



Student Government Association
General Meeting
Tuesday, October 29, 2024
Meeting Minutes

Peter T. Mazza Student Government Association Room
Ely Campus Center

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

Members Present: Joseph Bonilla, Justin Wald, Sarah Harrington, Austin Morgan, Lorraine Fernandez, Daniel Currier, Ethan Haynes, Nicholas Palumbo, Isabella Moniz, Anderson Dallaire, William Connor, Travis McLoughin, Rachel Luo, Stella Greenberg, Ben Janes, Jakob Trainor, Barney Garcia, Benny Rosas, Brendan Major, Melissa Kuzmeski, Raymond Croteau, Sicilia Campbell, Troyelle Nosal*, Laura Terry, Mariza Monteiro*, Ethan Mallinson, Christopher Lannon, Akile Phakos, Ezekiel Tamarkin, Irini Mahida, Dominic Zajko, Will Onorato, Avianna Lee-Saulters, Angel Bethea, Ali Sutherland, SAAC Representative**

Members Excused: Emma Bowes, Jacob Constant, Puru Sharma

Members Absent: Elizabeth Mercer, Brenna Guiliani, Aiden Luciano, Thomas McLaughlin, Cody Hoisington, Sophia Rebenciuc

Also present and participating were representatives from the Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance (DCAMM), Associate Director of Space Management Joshua Hettrick, and SGA Advisors Matthew Dellea, Ryan Meersman, and Shannon Green.

Call to Order: President Joseph Bonilla called the meeting to order at 5:30pm. It was announced that the meeting was being livestreamed and recorded. Members were asked to review the meeting agenda, and a roll call was taken of members present (listed above).

Approval of the Minutes: Due to extenuating circumstances, the approval of the minutes from the October 22, 2024 general meeting was tabled to a future meeting.

Guest Speaker – Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance, CambridgeSeven & Thomas Therrien: President Joseph Bonilla introduced Thomas Therrien, the University's Executive Director of Facilities & Operations, representatives from the state's Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance, and representatives from CambridgeSeven architects, to discuss the Campus Master Plan and solicit feedback from SGA members.

Representatives discussed the purpose of the Campus Master Plan, which will last for approximately ten (10) years. The team then asked members what the pros and cons of the current campus are. These included:

*One (1) asterisk signifies that the member missed the first roll call.

**Two (2) asterisks signify that the member missed the second roll call.

- Justin Wald mentioned that accessibility is a major issue.
- Daniel Currier highlighted that academic support services being in one place is a strength, but there is an issue of space utilization on-campus.
- Irini Mahida mentioned that there is a lot of natural light, but there is a lack of student gathering space, including for clubs and organizations.
- Dominic Zajko brought up accessibility again and noted that there are parking issues, particularly for faculty/staff.
- Angel Bethea highlighted natural lighting within some of the halls but stated that Courtney Hall has some issues with natural lighting and shower curtains.
- Christopher Lannon brought up issues with gender-neutral bathrooms and residence hall lifespans, particularly Lammers Hall. The team noted that gender-neutral bathrooms are an administration priority.
- Ezekiel Tamarkin mentioned that parking is a major issue on campus. The team mentioned that the interrelationship between residential and commuting student populations will be important to consider in parking decisions.
- Ben Janes added on to the accessibility discussion by noting that certain halls, including Bates Hall and Davis Hall, have major physical accessibility barriers.
- Brendan Major brought up the issue of car theft in South Lot, particularly after last year's incidents. The team noted that they will discuss the issue with Public Safety.
- Joseph Bonilla noted that the Ely Campus Center is a great space, but there should be a space for affinity groups (i.e., multicultural center).
- Akile Phakos questioned whether there will be consideration for digital ID cards for residence hall access. The team noted that this will be considered, as the current system is antiquated.
- Christopher Lannon shared concerns about safety. Joseph Bonilla referred Chris to Public Safety.

Matthew Dellea brought a point of information forward that students should be thinking big and recognize that a plan has not been completed yet – the team is simply asking for their thoughts on the future of Westfield State's campus.

