



Student Government Association

General Meeting

Tuesday, February 25, 2025

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: Justin Wald, Sarah Harrington, Austin Morgan, Lorraine Fernández, Daniel Currier, Jacob Constant, Nicholas Palumbo, Isabella Moniz, Anderson Dallaire, Travis McLoughin, Brenna Guliani, Jakob Trainor, Cody Hoisington, Melissa Kuzmeski, Barney Garcia, Mariza Monteiro, Ethan Mallinson, Christopher Lannan, Ali Sutherland, Angelina Cassella, Puru Sharma, Irini Mahida, Ethan Haynes, Benny Rosas, Dominic Zajko

Members Excused: Joseph Bonilla, Raymond Croteau

Members Absent: SAAC Representative, GianCarlos Arteaga, Troyelle Nosal, Aviannah-Leigh Saulters

Also present and participating was Guest Speaker the Executive Director of the Westfield State University Foundation Bill Hynes.

Call to Order: Acting President Justin Wald 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 February 18th, 2024, general meeting was approved pending an amendment under the UCC report.

Guest Speakers: Executive Director of the Westfield State University Foundation Bill Hynes introduced himself and his roles here on campus explaining what he does in Intuition Advancement and in the Westfield State University Foundation. He explains the Westfield State University Foundation Scholarships where there are a lot and anyone could apply for them given they meet the requirements. He also then talks about Give-A-Hoot and how that is how they fundraise money to be able to pay for the scholarships, and there are around 400 Donors. Then on March 20th there is a Notecard-Athon hosted by the Westfield State Foundation as well as partnering with the Student Government Association making notecards to send to Alumni to be able to request money to be able to give money to others.

- Christopher Lannan mentions the scholarships, asked how many students apply for scholarships and asked how we as senators let everyone know about these offers. Then ended with asking for an update from last years' notecard-athon when asking Taylor Swift to have a Honorary Degree.
- Isabella Moniz asked if there are scholarships for students going into a master's degree.
- Sarah Harrington thanked Bill Hynes for comes down as well as adding that herself and Daniel are in the Student Senate Scholarship.
- Ali Sutherland asked if the scholarship is paid to the school or the student.

President's Report: Acting President Justin Wald introduced our guest speaker the Executive Director of the Westfield State University Foundation Bill Hynes.

Then, Justin Wald reported that some senators are at risk of removal due to accumulated absences, which are counted for missing full meetings, failing to complete office hours, missing committee meetings, or receiving half absences for missing either the first or second roll call during meetings. He emphasized that the goal is not to remove nearly half the senate, especially given the great work everyone has done this year, but accountability remains important. Jacob will be sending emails to those at risk, with both Justin and Joseph cc'd, and senators receiving these emails are expected to respond and have a conversation with Jacob. He reminded everyone to monitor their emails closely. He also explained that Accepted Student's Day is this Saturday, and that Jacob and Austin will be manning the SGA table, and he is hoping that 1-2 senators will be there as well.

- Jacob Constant gave more information about the reason why people would be removed.
- Angelina Cassella asked what do you do during Accepted Students Day?
- Christopher Lannan brought up a concern about where the doors for the SGA room being locked last and not being locked this year, then gave brief information about accepted students' day and that's how he got his start.
- Ethan Haynes gave a point of information regarding Christopher Lannan's question, explaining that the Minutes are public, and the space is for students to come to at any time.
- Angelina Cassella gave a point of information about how CAB also uses the room.
- Sarah Harrington asked Jacob Constant a question regarding if Accepted Students day will count as an Office Hour.
 - Jacob Constant explained YES!

All University Committee: Travis McLoughlin reported that AUC met last Friday and ran for the full scheduled time. During the meeting, AUC unanimously referred 13 items to UCC and recommended approval of 9 additional items to UCC. They also unanimously referred the Commonwealth Honors Program Graduation Requirement to APC. While all items passed without issue, two of the items referred to UCC sparked a broader conversation about 400-level courses, noting that Westfield State is currently the only state university in Massachusetts without a clear definition of what constitutes a 400-level class. In response, AUC drafted and unanimously passed a resolution encouraging departments and faculty to review and consider moving some 300-level courses to 400-level, with this resolution to be emailed to all faculty.

