

Grand Valley State University Student Senate

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MINUTES

Thursday, February 19th, 2026

Devos 201A, 5:15 PM

Chair: Evan Jackson

Vice Chair: Ty Vanlerberghe

Parliamentarian: William Laurin



Minutes

1. Call To Order

- a. Meeting was called to order at 5:16 PM.
- b. Approval of the Minutes
 - i. Previous meeting's minutes stand approved.
- c. Passing of the Papers
 - i. Chair Hartley passed a paper that described in full the proposed 2026-2027 Student Life Fund budget.

2. Public Comment

- a. No comments were made at this time.

3. Executive Reports

- a. **President** - Evan Jackson
 - i. Good afternoon, I want to begin by thanking each of you for the time, focus, and intentionality you brought to last week's letter-writing effort. Coordinated advocacy requires preparation and discipline, and you demonstrated both. I am looking forward to hearing updates during General Announcements about how those conversations unfolded and any responses you may have received. That kind of follow-through matters.
 - ii. Building on our recent conversations around the Reach Higher Together Strategic Plan and the Academic Affairs Strategic Framework, it became clear that there is a natural alignment between the questions you have raised about the future of technology at Grand Valley and the current work underway within Information Technology.
 - iii. As you recall, Student Senate helped facilitate two town halls focused on the future of technology at GVSU. That work positioned us well. Now, we will be serving as a structured focus group for IT, representing the student

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perspective as the university develops parallel plans for technology infrastructure, AI integration, digital access, and instructional support. As you engage in this conversation, I want to challenge you to think in what feels like a paradox: be broad and be specific. Be broad in articulating principles—access, equity, reliability, innovation, preparedness. Be specific in identifying friction points—platform redundancies, communication gaps, classroom technology inconsistencies, data transparency, and AI policy clarity.

- iv. I have worked closely with Emil and his team to help refine the questions guiding today’s session. I am confident that the range of experiences represented in this room will produce thoughtful and actionable insight.
 - v. Looking ahead: February 26 – State of the Student Body. This is a required event for all members. It is a public-facing moment of shared governance and institutional accountability.
 - vi. The following week, we will host a brief bonding and decompression event in light of midterms. This is our final General Assembly before Spring Break. We will reconvene on March 19 for our long-anticipated meeting with Vice President Truss and the Admissions and Enrollment team. That conversation will be substantive and forward-looking as we examine enrollment strategy, student experience, and institutional positioning.
 - vii. The work ahead is meaningful. Thank you for continuing to approach it with seriousness and clarity.
- b. **Vice President** - Ty Vanlerberghe
- i. Hi, everyone! Happy Thursday! A couple of quick notes from me today.

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- ii. First, on Monday, I met with Vice Provost for Advising and Student Success, Cathy Buyarski, to discuss co-hosting an Administrative Barriers Townhall to help better understand barriers students are facing in the classroom. We have planned to hold this event on March 18th from 11:45-2PM in the Kirkhof Thornapple room. Stay tuned for more details.
 - iii. Second, on Tuesday, Senator Rodgers and I presented our Course Marking initiative to the Provost's Cabinet and got a lot of great feedback from leaders within the division of Academic Affairs. This is great news for us, and we will continue this "roadshow" until the initiative is fully implemented.
 - iv. Third, tomorrow in Kirkhof Center is the Office of Student Life's Leadership Summit. We have four students from the Student Senate presenting, so stop on by! Anyone can drop in and out during the event.
 - v. Finally, if you haven't bought your President's Ball ticket already—do so! The event is coming up fast, and this is a big opportunity in Student Life that we support. Tickets can be purchased at gvsu.edu/presidentsball.
- c. **Chief of Staff** - William Laurin
- i. Good evening everyone, I hope we're all doing well tonight. I only have a couple of updates:
 - ii. Earlier today I met with the Elections Commission and officially verified our first petition packet. While we still have a bit of time left, I am encouraging you all to keep elections in mind, as starting tomorrow you will only have one week to register for the ballot. If you have any questions regarding signature collection, please let me know.
 - iii. On a similar note, there have been some recent instances of national political organizations attempting to offer assistance for student

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government candidates in the form of campaign support. I want to clarify that accepting assistance from any sort of Political Action Committee, political party, or any other form of campaign support is strictly prohibited which can and will lead to disqualification from the election process. Campaigns should be managed solely by the candidate running.

iv. If there are no questions, I will yield back to President Jackson.