- Isabella Moniz brought up concerns regarding the University's WiFi and cellular service infrastructure.
- Daniel Currier shared that he believed that the campus center should see enhanced activity spaces and that academic halls should have more technology infused into classrooms.
- Irini Mahida argued for more artistic elements on-campus, including paintings and sculptures, with a modern touch in order to be more "inviting."
- Avianna Lee-Saulters argued for additional dining spaces on-campus, including a separate dining space for those who are sensitive to food allergies or want to eat in a quieter environment.
- Anderson Dallaire suggested the return of the "Owl's Nest" bar to keep students safe and increase enrollment.
- Christopher Lannon suggested the installation of shower curtains and additional parking.
- Ezekiel Tamarkin shared an anecdote about his experience in the Apartment Complex.
- Will Onorato shared that he believes the campus should retain the classic New England feel that it currently has.
- Jakob Trainor noted issues with lighting, particularly on the Campus Green and South Lot.
- Justin Wald suggested the installation of a parking garage. The team shared that while it is great for green space, there needs to be consideration about reducing the need for cars on-campus.
- Isabella Moniz noted that the accrediting body for the social work major requires their classrooms and offices be in the same building, but they are currently not.
- Dominic Zajko shared that the elevators on-campus are not modern enough.
- Angel Bethea brought up an idea for the expansion of the Ely Fitness Center due to increased usage by students.

- Irini Mahida spoke out against the idea suggested by Justin Wald for a parking garage due to issues at her previous institution.
- Sarah Harrington suggested the use of solar panels to diversify energy sources on-campus.
- Laura Terry noted that there should be more elevators across the campus.

The team concluded by sharing that there will be additional stakeholder sessions and opportunities for feedback in the near future. The plan will go to the Board of Trustees for approval in June 2025.

President's Report: President Joseph Bonilla began by thanking SGA members for assisting with the voter registration drive last week. More than 80 students registered to vote, and 150 students acquired resources.

Joseph further shared that he was recently appointed to a state task force focused on accessibility and affordability in higher education. He discussed the role of the task force and how he will be assisting in their efforts.

It was noted that President Bonilla and Student Trustee Daniel Currier will be meeting with General Counsel and Vice President of Government & Community Relations Melinda Phelps on Thursday, October 31st to discuss the possibility of a legislative breakfast focused on deferred maintenance.

Proposed dates were shared for a team bonding experience for SGA. These include Monday, November 18th, Wednesday, November 20th, and Friday, November 22nd – all at 6:00pm.

Various senators brought up concerns with these dates, but it was generally agreed that Wednesday, November 20th at 6:00pm would work best.

Student Trustee Report: Daniel Currier provided highlights from the Board of Trustees meeting on Wednesday, September 23, 2024. These include:

- The announcement of a 28% increase in first-year admissions and a 26% increase in transfer admissions.
- A presentation made by Matthew Dellea, Director of Student Activities, Involvement & Leadership (SAIL), regarding New Student Orientation and student extracurricular involvement.
- \$250,000 being raised as a result of the 185th anniversary celebrations and a successful first quarter of fundraising and grant revenue generation.
- An in-depth discussion over the University's budget took place during the Financial Affairs Committee meeting. As a result of this discussion, the Board conditionally approved the FY25 budget pending a review at the December Board meeting.

Daniel concluded by noting that the next Board meeting will be taking place on December 9th with a special performance by the internationally acclaimed band The Irish Tenors performing in Dever Auditorium.

A concern was raised by Christopher Lannon regarding the potential increased workload on the staff within the Office of Academic Advising & Transfer Transition (Christopher works for the Office). Daniel Currier explained that Provost Salka is data-driven and takes things into account before making a decision, thus it is unlikely that the Provost would have implemented this change without consultation with the Office of Academic Advising & Transfer Transition and reviewing current data. Irini Mahida followed up by explaining to SGA members the importance of the Office's services and how they are available to all students (Irini additionally works for the Office).

Vice President of Student Life Report: Justin Wald announced that he will be working with the Counseling Center on an event and will be touring Lammers Hall with their Assistant Residence Director. Minor dining updates were also provided, including upcoming events.

Questions were raised regarding the quality and quantity of food at Late Night. Justin responded that additional options are forthcoming, including fried food options being available on the GET app.

An additional question was raised regarding potential changes to brunch on the weekends. Justin will connect with Dining Services administration.

