



General Assembly

Thursday, March 25th, 2021 — 5:08 pm

Via Zoom

Interim President: Grace McMahon

Parliamentarian: Alexis Krichevsky

Please note: Minutes are summarized and exact words are not written

- I. Call Meeting to Order: 5:08pm
 - A. Moment of Silence for Native Land Recognition
 - B. Student Senate Creed
 - C. Pledge of Allegiance
- II. Roll Call - Part I
- III. Public Comment - Part I
 - A. McMahon: prefaces the conversation with noting that Senate will be partnering with University Administration to resolve issues through a committee which a university commitment has been made on
 - B. Eric Szczpaniak: Senate President from 2019-2020, congratulates Senate on a successful year and shares his support for a bolder approach to campus dining restructuring than what was presented by McMahon. He encourages Senate to support SFS and believes that the GVSU Run dining plan is more reliable than Aramark. Be bold in this and every action, and be warned that administrators are capable of waiting out a student's term as a senator if they are the only person who is working for something. Senate's silence on certain topics can be seen as compliance or agreement. Please use your (Senate's) raised voice to push against Aramark
 - C. Ryan Ruiz: President of Young Democratic Socialists of America in response to food sovereignty. He states that Aramark is atrocious in terms of ethics and quality, citing its involvement with the prison system and ICE. Disagrees with the Senate's current decision (and the comments they have made) in regards to their relationship with SFS. Ruiz states that some of the senators are illegally funded, and if they are not committed to representing students, then they should resign.
 - D. Damian Martinez: also urges Student Senate to take a stance with SFS to introduce real food to GVSU. Senators have been quoted as saying Grand Valley is the best of the best and that their goals are to remain equitable and sustainable, but these goals are not achieved if Senate supports Aramark. Students are not happy with the current dining system, and students are relying on Senate as their representatives
 - E. Foster Thorburn, member of YDSA: encourages Senate to approve/partner with SFS' proposal to bring real food to GVSU. Feels appalled that GVSU is partnered with Aramark. He also states that personally, as he is someone with an alternative diet, he has had trouble finding good, healthy food through campus dining.

- F. Reed Barker, GVSU SFS Core Team, GV student: urges Student Senate to take a stance on SFS' proposal. All Lakers deserve better food, and it is Senate's responsibility to take a stand on this.
 - G. Supervisor Adam Elenbaas: serves as the elected supervisor of Allendale Township. Typically there is a lot of interaction between GVSU and Allendale Township, and he is grateful for Senate's relationship with the community and for hosting the State of the Student Body.
 - H. Paul Villa: a student at GVSU, he is present to urge Student Senate to take a public stance on SFS' proposal. It's time for Senate to have a worthwhile role in the Senate community and to publish a statement of support for a proposal that has significant student support
 - I. Ethan Johnson, GVSU Student: urges Senate to take a public stance on SFS proposal which he believes will make GV a better community and serves the best interest of students. We cannot be "engaged, healthy, and empowered" while partnered with Aramark
 - J. Jenia Thompson: former VP of SRC, it is apparent that everyone on Senate is on the same page with not liking Aramark, but Thompson is more focused on individuals who are not being the nicest online; holding people accountable is needed and it's important to give constructive criticism while recognizing that we are all human. Hold people accountable, but don't be rude about it. Thompson knows that everyone on Senate is a good person and hopes they are taking care of themselves.
 - K. McMahon closes Part I with thanking all participants for their comments. Now is not the time to respond to each and every comment, but Senate looks forward to working on this and developing an inclusive space at the university with the input of all students.
- IV. Guest Speakers
 - V. Five (5) Minutes to Pass the Papers
 - VI. President's Report
 - A. Adoption of the Agenda - stands approved
 - B. Met with Provost Cimitile yesterday and received advice for moving forward with the rest of the semester, as well as how to get involved with the tuition process
 - C. Will be attending ECS tomorrow
 - VII. Executive Vice President's Report
 - A. Approval of the Minutes - stand approved.
 - B. Will be reaching out to Promotions to get the Composite ordered
 - C. In the process of Hiring a new Executive Office Assistant, please inform individuals if you believe them to be a good fit for the position
 - D. Elections are underway, the date to file has passed and voting will commence next week
 - VIII. Unfinished Business
 - IX. New Business
 - A. Review of the proposed Student Life Fund Budget - presented by Vice President Siegrist
 - i. Siegrist presents the tentative Student Life Fund Budget. He presents the historical context and distribution of the budget. He also thanks Director of Student Life Valerie Guzman for her work on this budget
 - ii. GV is anticipating the approximate same budget for next year as this year (i.e. approximately \$1.2 million). Siegrist emphasizes that we want to be fair with

