The state is paying 20 million dollars, and we are taking 20 million dollars from our savings of surpluses over the years. This is an all-cash project. There will be no additional direct costs caused by the project. It is all cash and will be managed by the state.
    24. **Matthew Michalik**: Do you have any ideas to better the communication between the students and Res Life to make information clearer.
    25. **Josh Hettrick**: We email out and deliver the information to student’s rooms. Also, the housing that is available to students now will change throughout the remainder of the school year and through the summer, so students that did not get the housing that they want should be taken care of.
    26. **Sam Tsongalis**: Due to the crash in myHousing, have you considered having more than one day of selection times?
    27. **Josh Hettrick**: That would actually make the system crash even more likely because, there were three other schools working with that provider during their housing at the time of the crash, but when we've done it in the spring there's dozens of schools, so this should not have happened. The system is following up to make sure this doesn't happen again.
    28. **Sam Tsongalis**: We receive our selection time one business day in advance, have you ever considered giving a week in advance instead?
    29. **Josh Hettrick**: We have always done it that way in the past—the one business day in advance. Part of the reason is that because as students filter out of the process after selecting housing, we only have one day to turn that information around and compress all the selection times for the following night. If we do it too far in advance, we would have to spread out the selection days even farther. This would drag out the process, making it more complicated for students to get it done in a reasonable amount of time. Since we moved to an online process, we have been upfront about selection days, however the selection times always come out one business day before.
    30. **Courtney Smith**: I'm seeing that a lot of people are interested in living in University Hall. Have you considered renovations of other halls in maybe FY21 orFY22? This may also help to fix issues with enrollment as well.
    31. **Josh Hettrick**: There have been conversations about transitioning other Halls there would be ability to provide updates and renovate them like we have in Davis and Dickinson. The problem with the Residence Halls is that we cannot do a cash funded renovation, unfortunately. We would have to take on more debt in order to do that, which would increase the amount of money that you all would have to pay to live here, something that for a lot of students would be concerning. The problem with doing any future renovation project is that adding to that debt is going to cause continued problems with the budget that we are already looking at.
    32. **Vice President Taksar**: Over the last eight months, we have undergone a strategic initiative to identify locations on campus, and the Residence Halls. There was a survey put out a few months ago, and we are looking at ways we can do that. However, Josh is right. Until we can stabilize the debt in Residential Life, and know where we stand, and get the refinancing done, and get the occupancy rate stabilized, I think we have a pretty good chance of doing it for another major project, not next year but in a few years, once we have the capacity to do it. It doesn't make any sense to take on additional debt when you can't keep up with your current bills.
    33. **Daniel Armany**: Is there some kind of alert system to let students to know if rooms open up?
    34. **Josh Hettrick**: We don't have the ability to do that through our system, and that would be too many emails to send out, because students move themselves around so often. It updates on a daily basis and will continue to send out information on it, but probably only about once a week. Once we get into April and that room swap process ends, we are going to go to the waiting list, as well as into a summer months when we learned that students are not returning.
    35. **Dave Youngerman**: This is the first year that RAs had to choose housing. Many of us banded together into one apartment; if we all got our jobs back next year that would open up a whole apartment, would those apartments go through the seniority process? RAs take up 5 to 10% of the total housing so I was wondering if next year you are thinking of something that will alleviate this from the process.
    36. **Josh Hettrick**: I would love to look at that personally, because you are right. There are a bunch of RAs that are on staff right now that I expect to be back next year that are in apartment style housing and are going to come out when they get rehired. Whether or not we should offer the first groups of students that didn’t get the apartment in the first round the option first, and go down the list that way. That is certainly is something we’ll look into.
    37. **Marcus DiBacco**: When we looked at the FY19 budget, I noticed that we had $120.5 million and the expenses for 2019 is $121.8 million. What is being done about the extra $700,000?
    38. **Vice President Taksar**: When we have capital projects that end up not getting completed in the year that was budgeted we carry that over to the next year and we use the funding that was set aside to add to the budget for next year. It looks like we are overspending our budget, and in the operating budget we are, but we’ve transferred capital dollars to fund projects that were going to be completed in the prior year. That’s what the gap is between the expenses.
    39. **Melanie Voss**: I would suggest that you do not continue the separate days for filling an apartment and not filling one.
    40. **Josh Hettrick**: The Residence Halls always fill up very fast. Our apartment and suite style housing could fit all of our senior, junior, and half of our sophomore class. The concern with having students partially fill suites on the first round, which we did the first year that we allowed incoming first year students to select housing, students spread out so that matched roommate groups could not get housing, and people do not get to live with the people they want to. So, we would be having the same problem students are coming to with us now, but even worse. I take your point, and we should look into it to see if there is a better way of doing this. Juniors and Seniors that were not placed into a suite or apartment do not have to worry about living in a traditional hall, things will open up, it happens every year.
    41. **Joey Joyal**: Of the students that have not decided about housing yet because they are trying to decide if they are living on or off campus, how many of those students do you expect to come back to campus?
    42. **Josh Hettrick**: We don’t know the exact number, because we have never done it this way before. The senior number from last year reflects 111 students and our senior number right now is 42. We expect the number is somewhere in the middle of these numbers. A lot of students that have already selected housing will leave for whatever reason, and their spots will open up. It just takes time for those students to filter out so that we can add the other students interested in it.
    43. **Sam Tsongalis**: Are the students in the random/later selection time’s group, students that were placed randomly, even though they did not select housing?
    44. **Josh Hettrick**: Yes, unless students filled out the housing cancellation fee, they were placed.
    45. I accept the resignation of Chris DiCarlo as a Representative-at-Large to the SGA.
    46. I am excited to announce that next Monday, December 3, Exec will be holding its own Town Hall meeting in this room from 6:00pm – 7:00pm. This forum is open to all students, they do not need to be on SGA to attend. We hope to see many people at this meeting and point out that this provides a chance for casual conversation between SGA members, Exec, and the general public. As we know, there are many issues that students face on campus. It is our hope that this forum offers everyone an opportunity to speak freely and cultivate a developed understanding. I have spoken to Courtney about this and she is allowing it to count towards an office hour. Oh and I would be remiss if I did not note that we will be having Hot Chocolate and Munchkins during the Town Hall. Once again it is from 6:00pm until 7:00pm on Monday, December 3, right here in SGA.
    47. Today I am passing around the contact sheet so that you can all have ample time to fill it out before Courtney Smith collects it following her report. Please do not leave until you have filled it out and make sure you include your A number.
    48. Items not listed on the agenda.
12. BOARD OF TRUSTEES' REPORT: **Cameron Swan**
    1. All University Committee: **No Report**

