

Grand Valley State University Student Senate

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Thursday, March 14th, 2024

Kirkhof 2204, 4:30pm

Chair: Quinten Proctor

Parliamentarian: Magdalyn Hallead



Minutes

1. **Call To Order at 4:31 pm**

- a. Native Land Recognition
- b. Roll Call - Part 1
- c. Public Comment - Part 1
- d. Passing of the Papers
 - i. Proctor passes a paper about volunteering for the Day of Giving.
- e. Adoption of the Agenda
 - i. Agenda is Adopted
- f. Approval of the Minutes
 - i. Minutes Stand Approved

2. **Guest Speaker**

- a. Donta Truss, VP of Enrollment Development and Educational Outreach
 - i. Truss: I am here to talk about enrollment with you today. We are at an “enrollment cliff” right now. This means that there are less babies being born, demographics are shifting, and the aftermath of the pandemic that we just went through. Many people have not returned to college after the pandemic. Many universities around the country are also struggling with the drop in enrollment. In 2016, GVSU had a total enrollment of 25,406 students. Last year, GVSU had 21,000 students. When I started here 4 years ago, I began to have conversations about combating the enrollment decline. We put together a task force of over 8,500 members and began to talk strategy over this. We also developed transformational teams and looked at the specific places in the university where we can create increases. This was our teams directly looking at what we could do better as a university. Out of the work we did, we created a 3.1% undergraduate increase and a 1% graduate increase. Overall, we had a 2.9% increase in total enrollment after five years of decline. Along with this, there have been increases in applications, enrollment, and acceptance rates. We believe that this will be the second year of increase. Our incoming class was the largest and most diverse in GVSU history. Many of the other colleges in Michigan have not seen growth like we have. They are still seeing decreases in enrollment from the pandemic. This creates problems with finances for these universities. They are having to get rid of programs and other entities that the university has previously offered. GVSU has experienced declines in retention. Many students are

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coming into college with learning loss, mental health issues, and more that the pandemic has directly caused. We are working to create programs and changes in current programs to help combat the decline in retention. Compared to other institutions we are doing well overall. Graduation is the ultimate goal when you go to college. The success of an institution is judged on the graduation rates and in this aspect, GVSU is growing. There are many great people here that are doing the work to create better retention rates.

ii. Questions

1. Bates: In an effort to get back to the number before the pandemic, would you say that GVSU is prioritizing quantity over quality with students?
2. Truss: If we were doing that, our growth would be a lot larger and a lot faster. The holistic approach to applications that we have added has helped us to see the whole picture with the student when they apply
3. Dolnik: Are there trends in retention?
4. Truss: We have seen an increase in retention rates from the fall to winter semester this year. We saw increases in races and ethnicities that have not been seen before. This is important because that means that our initiatives have been working well.
5. Bates: We do not have a minimum GPA requirement. Why is that?
6. Truss: This was decided before I got here. We are a comprehensive regional university. This means that we are designed to serve students in this region and give everyone an affordable option for college. We are looking at all aspects of students, including things overcome, what you have participated in, and more. With this process, we are looking at a complete picture of the student rather than just GPA. To finish college, you have to be able to go through what college entails.
7. Bartlett: Are there actions being taken within the mental health services for students with the expected growth?
8. Haight: We are seeing a decrease in the services used because of the ability to use telehealth or continuing to use what they do outside of the university. Care is based on a case by case basis. We are doing case management and this helps our mental health specialists as well.
9. Eshleman: What do you attribute the growth in retention to?

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10. Truss: There are multiple things that we are doing, but it is a group of strategies that are creating growth. We also have staff that are committed to meeting students where they are. We have created opportunities for people to leave college and still have the opportunity to come back.
 11. Stang: What are the similarities within students?
 12. Truss: When we do surveys on retention we hear three things: life, financial, academic, and there are unknown reasons.
 13. Bates: There used to be a waitlisting process, could that be an issue with retention.
 14. Truss: In each GPA range from before, we are still bringing in students from the same ranges now. I want us to celebrate our ability to be inclusive.
 15. Bashore: There are three major issues that students have with GVSU. With an increase in students do you think that these issues will get worse or better.
 16. Truss: I think we will begin to get better with these issues. We have time to get there and with time we can address these issues.
 17. Devries: Did your study focus on race, gender, ethnicity, only or did you include disability. This was not included in the plan. This is something I am willing to look into.
 18. Haight: We have seen a large increase in students using our disability resources. We have added new staff. The students that disclosed this information were reached out to and asked to join in this program. We are building support for it.
 19. Truss: Thank you for your feedback, it only makes us better. I hope that you all will take me up on the offer to join the task force or to meet with me and my team. We will consider the feedback and input every time.
- b. Bri Slager, Student Life Fund
- i. Hoogwerf and Slager present the 2024-2025 Student Life Fund.
 - ii. Discussion:
 1. Bennett: I feel like \$18,000 is a lot, and I am wondering if we can give that to another organization.
 2. Hoogwerf: We believed that a decrease was needed, but we didn't want to take too much. We are hoping in the next few years to figure out what we need.
 3. Lawson: Why is spending so low in the cultural category?