each of the student orgs and making sure they are utilizing the budget to its full potential.

- iii. Most of the allocated budgets will remain the same; though Greek Life has received an increase in their budget. Greek Life gave a wonderful presentation on what the money will be sent on and ensuring it will be utilized effectively. This is the only budget that increased.
 - iv. In relation to the last fiscal year, there is not a lot of solid information, in part related to COVID. The hope is to provide student orgs with the same level of funding that they would have gotten originally.
 - v. Questions and Comments
 - a) Mueller: appreciates Siegrist's hard work on the budget
 - b) Senator J. Pearson: offers thanks for the thorough presentation
 - vi. This will be reviewed and voted on in two weeks
- B. Discussion on Resolution W-21-04: Higher Education Resolution
- i. Pagel and Raak presents this resolution which is a product of ERC
 - ii. Raak shares that this resolution's goal is to call "the State of Michigan to work with Student Senate and other Michigan Student Organizations to come up with proactive, equitable, and timely solutions to the challenges in higher education which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic."advocating for higher education funding
 - iii. Questions and Comments
 - a) Siegrist: this is a great resolution to pass in tandem with the resolution passed in response to the tuition increase; appreciates the work on this and believes it will have a tangible impact
- C. Call for New Orders of the Day
- i. Senator J. Pearson motions to add an open discussion on Aramark to New Business. The motion is seconded by Krichevsky.
 - a) McMahan sends out a Google Form in order to vote. The motion passes.
 - ii. McMahan reminds that everyone is allowed two times on the speakers list and that everyone remain respectful
 - iii. Discussion
 - a) Suchecki: this is a topic that Suchecki is personally very passionate about. DAC has been gathering research on Aramark for quite some time and Suchecki does not agree with Aramark as a whole, but also doesn't agree with needlessly bullying the university into positions and rudely calling out colleagues on social media. Things take time, and something as large as this will take time - it is a large contract that the University has. Personally feels that aligning ourselves with organizations that bully the Senate and University is not okay.
 - b) J. Pearson: fully supports getting rid of Aramark, and would like to know what Senate can do now. Pearson would like to work with other student organizations. It was disheartening to see how many students didn't think Senate was supporting the students. Pearson understands that people are

frustrated and concerned, but things take time and what has happened online was not professional.