B. NEASC Steering Committee: **No Report**

C. Strategic Planning Committee: **No Report**

D. Student Advisory Council: **No Report**

1. VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT-STUDENT LIFE:
   1. Student Affairs Committee: **No Report**
   2. Diversity/Inclusion Committee: **Mitchel McKittrick**
2. The Diversity/Inclusion Committee will be hosting an event in conjunction with the Diversity and Inclusion Department for AIDS Awareness Week in December. We will be having an educational discussion about HIV and AIDS; following the discussion we will be watching Rent. The discussion and film showing takes place next Tuesday, December 4 at 6:30pm in Dower 127.
3. This showing of PBS’ Documentary about Indian Boarding Schools has been moved to Thursday, November 29 at 8:15 pm in University Hall Multipurpose room.
4. Our next scheduled meeting is November 28 in the E003 conference room.
   1. Food Services Committee: **Elizabeth Ferrara**
5. Food committee met today and we talked about grab and go breakfast. You may have noticed that breakfast sandwiches come on bagels now, but you can still get an English muffin instead, all you have to do is ask for one. You can get a gluten free breakfast sandwich, the worker will go into the DC and grab you some gluten free bread, but they are working on keeping some bread in there.
6. Once the pumpkin soft serve is gone, they will be switching back to Chocolate and they are also looking into cereal changes.
7. Speaking of cereal, tonight, right now there is cereal wars going on in the DC, go taste test and vote on your favorite cereal and enjoy some homemade cereal milk. Next week there is a gingerbread people decorating event, enjoy gingerbread cookies and holiday movies.
8. Just a heads up, this Saturday is breakfast with Santa, so be aware of the fact that there will be a lot of outside patrons in the DC From around 8:00 am until 12:30pm.
9. Also, the finals week hours of operation will be posted next week. Keep an eye out for a dining services survey, please take the survey it only takes a couple minutes, there are questions regarding the meal plans. Dining services wants your feedback, and this is a great way to get your input into them.
10. Our next scheduled meeting is December 4 at 4:00pm in the Tekoa Room. 
    1. Parking Control Board: **No Report**
    2. Student Athletic Advisory Board: **No Report**
    3. Substance Advisory Committee: **No Report**
    4. Veteran’s Affairs Report: **No Report**
11. VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT-ACADEMIC LIFE: **Madeleine Scott**
    1. Academic Policies Committee: **No Report**
    2. Curriculum Committee: **No Report**
    3. Enrollment Management Committee: **No Report**
    4. International Programs Committee: **No Report**
    5. Academic Technology and Information Services Committee: **No Report**
    6. Writing Liaison Committee: **No Report**
    7. Guest Lecture Committee: **No Report**
12. VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT-FINANCE: **Thalita Neves**
    1. Finance Committee: **No Report**
    2. Foundation Report: **No Report**
    3. Student Organization Council: **No Report**
13. VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT-PROGRAMMING: **Matthew Howe**
14. There are a few events to key you in on.
15. This Thursday, November 29 will be the Gingerbread House Competition in the Owl’s Nest, starting at 8:00pm. You are able to bring outside decorations to AMP up your house. You can will up to $80.00 in Owl Bucks.
16. **Saraiz O’Farrill**: Point of Information: There is also Hot Chocolate and all the fixings at the Gingerbread Event.
17. On Friday, November 30, again in the Owl’s Nest, there is Black Light Zumba starting at 8:00pm. It’s free of charge so definitely check it out.
18. On Saturday at 8:00pm in the Owl’s Nest it is a S’mores Night. Stop by the Owl’s Nest to make your own late night treat.
19. Our next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, November 28 at 5:00pm in the SGA office.