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4. Hoogwerf: There are many things that will be added in soon, and the budget left will be lower already.
5. Gjolaj: Why is the creation station money going down as RA's use this space very often?
6. Hoogwerf: We got a cricket, and RA's are not under this budget.
7. Bashore: Why does the performing arts have the same budget as academics?
8. Slager: They were having to go off of campus, but now they can come back on campus and split the cost in half.
9. DeVries: Why is there only \$4,000 given for special interest, when they spent \$5,000 over this year.
10. Hoogwerf: We are starting with \$4,000 and if we need more, we can pull from other groups.

3. President's Report

- a. Proctor: If you are planning on returning to Student Senate next year, remember to keep your Thursdays at 4:30 and later open! Voting for the elections begins on Monday! Although the candidate list has come out and theoretically everyone has a spot, there is the possibility that we can have write-in candidates. It only takes 10 votes for them to make the write-in threshold, and since there is only one at-large seat to spare in the election, it's very important that you all are campaigning to ensure you can return to the Senate next year. Just a reminder that the end of our terms is growing close. In order to receive your stipend for the semester, you do need to demonstrate to the Cabinet that you are going above and beyond in some capacity in your work on Senate. Our terms end two weeks from today, so please make sure you are helping out and completing the assignments your Vice Presidents are giving to you! I have had quite a few meetings over the past few weeks, and several more coming up. I will report on these more in depth next week! If you are interested in running for Cabinet for next year, please reach out to me! I'd love to talk about what this looks like. I am sure that any other current Cabinet member would love to chat about their experience in Cabinet as well. Even if you are new, or you think there are other Senators running for a position you are interested in, I would still encourage you to go for it! Competition for Cabinet is good, and although experience in the Senate would be helpful, it's not completely necessary in order for you to do a good job!

4. Executive Vice President's Report

- a. Hallead: If you are interested in helping and working with the University Counseling Center, please reach out to Richard or fill out the forms I sent in the slack and weekly email. Any interest

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in a Cabinet position for next year? Set up a meeting with me! Slack me anytime! Just some further information, I have technically been in every position on Student Senate besides President, so I feel fully equipped to prepare you all for the revised chair positions for next year.

5. **Five Minute Recess**

6. **Business**

a. W-24-02: Create a Student Legal Services Department

i. Bates presents Legal Services Legislation

ii. Discussion

1. Bartlett: Can you add in a statistic about off campus housing numbers to show the need for this more.
2. Bates: I wanted to add this, but GVSU does not keep track of the students after they leave campus. I can not think of a way that I could get those statistics.
3. Bashore: With many universities participating in this, what do you think would be the best solution?
4. Bates: I think we should reach out to the national student legal services. I met with many attorneys and I think the best option would be to have attorneys come to the school and see what the students need overall. Then they could start with an attorney and pilot the idea for a couple of years. I would recommend going with a third party company so that the university doesn't have any liability with malpractice. The attorneys are then able to give money back to the university to use in a good way.
5. Palumbo: Are there great differences between how the team operates within the smaller schools you researched versus the larger schools?
6. Bates: The larger schools employ attorneys themselves whereas the smaller schools do not want to have the liability. The larger schools are also willing to take on whatever, whereas the smaller schools might have to refer you to other places for similar pricing.
7. Devries: I am concerned about the higher ups in the university rejecting this idea.
8. Bates: I have talked to many of these people and many are optimistic about this, but they want to take the time to research and hire the right people to be able to provide the best care for the students.

b. W-24-03: Create an Online Map for Gender Neutral Bathrooms

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- i. Johnson presents Gender Neutral Bathrooms Legislation
- ii. Discussion
 1. Hallead: I would be more specific about what campuses you are referring to.
 2. Johnstone: Is there a reason why you specified Pew and Allendale campuses?
 3. Johnson: I was only thinking about the campuses that have one building.
 4. Hallead: I would put all campuses, because sometimes buildings can get confusing and if you put it in there, it is up to the campus to put that into effect.