- Justin Wald asked about the conversations that came up about the 400 level classes.

Student Trustee Report: Daniel Currier reported that the Board of Trustees met on Thursday, February 20th in the Owl's Nest and approved three new graduate programs: a Master of Arts in History, a Master of Science in Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Studies, and a Master of Science in Athletic Training, some of which required fresh votes due to updated financial figures. The Board also received an update from Leslie Rice, Executive Director of Communication, Marketing & Branding, regarding the University's rebrand, and Daniel announced that the logo options being considered will soon be publicly unveiled, with the Athletics logo and seal remaining unchanged for now. Enrollment updates showed that the University met its Spring 2025 goal of 75 transfer students and exceeded its goal of 20 new first-year students by enrolling 26; Fall 2025 numbers are currently up about 60% compared to last year, but FAFSA filing remains a concern. He reminded everyone who has not yet filed their FAFSA to do so and noted that Dr. Hearn will soon form a Strategic Enrollment Committee, likely seeking student representation from SGA. Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola, Director of Belonging, Inclusion & Learning, also provided an update on her office's initiatives, with Chair Salehi and other Board members reiterating the Board's commitment to belonging and inclusion regardless of federal developments. Daniel also expressed concern about the University's finances, noting that increasing expenses and reduced working capital are leading to potentially unsustainable operating budget deficits. The Board approved the Fiscal Year 2026 Schedule of Annual Tuition & Fees, incorporating the Fitness Center Fee into the General Fee, making modest increases to the General Fee and Residential Life while keeping Dining fees flat thanks to Dining's efforts to control costs. The Board also approved the University's

Strategic Plan for the next five years, with the full document to be published by the end of the academic year, and Daniel encouraged all members, especially those returning next year, to review it. During the meeting, he provided an update on SGA's deferred maintenance advocacy, plans to fundraise for an endowed program for belonging and inclusion, and more. He closed by announcing that he will meet with Vice President Phelps next Monday to discuss next steps for higher education capital improvement advocacy, which could include a visit to Beacon Hill in April, with further updates to come next week.

- Ali Sutherland asked about where to find the information mentioned in the report.

Student Advisory Council: Daniel Currier reported that the Student Advisory Council to the Board of Higher Education will meet on Thursday, February 27th, from 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM on Zoom. He reminded members that the Student Advisory Council consists of SGA presidents and student trustees from across the Commonwealth, and he believes this upcoming meeting will be particularly important as higher education faces increasing challenges from Washington. He encouraged everyone to read the statement recently published by the State University Council of Presidents, which was also sent to all students last week from the President's Office. The letter, signed by all state university presidents, including Dr. Thompson, reaffirms the commitment of public higher education institutions in Massachusetts to belonging, inclusion, and equal access to education. He also noted that the state university presidents, including Dr. Thompson, remain in regular contact with the Massachusetts Department of Education and will respond as needed to any actions that could negatively impact students.

Vice President of Student Life Report: Justin Wald reported that he met with Director of Residential Life Chris Willenbrock to finalize plans for the Residential Life Committee, with its first meeting scheduled for this Friday at 1:40 PM in University Hall A&B. This initial meeting is intended to attract potential new committee and SGA members to serve as Hall Representatives, as well as to gather feedback from residential students about their concerns and suggestions to help the committee better support them. Flyers will be finalized and distributed today to begin promoting the meeting, and Justin encouraged members to share the opportunity with any students who may have concerns or ideas. He also provided an exciting update on SGA's participation in Relay for Life, announcing that the team has raised \$265 so far, with seven members currently sitting in third place just behind the Campus Activities Board. He noted that there is a strong chance for SGA to become the top fundraising team on campus, with all funds going directly to the American Cancer Society. He gave a special shoutout to Daniel Currier, the current top fundraiser and reigning Mr. Westfield, and playfully suggested someone might want to challenge him for the top spot. He thanked everyone who has participated and reminded those who haven't joined yet that it's not too late. Relay for Life is not just a fundraising event, but also a chance to step away from technology, enjoy fresh air, have great conversations, and focus on mental health and well-being. He encouraged everyone to participate and enjoy the event's fun sideline activities.