- c) Byers: respectfully disagree with the statement that we shouldn't be pestering the university, as the offenses committed by Aramark are severe enough to warrant immediate action. Appreciates the efforts of SFS, and would fully support getting rid of Aramark.
- d) Gineman: appreciates everyone who has come to talk with Senate. Personally, is fully against Aramark (as is most if not all of DAC) which is why the committee has been researching Aramark for most of this academic year. Personally feels that there are so many individuals on Senate with this goal, but there is a best method to go about doing this
- e) Kidd: is an Aramark employee, has worked in food service for many years and is familiar with the treatment of food service workers, and can vouch for the statement that working for Aramark is the worst experience. Is happy to provide information and statistics that are provided in employee handbooks, and also encourages that ending the contract with Aramark through the appropriate channels
- f) Moine: appreciates everyone who has spoken up on the call and everyone who has pointed out that she doesn't believe that anyone in the present meeting supports Aramark; a liberal arts education teaches one to use critical thinking skills, to have a productive dialogue, etc. and these are the methods that will be utilized to achieve the goal. This is not an issue that Senate is ignoring or doesn't care about.
- g) Siegrist: the important thing to consider here is research, and taking a step back from our positions and recognizing what the impact would mean. There may be unintended consequences somewhere else when pushing for something. It's important from a finance perspective to look at the equality that comes from finding a cost-benefit analysis: if we switch contracts, what will the price look like for students? What are we willing to pay? Student Senate has had a method, research-oriented approach and is encouraged by this as well as the support the Student body has shown today. Urges everyone not to get pigeon-holed into one idea or one perspective
- h) Suchecki: wanted to echo Siegrist and Kidd's statements, and clarify that when it comes to pressuring the university, pressure is necessary, but bullying is unprofessional and ineffective. There have not been many instances of students sitting in on DAC meetings, and wishes that the turn out received today would be present throughout the year. Makes it a personal goal to attend some of the meetings of individuals who have spoken today
- i) Pagel: as representatives, we should want the best food options and student experiences for everyone. SFS has a good mission, but perhaps isn't going about it the right way. Hopes that we can find some common ground to accomplish this

- j) Frappier: briefly worked on Aramark with Neal at the beginning of his term, spoke with Senate advisor, people in the university and other faculty members - all of them have made it clear that the most important thing is having a relationship with the university. There are faculty members who support getting rid of Aramark, but recognizes it is not possible to get rid of a contract without administrative support.
- k) McMahon: we all seem to have the same goal, everyone seems to have the same goal, and we are creating these spaces where we want to invite individuals in, to call individuals in. McMahon is hopeful that we can make the change we want, but we do need university support to evaluate the contract that the university signed in order to do so. Appreciates all of those who have spoken.

X. Public Comment - Part II

- A. Damien Martinez: thanks everyone who is speaking on the issue. Glad to hear that many of the Senate are in agreement, but also wants to make it clear that most food providing companies are just the same, so a self-operating dining system is the best way to go. The least Senate can do is support the proposal if the goal is the same. Apologizes to anyone who has been a victim of targeted bullying. Encourages Senate to think about how much engagement is happening with this issue. There's also a lot of talk on restructuring the system on Aramark, but that is not a productive resolution. We know there is a process and things don't happen overnight, but we can't just sit back and do nothing. This is a social justice issue that needs to be addressed and needs to be addressed now. There has been lots of research and education already, it's important that we move forward with this process.
- B. Drew Bochenek: on behalf of the YDSA in support of SFS. In relation to the relationship between Senate and SFS, Aramark is not a good organization, this we can agree on, but not taking action does not look good, and making accusations against SFS are not productive. SFS feels that Senate views SFS as a joke, and not a legitimate organization. Listen to SFS as a group with invested interest for the welfare of students.
- C. Alex Hicks: Communications Director for SFS and administrative director for national SFS, the ask of Student Senate is not to make this suddenly better or suddenly change, but to take a stand with SFS. Hicks' audio cut out and they will continue at a later time
- D. Ryan Ruiz: in regards to the idea of a correct way to go about things is reminiscent of what politicians say when they don't want to do something right now. The goal of the university is to make and save money, and Aramark achieves these goals for them, so we must place pressure on them. The idea that SFS and YDSA is bullying senators is ridiculous, SFS will continue to put pressure on Senate if they continue to do a bad job. If you are not standing up for Student Senate, don't run for next year.
- E. Jay Chapa is not in Senate, SFS, or YDSA: agrees with everyone, Aramark is a company that GVSU needs to get away from, there is room for growth on this campus, and the biggest thing from someone watching all this happen is that there are a lot of opinions and a lot of grey area, but remember that everyone we are talking to is a real person. Everyone has proven they are worth being in these organizations and know what they're

talking about, and would like to see organizations that represent students work together with more collaboration and more kindness

