



Student Government Association

General Meeting

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

Meeting Minutes

University Hall MPR

A live stream of the meeting was not taken.

Members Present: Joseph Bonilla, Justin Wald, Sarah Harrington, Austin Morgan, Lorraine Fernandez, Daniel Currier, Elizabeth Mercer, Jacob Constant, Nicholas Palumbo, Isabella Moniz, Anderson Dallaire, Travis McLoughin, Jakob Trainor, Barney Garcia, Mariza Monteiro, Ethan Mallinson, Christopher Lannon, Ali Sutherland, Angelina Cassella, Puru Sharma, Irini Mahida, Cody Hoisington, Ethan Haynes, Sicilia Campbell, Melissa Kuzmeski, Raymond Croteau, Troyelle Nosal, Sophia Rebenciuc

Members Excused: William Connor

Members Absent: Benny Rosas, Aviannah-Leigh Saulters, Akile Phakos, Dominic Zajko, SAAC Representative, GianCarlos Arteaga, Christopher Filip

Also present and participating was Guest Speaker Mayor of Westfield Micheal McCabe, and SGA Advisor Matt Dellea.

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

Approval of the Minutes: The minutes from the December 10, 2024, general meeting was approved.

Guest Speakers: Mayor Micheal McCabe started by explaining that he was the only person that was head of the Commuter Council and Apartment Complex Council. Micheal McCabe answered questions provided by the senate beforehand. The first of which being about community connections, as well as the connections with the City of Westfield. Then leading into fostering partnerships and how the relationships with the City of Westfield could bring lasting benefits to everyone. After that he spoke about civic engagement. Finally, he spoke about different initiatives he has done for the college campus and for the community at large.

- a. Guest – Asked a question about an idea they had about overbreak and where they can provide the information to the mayor's office.
- b. Ali Sutherland asked about something that had come up in one of his classes last semester and talked about one of the members working in the mayor's office Ann Lentini and about some of the things that they have done for the community.
- c. Guest – Asked if there are any plans to make the downtown of Westfield to be more accessible and more of an appealing option for Students of Westfield State University.
- d. Isabella Moniz asked about the new laws from the Federal Government and how the City of Westfield would respond to them.
- e. Christopher Lannon asked about the students that are scared about the new administration in the country.

- f. Ali Sutherland asked about fostering an environment and what it looks like to him about being here than other places.
- g. Joseph Bonilla asked about how he would define leadership.

President's Report: Joseph Bonilla welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the semester and highlighted the Centennial Year of SGA at Westfield State University. The meeting featured Mayor Michael McCabe as the first speaker in the Civic Leaders Speaker Series, aimed at promoting civic engagement and student leadership. Mayor McCabe's background includes a long career in law enforcement, community service, and city improvements such as road maintenance, school grounds enhancements, and securing the F-35 contract for Barnes Air Force Base. The President then provided updates on key events, including the SGA's volunteer service trip to the Westfield Soup Kitchen on February 7, with an orientation on January 30, and thanked participants of the Sip for a Cause fundraiser. The first State of the Campus Address in a long time will be held on January 31 at 2:00 PM in Dever Auditorium, where attendees will have a chance to win a 50-inch TV. The Legislative Breakfast will take place on February 7 at 8:30 AM, focusing on workforce development and deferred maintenance, with limited spots available. The report concluded with a quote by Richard M. Rorty: "Solidarity is not discovered by reflection but created."

Student Trustee Report: Daniel Currier provided clarification on a recent OMB memo halting federal grant and loan disbursements, confirming that student financial aid remains unaffected. The University is monitoring potential impacts on federal grants supporting campus programs like TRiO Student Support Services. At the state level, Governor Healey introduced the BRIGHT Act, proposing a \$2.5 billion investment in higher education capital projects to address deferred maintenance, though this falls short of the \$24 billion need across institutions. The Legislative Breakfast on February 7th will advocate for increased funding, tying the need for investment to workforce development. Over break, Daniel Currier participated in a meeting regarding the University's new brand, with feedback opportunities for SGA and a random sample of students. The next Board of Trustees meeting is on February 20th in the Owl's Nest, and Daniel Currier encouraged attendance. He also announced new office hours and remains available for appointments.