Vice President of Student Equity Report: Lorraine Fernandez provided the following updates:

- Lorraine met with Father Savage from the Interfaith Center about the services available through the Center and future meetings.
- A meeting took place with Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola, the Director of Belonging, Inclusion & Learning (BIL), regarding future Unity Council meetings and an event being held in the wake of the U.S. election results.
- Lorraine met with the Pride Committee to discuss planning for an event for Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20th.

Vice President of Finance Report: Austin Morgan briefly noted that in an effort to increase transparency, senators will be receiving finance proposal well in-advance.

Rules & Regulations Committee Report: Parliamentarian Ethan Haynes reported that the Rules & Regulations Committee has endorsed two groups to become registered student organizations (RSOs) - the African Student Association (ASA) and the Chess Club.

MOTION made by Sarah Harrington, seconded by Lorraine Fernandez, to recognize the African Student Association (ASA) pending changes to their constitution.

There being no discussion, **VOICE VOTE** passed with one (1) abstention.

MOTION made by Daniel Currier, seconded by Sarah Harrington, to recognize the Chess Club pending changes to their constitution.

There being no discussion, **VOICE VOTE** passed with three (3) abstentions.

First-Year Class Report: Ben Janes spoke on behalf of President Aiden Luciano and noted that there have been several issues with dishware being placed across campus. Justin Wald provided a point of information noting that this has been a long-standing issue but commends the Class Council for their work.

New Business: President Joseph Bonilla asked for a motion to open new business.

MOTION made by Ethan Haynes, seconded by Justin Wald, to open new business.

There being no discussion, **VOICE VOTE** passed unanimously.

President Joseph Bonilla began by noting that he neglected to ask for motions to appoint the new members of the Student Government Association (SGA) during his report. He asked that each new senators stand individually and for motions to be made to appoint each of the below-mentioned senators:

MOTION made by Daniel Currier, seconded by Ethan Haynes, to appoint Will Onorato as a University Hall Representative for the remainder of the 2024-2025 academic year.

There being no discussion, **VOICE VOTE** passed with two (2) abstentions.

MOTION made by Daniel Currier, seconded by Christopher Lannon, to appoint Angel Bethea as a New Hall Representative for the remainder of the 2024-2025 academic year.

There being no discussion, **VOICE VOTE** passed with one (1) abstention.

MOTION made by Daniel Currier, seconded by Nicholas Palumbo, to appoint Ali Sutherland as the Office of Veteran & Military Services Representative for the remainder of the 2024-2025 academic year.

Justin Wald commented prior to the vote that Ali Sutherland would be the first person to hold this position in many years and thanked him for his willingness to serve in this role.

There being no further discussion, **VOICE VOTE** passed with one (1) abstention.

MOTION made by Justin Wald, seconded by Sarah Harrington, to appoint Avianna Lee-Saulters as a Class of 2027 Representative for the remainder of the 2024-2025 academic year.

There being no discussion, **VOICE VOTE** passed unanimously.

Each new member was congratulated on their appointment.

Executive Session: Student Trustee Daniel Currier read the following motion:

MOTION made by Daniel Currier, seconded by Nicholas Palumbo, that the Student Government Association (SGA) enter executive session, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(1), to discuss a complaint brought against a registered student organization.

Members of the Executive Council reminded members of the SGA that discussions within executive session are treated as confidential.

There being no further discussion, **VOICE VOTE** passed unanimously.

Following approval, Student Trustee Daniel Currier read a statement requesting that the livestream stop and that all non-SGA members leave the room with the exception of Matthew Dellea and Shannon Green.

The SGA then entered executive session at 6:45pm¹.

The SGA reconvened in open session at 7:00pm².

MOTION made by Daniel Currier, seconded by Justin Wald, to close new business.

There being no discussion, **VOICE VOTE** passed unanimously.

Announcements: The following announcements were made:

- The Accounting & Finance Club is hosting a fundraiser at Hot Table this evening. 35% of sales generated will benefit the organization. Those who wish to support the organization must present the flyer at checkout.
- There are 199 days till Commencement.

¹ Minutes for the executive session are separate and are considered confidential.

² This portion of the meeting until adjournment was not livestreamed.

Adjournment: There being no further business, President Bonilla adjourned the meeting at 7:05pm.

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 October 29, 2024.

Executive Secretary Jacob Constant

Signed: _____

Date: _____