- Daniel Currier asked for thoughts in the room about the news that came out about the Honors Housing.
- Cody Hoisington mentions that it will only be for incoming freshmen.
- Dominic Zycho gave a point of information explaining that Justin's shirt looks cool today.
- Anderson Dallaire explained that he has spoken to many students, and he explained that it wouldn't have affected their decision to come to the school, but it would have affected their decision about joining the Honors Program.
- Angelina Cassella asked about the Residential Life Committee Meeting being held on Friday.
- Jacob Constant gave some information regarding Relay For Life and how it is a great event.
- Christopher Lannan asked for some clarification if it will have all of the vacant hall rep positions.

Dining Services Committee Report: Jacob Constant reported that the Dining Services Committee didn't meet however he wanted to give information regarding the candidate for the Manager of Nutrition that will be coming to campus tomorrow for a food showing in the DC from 11:30-1.

University Curriculum Committee Report: Jacob Constant reported that the University Curriculum Committee met last Friday but started late due to not meeting quorum. EGST 102 was approved with the addition of WISE

inclusion. The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design proposal was discussed, aiming to add more elective courses to the degree, as currently only two electives are required. MUSC 01XX courses were tabled to ensure the correct WISE form is submitted. EDUC 0354 was approved with a credit change and the removal of EDUC 0321 and EDUC 0341 as prerequisites. EDUC 0319, Methods of Teaching and Learning 1: Mathematics, was approved with the removal of EDUC 0320 as a corequisite, the addition of a requirement that students must earn a minimum grade of B in each course to advance in the methods sequence, and the inclusion of a field experience. EDUC 0378 was approved with prerequisite changes to EDUC 0319 or EDUC 0354, or permission of the instructor. EDUC 04XX, Dyslexia: Foundational Knowledge, Assessment, and Instruction, was approved with a prerequisite of EDUC 0303 or instructor permission. MOVP 0100 was approved with a name change from Science Physical Activity and Health to Concepts of Physical Activity and Health, as well as the addition of FYJ 0101 and English 0101 as prerequisites. MOVP 0325 was approved with WISE inclusion, a name change, and the removal of prerequisites for core inclusion.

- Christopher Lannan asked about the education minor.
- Ethan Haynes gave a point of information is that UCC is working from September-November so they are catching up as soon as they can.

Vice President of Student Equity Report: Sarah Harrington reported on behalf of Lorraine Fernández, who was unable to attend due to feeling under the weather. Lorraine announced that she is continuing to recruit members for the Advisory Committee for the Advancement of Equitable Representation (ACAER) and hopes to add three more senators. An email was sent last week with information and a sign-up form, and anyone interested or who knows potential candidates from relevant organizations is encouraged to reach out to her via email or Teams. She is aiming to hold the first meeting either this week or next week and asked anyone who received her email to respond as soon as possible to confirm availability. In addition to ACAER recruitment, she is also working on a project for Women's History Month in collaboration with the Office of Belonging, Inclusion, and Learning, as well as SGA. The project is still in the planning stages, and Lorraine welcomed support from fellow members. She closed by encouraging anyone with questions or ideas to reach out and wished everyone a great rest of the week.

Constitutional Review Committee Report: Ethan Haynes reported that Constitutional Review is nearly complete, and members should expect a report along with a marked-up version of the constitution within the coming weeks. He expressed hope that the process will be wrapped up soon.