- a. Austin Morgan asked to repeat the bonds.
- b. Ali Sutherland asked about Chapter 31 or 33 about the freeze at the federal level.

Vice President of Student Life Report: Justin Wald provided updates on the Ely Lounge project, detailing the planned blue and gray color scheme to enhance school spirit. The lounge will feature chairs with built-in outlets, a TV lounge area, picnic-style seating, two smaller hangout spaces, and a game area with air hockey, foosball, and a 32-game arcade machine. The design will incorporate student photo murals, staircase graphics, and additional themed elements still in development. The project is progressing within the \$100,000 budget to create a vibrant student space. Anyone interested in seeing the slideshow with images and pricing can reach out for more details.

- a. Ethan Haynes asked about digitally sending the documents provided.
- b. Nicholas Palumbo asked about what will happen when the pictures become outdated.
- c. Sarah Harrington added that it would be the same with Bistro.

Vice President of Academic Life Report: Sarah Harrington welcomed everyone back to campus for the new semester, expressing excitement for her final term at Westfield State. She provided updates from her meeting with the Provost, discussing the new course evaluation system, which will be assessed after this year, and clarified that a comments section will not be included due to state negotiations. She also followed up on discussions about reducing online course enrollment, noting that the Provost is open to discussing the policy with SGA. Additionally, she shared that the CARE Centers' move to Parenzo is expected to be completed over the summer, with offices already transitioning out of Scanlon. She mentioned her new schedule due to student teaching, with availability primarily in the afternoons and her office hours set for Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 4-5 PM, encouraging communication via Teams. She concluded with a lighthearted song recommendation, "Wash Your Hands Rap" by Jack Hartmann, given the season of illness.

- a. Isabella Moniz asked about to elaborate on which offices were moving to Parenzo.
 - a. Isabella Moniz readdressed, and Sarah said they will reclarify.

- b. Lorraine Fernández gave a point of information and explained that it is intended that all the campus resources will be moved to Parenzo.
- b. Ethan Haynes asked about the online courses for the undergraduate level.

University Curriculum Committee Report: Melissa Kuzmeski reported that the University Curriculum Committee met on December 20, 2024, to discuss various academic program changes. The committee approved modifications to the B.S. in Finance program, adding ECON 315 to its electives and expanding course options from multiple related disciplines. A new minor in finance was also approved, requiring FIN 207, 312, 318, 319, and two electives. The committee passed a proposal to establish a B.A. in Philosophy, aimed at fostering cultural growth, critical analysis, and a diverse learning environment. The B.A. in Music was reviewed, and recommendations were made to update the program to reflect current industry standards and enhance equity and inclusion. Additionally, a recommendation was made to assign an official FYJ prefix to 101 First Year Journey, which was approved for further academic development. The next UCC meeting is scheduled for January 31.

Vice President of Student Equity Report: Lorraine Fernández welcomed everyone back for the new semester and introduced herself as the Vice President of Student Equity. She is a Psychology major with a Spanish minor, part of the Class of 2026, and a commuter. In addition to her role in SGA, she serves as the president of the Latinx Association for Empowerment. Her role focuses on ensuring fair treatment and equal opportunities for all students, particularly underrepresented groups, and advocating for diversity, inclusion, and accessibility of resources like mental health services. She collaborates with student leaders, faculty, staff, and the Office of Belonging, Inclusion, and Learning to create a welcoming campus environment. Lorraine's office hours are Mondays and Wednesdays from 9 AM to 11 AM, and she encouraged students to reach out via email if they have any questions or concerns. She looks forward to a productive semester.

- a. Christopher Lannan asked about possibly having discussions that students can go to about their concerns with what is going on in the world.
 - a. Joseph Bonilla responded that it is a big issue and that it is very important, and all the concerns that everyone is bringing to us and how we are working with BIL.

Vice President of Finance Report: Austin Morgan provided the finance report, noting that due to a lack of quorum, all finance proposals were reviewed by the executive council. There is approximately \$35,500 left in the allocation pool. The first proposal from the Accounting & Finance Club requested \$70.46 for on-campus event support, which was approved by the executive council with a 6-0-1 vote. The second proposal from the same club requested \$603.13 for an event featuring Trustee George Gilmer, which was approved 7-0-1 and requires a two-thirds majority vote from the senate. A request from the Music Therapy Club was tabled to allow for further discussion with the organization. Austin encouraged senators to join the finance committee, as they currently need at least one more member, preferably a first-year or sophomore.