7. Officer Reports

a. Senate Resources - VP Palumbo

- i. Palumbo: Good evening everybody, I hope you enjoyed your spring break, As one last reminder, please fill out the climate survey if you have not done so. I appreciate it if you have completed it already and added feedback. We are going to have another bonding event this weekend, this time bowling together. Based on the poll I took, I think we are going to do that this Friday, likely around 9 or 10 PM. Let me know if you are able to attend and I will give you the details. I will keep Saturday as a backup date. Additionally, we are working on the logistics and details for our upcoming end-of-semester party, which is on March 28. Keep an eye out on slack for official information. I hope to see everyone there one more time before this Senate session ends! As we approach the end of this semester, I know that many of us (including me) are probably experiencing some burnout. I know this may affect your Senate experience, but wanted to thank you all for hanging in there. It can be hard to organize school, work, and more while also participating in the Senate. It is also easy to get overwhelmed, but you guys are doing a good job. As always, you can talk to me if you have any struggles affecting you this semester. Lastly, for those who plan on being on the Senate body next year, come chat with me about your plans and goals (running for Cabinet, choosing councils, etc.). I would like to learn more and explore the potential to collaborate on numerous topics. For those of you attending USGC, I will see you Saturday! Otherwise, have a good weekend and get some rest!

b. Allocations - VP Hoogwerf

- i. Hoogwerf: Happy Pi Day!! We will likely have a request coming to GA! Please make sure you have your funding board training—if you were here for inservice or have come to an allocations meeting, you have funding board training and you are able to vote. If

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you haven't done either of those things, please talk to me. We have eight requests coming to the Allocations board tomorrow. Join us if you wanna have fun!!

- c. **Public Relations** - VP Martell
 - i. Martell: Hi everyone! Please fill out the RSVP for the meet the candidates event that's happening this Monday if you are planning to attend. It's a great way to continue your campaign! Also, I was able to get the final invoice for senate apparel today and that is now paid. Senate apparel is estimated to be here the week of March 25th. I yield.
 - d. **Campus Affairs** - VP Dolnik
 - i. Dolnik: Hello everyone and happy almost spring. Next week I will meet again with GV Parking. I'm going to bring up things mentioned in the last meeting. If there is anything else you want me to bring up, just let me know. Next week is the last mental health screening with the University Counseling Center, they still need some volunteers, if you're interested I can resend the sign up link after GA. There is also a new Virtual option if you were hoping to get screened without having to leave your residence. Also, yesterday President Proctor and I volunteered with the Alcohol & Other Drug Services, there is still one more event we can volunteer for. If anyone is interested, just slack me. With that, as we speak, The AOD is in room 2263 making Tie-Dye shirts and enjoying some crazy mock-tails, and they will be until 8. I'd definitely recommend stopping by as soon as the adjournment of your committee meeting. Enjoy your weekend!
 - e. **Educational Affairs** - VP Gessler
 - i. Gessler: Hello all! Happy Thursday. Finally finished the GVSU Save video and Last Lecture is March 26th from 6-8 PM! Please RSVP. Thank you!
 - f. **Diversity Affairs** - VP Lawson
 - i. Lawson: Good afternoon, I hope everyone had a fun and relaxing break! Next week, Tuesday the 19th DAC and EAC are tabling for Women's History Month which will include a book display. Please sign up to the table on this day if you are interested. DAC is also working on a campus movie night to celebrate women's history month as well, and we will keep you posted about details. Lastly, we are working to prepare for our 2024-25 body and school year by talking about future legislation and event goals.
8. **Advisor Reports**
 - a. Guzman: Email will be sent on Monday to vote. Also, thank you to the Elections Commission.
 9. **University Committee Reports**
 10. **Adjournment at**

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- a. Public Comment - Part 2
- b. Roll Call - Part 2
- c. Call for Announcements
 - i. Johnson: I was planning on writing legislation about having sign language be recognized as a language here, but this will be happening anyways so I will not need to write legislation.
 - ii. Hallead: Make sure to nominate some people or organizations on the survey I sent on slack!
 - iii. Proctor: If you are returning to student senate, you are expected to go to the April 4 and 11 meetings, but if you are not coming back, March 28 is the last day for you.