20. Campus Activities Board: **No Report**
21. Neighborhood Advisory Board: **No Report**
22. Community Relations/Fundraising Report**: Annamarie Jackson**
23. Last week we were able to purchase 164 turkeys for the local families in need. Thanks so much to everyone that participated in collecting donations. I am sure the receiving families where very appreciative on Thanksgiving for your help.
24. Tomorrow November 28 from 1:00 pm until 7:00 pm in the Parenzo Gym is the Blood Drive. I could really use some volunteers to sit at the sign in desk and snack tables, preferably four people per hour. There is a sign-up sheet that has been going around, so if you can please sign up. Remember this can also be used in exchange for your office hours.
25. SECRETARY'S REPORT: **Elizabeth Ferrara/Courtney Smith**
    1. Executive Secretary Report: **No Report**
    2. Legislative Secretary Report: **Courtney Smith**
26. I would like to remind you all that I am allowing those who did not complete their office hour for the week of November 12 due to the snow day to do so this week, please just indicate that you are doing so on the sign-in sheet. A great way to get one of these hours completed, or to complete your hour for this week is by volunteering to help at the Blood Drive tomorrow which runs from 1:00 pm until 7:00 pm in the Parenzo Gym. It is extremely important that we all are engaging in SGA run events as we need 100% participation to make these events a success.
27. PARLIAMENTARIAN REPORT: **Jacob O’Kane**
28. Rules and Regulations Committee: **No Report**
29. Constitutional Review Committee: **No Report**
30. ADVISORY COMMITTEES:
    1. Advisory Committee on Facilities Planning: **No Report**
    2. Advisory Committee on Academic Planning: **No Report**
    3. Advisory Committee on the CURCA**: No Report**
    4. Advisory Committee on Budget Planning: **No Report**
    5. Advisory Committee for Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Affirmative Action: **No Report**
31. COMMUTER COUNCIL, CLASS AND HALL REPORTS:
32. Commuter Council: **No Report**
33. Senior Class: **Shane Stocker**
34. The 2019 Class council is raffling off a pair of tickets to the Boston Celtics vs Indiana Paces on Wednesday, January 9 at 7:00pm at the TD Garden in Boston. The seats are 3 rows away from court side and allof the proceeds are going to the Make A Wish Foundation. By the end of the semester, the 2019 class council plans to have raised enough money to grant a wish. The ticket raffle should really help, so we appreciate any support. Raffle tickets are one for $2.00, three for $5.00, seven for $10.00 and 15 for $20.00. Tickets are on sale outside the Book Store in Ely tonight until 8:00pm, tomorrow from 3:00pm until 8:00pm and Thursday from 8:00am until 6:00pm, also in Ely outside the Book store.
35. Junior Class**: No Report**
36. Sophomore Class: **No Report**
37. First Year Class: **No Report**
38. Apartment Complex: **No Report**
39. Courtney Hall: **No Report**
40. Davis Hall: **Hunter Hassett**
41. This Thursday, November 29 Davis Hall will be hosting a movie night premiering *Click* from 7:00pm until 9:00pm in the lounge.
42. Dickinson Hall: **No Report**
43. Lammers Hall**: No Report**
44. Lansdowne Place: **No Report**
45. New Hall**: No Report**
46. Scanlon Hall: **No Report**
47. University Hall: **No Report**

1. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
2. NEW BUSINESS: (requires majority vote to be opened)

1. ANNOUNCEMENTS:
   1. **Jake O’Kane**: Rules and Regs after the meeting.
   2. **Cameron Swan**: Board of Trustees meetingon Wednesday, December 5. Move details to follow next week.
   3. **Marcus Payne: 172** days until commencement**.**

1. ROLL CALL: Orialys Delgado was absent.
2. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 6:57 pm.

*To ensure the courtesy of others,*

*Please refrain from ANY cell phone use during the meeting.*

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