MOTION made by Austin Morgan, seconded by Christopher Lanan, to approve the Finance Proposal for the Accounting and Finance club \$70.46.

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

MOTION made by Austin Morgan, seconded by Jacob Constant, to approve the Finance Proposal for the Accounting and Finance club \$603.13.

- a. Isabella Moniz asked about the kind of food that will be catered for the event.
 - a. Daniel Currier gave reasoning behind the request as President of the Accounting and Finance Club he explained that it will be an Italian Feast.
- b. Christopher Lannan asked about the conditions of a roll call vote for this, and it was determined that a roll call vote is not necessary.
- c. Ali Sutherland asked if they could bring their significant others.
 - a. Daniel Currier gave reasoning behind the request as President of the Accounting and Finance Club explaining that it should be fine and that they should be able to make it work.

VOICE VOTE passed unanimously.

Vice President of Publicity Report: Elizabeth Mercer welcomed everyone back from break and expressed excitement about the Owl Ball and Blue Key committees. She encouraged those interested to see her after the meeting to join either or both committees. She reiterated her availability for anyone who needs support and emphasized that everyone is welcome.

- a. Christopher Lannan asked if we can have SGA pins at the end of the year.
- b. Joseph Bonilla asked to give a brief overview of Owl Ball and Blue Key committees.

Executive Secretary Report: Jacob Constant welcomed everyone back and reminded senators that office hours have resumed this week. He announced that attending the State of the Campus Address on Friday would count as an alternative office hour, though he would be unable to attend due to his first UCC meeting. He encouraged senators to log their office hours through the link he would resend in Teams. He also reiterated that next week's soup kitchen event would count as an office hour and had printed schedules for alternative office hours available for those interested. Lastly, he introduced next week's guest speakers, Trish Bonica and Marleigh Strait from Title IX, who will discuss a Climate Survey. He encouraged senators to reach out with any questions and wished everyone a great week.

Senior Class Report: Nicholas Palumbo updated that the senior class council is in crunch time as they prepare for their final semester events. The lawn sign fundraiser remains live until Friday, February 14th, and is their most successful fundraiser to date. He reminded everyone that the 100 Days Toast is just nine days away, taking place on February 6th from 7-9 PM at Westfield River Brewing Company with a tropical theme. He encouraged seniors to attend and announced that junior representatives would be needed to assist with setup and tasks at the event to gain experience for next year.

- a. Austin Morgan asked about metrics about the Lawn Signs.
- b. Daniel Currier asked about any update on Senior Week.
- c. Joseph Bonilla asked if they could indulge any information about senior week.

New Business:

MOTION made by Joseph Bonilla, seconded by Sarah Harrington, to open new business.

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

MOTION made by Justin Wald, seconded by Sarah Harrington, to approve the Committee Charge for the Residential Life Committee.

- a. Anderson Dallaire asked if RAs would be allowed on the committee.
 - a. Christopher Lannan asked if some years down the line if an RA becomes a Hall Representative.
 - i. Ethan Haynes explained that it isn't allowed.

VOICE VOTE passed unanimously.

MOTION made by Joseph Bonilla, seconded by Jacob Constant, to close new business.

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

Announcements: The following announcements were made:

- Sarah Harrington reminded everyone about going up to their team huddle members to give them your questions to us to bring to cabinet.
- Justin Wald asked for all Hall Representatives to come see him after the meeting.
- Daniel Currier let everyone know about how the Accounting and Finance club is having an event on Thursday and how the CFO of Executive Office of Public Safety and Security about accounting and finance it would be a good opportunity if you are interested in public service.
- Austin Morgan reminded everyone about the club fair being on Thursday.
- Nicholas Palumbo stated that there are 108 days till Commencement.

Adjournment: There being no further business, President Bonilla adjourned the meeting at 7:01 pm.

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 January 28, 2025.

Executive Secretary Jacob Constant

Signed: _____

Date: _____