- Justin Wald gave a point of information that there is a sheet to sign up for ACARE in the back of the room or to just reach out to Lorraine directly.

Rules and Regulations Committee Report: Ethan Haynes reported that starting **March 3rd at 11:59 PM**, the Rules and Regulations Committee will no longer accept any new club constitutions for the remainder of the semester. This is to allow the committee time to finalize outstanding work and ensure clubs will be active for the next semester. He encouraged anyone with questions to reach out. He also announced that the committee will meet tomorrow from 4:00 to 5:00 PM in the Banacos Conference Room, with a second meeting scheduled from 1:40 to 2:15 PM at a location to be determined.

Senior Class Report: Nicholas Palumbo reported that the Senior Class Council is preparing for the upcoming 50 Days Toast, which will be held at Westfield River Brewing Company on Thursday, March 27th. He also announced that after thoughtful discussion, the class council decided to shift the traditional multi-day senior week into a one-day Senior Send-Off event that will be free for all seniors. This change was made after observing low attendance in previous years and with the goal of re-engaging seniors in class events while building a new tradition that future classes can potentially expand back into a multi-day celebration. The council is currently polling seniors to determine if they prefer a free event on campus, which would allow more funding to go toward activities, or an off-campus event that would require allocating some funds toward transportation. In addition to the Senior Send-Off, the class is planning two free events: a night trip to Mohegan Sun, modeled after the previous "Mohegan Day," and an on-campus BBQ-style event on Friday, May 2nd, from 6:00 to 8:30 PM. Nicholas encouraged seniors to

participate in the poll and expressed excitement for creating memorable experiences to celebrate the class's accomplishments over the past four years.

- Daniel Currier along with Sarah Harrington asked if they were told that they couldn't do senior week.
- Sarah Harrington asked for more information why the tickets weren't sold sooner.
- Austin Morgan asked if there would still be cap and gown photos
- Christopher Lannan asked when we should start planning for our senior event.
 - Austin Morgan gave a point of information and explained that it should be now.
- Daniel Currier gave a point of information that there should be a handbook made so the class councils get trained on how to do these things, as well as fundraising each year.
- Sarah Harrington explained that you should prioritize the events that you really want to do.

Sophomore Class Report: Brenna Guiliani reported that the Sophomore Class Council is excited to celebrate Women's History Month in March by hosting a two-day event aimed at empowering and inspiring students while honoring women who have made significant contributions to the community. The first event will be a HIIT fitness class on March 6th from 7:00 PM to 7:45 PM at the Ely Fitness Center, which will focus on strength and fitness for participants of all fitness levels, and is open to all students, including those who are not gym members, as long as they complete a waiver. The second event will be a Women's History Month Panel Discussion on March 7th from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM in the Owl's Nest, featuring influential women from the Westfield State community who will share their experiences and perspectives on empowerment and leadership, with pastries provided for attendees. She encouraged everyone to attend these events as a way to come together as a community and support women's empowerment and leadership on campus.

- Ali Sutherland asked about the leaders panel if they can live stream the event.
- Anderson Dallaire asked about the time of the event.

Announcements: The following announcements were made:

- Sarah Harrington let everyone know that you should go to Hot Table to show support to CAPPA.
- Daniel Currier explained that he is doing a fundraiser at Maple Leaf next Tuesday after the SGA meeting.
- Christopher Lannan gave a plug to Owl Ball committee.
- Benny Rosas explained that the Music Therapy Club is having a fundraiser somewhere in Ely, it is a bake goods and craft goods.
- Ali Sutherland explained that tomorrow is the Alzheimer's Association panel in the Owl's Nest, to give a presentation, starting at 5:30.
- Justin Wald thanked Bill Hynes for staying for the entire meeting.
- Nicholas Palumbo stated that there are 80 days till Commencement.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Acting President Justin Wald adjourned the meeting at 6:19 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 February 25, 2025.

Executive Secretary Jacob Constant

Signed: _____

Date: _____