- F. Hicks: (continues) SFS reached out to Senate first; felt that SFS didn't feel supported by Senate and that the Cabinet conversation was unacceptable. Asking to tone-police our peers is unfair. Senate has been aware of Aramark for two years now and have still not taken action. Senate is only limited in what they can or cannot do. Since when should students benefit Senate? The relationship should be the other way around, as Senate serves the student. Anyone that's interested in working with SFS is happy to have you
- G. Cara Smith: not someone who is affiliated with SFS or Student Senate, a member of the LGBT community; the first thing they saw was an Instagram debacle, feels that SFS needs to realize how much work senators are putting in; reached out to some senators and feel that they are personally invested in this. Student Senate represents Students, but they also have a responsibility to represent and maintain their organization. This was a very disrespectful form of bullying, and wanted to express their appreciation for Student Senate and the hard work they put in on these issues. Hopes Senate can work with SFS in the future. In order for someone to represent their constituents, those constituents have to ask accordingly and respectfully

XI. Officer Reports

- A. Senate Resources - Krichevsky
 - i. Krichevsky shares that she is available if someone needs to chant, especially in light of the difficult conversations just had
 - ii. SRC is planning a final bonding event that will hopefully take place outside
 - iii. Met with the Kirkhof Steering Committee and will continue to bring information to Senate as this committee continues to meet
- B. Allocations - Siegrist
 - i. Presented the Student Life Fund Budget, which is approximately the final responsibility as VP of Allocations.
 - ii. Shares appreciation for those he has worked with this year on Senate
- C. Public Relations - Moine
 - i. The form to file to run for elections closed last night and voting will begin on Monday at 8am
 - ii. Questions
 - a) Frappier: if you plan on running with somebody, how do you go about that? Moine: you can run with up to a total of three people, authorization must be obtained from the elections commission, so reach out to Moine and Neal in order to receive approval
- D. Campus Affairs - Frappier
 - i. Thanks McMahon for her taking over of EVP and President roles
 - ii. Senator Jim and Frappier will be hosting a community service event on Saturday that senators are welcome to volunteer and assist with
- E. Educational Affairs - Mueller
 - i. Thanks everyone for the productive dialogue and will take everything into consideration to develop further

- ii. If anyone would like to participate in the ULAC strategic planning, please inform Mueller or join on Zoom Link. There will be a meeting tomorrow that will focus back on the Libraries and internal operations
 - F. Diversity Affairs - Neal
 - i. Neal will be attending the Ceasar Chavez event next week
 - ii. DAC will be doing a wrap-up project on pronouns, met with Marla Wick to discuss this.
 - G. External Relations - Pagel
 - i. Earlier this week, ERC participated in an archive day - information on this is available in Google Drive
 - ii. Raak and Pagel attended a few more meetings on Housing resolution
 - iii. Pagel shares the Battle of the Valleys Ratified Rules Agreement document which was established this last week
- XII. Subcommittee Reports
- XIII. University Committee Reports
 - A. Raak, University Assessment: assessments are underway for this round's docket, so this should be done within the next month. Working on remodeling GVSS
 - B. Raak, Academic modeling advisory committee: Zoom released a new captioning feature, though it was not very accurate so reach out to DSR if captioning is desired or needed. Contract with Blackboard expires in two years, so the discussion on Blackboard Ultra vs. Canvas will take place up until the contract ends in 2023
 - C. Siegrist, FSBC: discussed budget and faculty's push for a raise
- XIV. Roll Call - Part II
- XV. Call for Announcements
 - A. Zdunczyk: Center for Women and Gender Equity is doing a Take Back the Night event on April 9-10th where people can stop by where they are tabling to pick up supplies to make cards for survivors of human trafficking
 - B. Cargill: in regards to subcommittees, if anyone would like to see her transitions report or would like to talk about being a chair of a subcommittee, they can contact her. Additionally, SUS is working with the Office of Sustainability to adopt a garden bed, so SUS will be going out there the week before exams to plant a vegetable or fruit - information on this will be placed in the Slack
 - C. McMahon: thanks the Senate body for their commitment to the students of Grand Valley.
- XVI. Adjournment: 6:49pm