4. Student Life Fund Budget

a. Bri Slager, Assistant Director of Student Organizations

i. Chair Hartley and Assistant Director of Student Organizations, Bri Slager reviewed the current 2025-2026 budget, and the proposal for the 2026-2027 budget. Hartley and Slager opened the floor for discussion.

1. Schuen: For the RSO promotional services fund, is there a reason we are decreasing this?

a. Slager: We connected with the Promotions Office to see what they actually find use out of, and they found that RSO's really only focus on banners, not the other materials included in the free packages. We are working with them to provide more free packages that look different than they do now. This will provide RSOs more options, and decrease upfront costs.

2. Driver: When you send executive board members for travel is there a limit to how many can attend?

i. Hartley: Yes, \$500 limit/student for 5 students.

3. Hardgrave: To clarify, is it just Student Senate costs for RSO media services?

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- i. Hartley: No, it applies to all RSOs who use the items in meeting rooms, such as projectors.
 4. Hardgrave: Is there a thought of advertising the travel funds more, if they aren't being fully used now?
 - a. Hartley: Not currently. We are seeing less money being used because there have been less national conventions being held since COVID. Every organization that attends Ignite should know about the travel funds.
 5. Boujoulian: Why did the Student Org Recognition fund get zeroed out?
 - a. Slager: The Student Organization Recognition account receives a base budget altogether, so there is no longer a need for there to be a reserved allocated amount in the budget.
 6. Hardgrave: Where does SPARK fall under? Will it continue or be a programming budget?
 - a. Hartley: That money comes from the Reserve Fund. Funding for that program will be up to the next Senate Cabinet to continue.
 7. Fedototzkin: If we don't spend the whole budget, does that leftover go to the reserves?
 - a. Hartley: Yes, however, most money gets spent now.
 8. Westbrooks: What do you mean by tapering off from the reserves? Does this have anything to do with GVSU offices, does this affect their budgets?

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- a. Hartley: When an org comes in to make requests, we sometimes use the Reserve Fund. We create a timeline of tapered funding, so that they know in advance they can't rely on it forever.

5. Information Technology

- a. Emil Delgado, Associate Vice President for Information Technology
 - i. Associate Vice President for Information Technology, Emil Delgado briefed the General Assembly on IT's next Digital Transformation. This covered IT's vision to pioneer a new future with technology on GVSU's campus through service excellence, modernization, and acceleration through transformation.
 1. Eapen: From a faculty perspective, what are the concerns you are hearing about?
 - a. Delgado: Reliability, training, usability, classroom experience, quality, research, and equity and access.
 2. Lipscomb: I would like to see a change for authenticating for logging into Blackboard, I have to login again only after a few minutes of a break. Also signals for connecting to Blackboard, having to walk out of the classroom and come back just to get a signal.
 3. Potter: We were talking about how interesting it was to see how similar environments and experiences are for students. Our topics were really down into the weeds, our biggest thing was teaching education on how to have professors structure their Blackboard systems easier or make them more accessible.

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4. Finley: As someone who isn't tech-savvy, when it comes to a better use of making schoolwork easier, can we have all of our PDF's and files for GVSU and work in its own separate systems, as my files get lost easily.
 - a. Eapen: Having files transfer across buildings computers would be super helpful too, even a shared network drive.
5. Theakston: I was going to bring up an idea we had, which was to have a better streamline of the Blackboard calendar and switching it and being able to transfer it to google or apple calendars personally.
6. Hartley: How much control does your department have over Blackboard? Can you go in yourself and modify Blackboard or is it through the company? Would it be possible to have a dedicated "tasks" or "assignments tab"?
7. Sanour: I understand that there needs to be two-factor authentication, however, it tends to not keep me logged in. Also, whenever an assignment is due, sometimes it's wordy and it won't necessarily show me in the moment through a notification what the notice entails.
8. Driver: When it comes to the activities tab, it will show upcoming and due. But, they don't technically update. Sometimes assignments still come up as overdue.
9. Rees: When it comes to two-factor authentication, I feel as though if you lose or misplace your phone, sometimes you absolutely cannot text the code for verification. As nice as it is, it feels very heavily dependent upon mobile devices to access Blackboard.

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10. Westbrooks: I think there needs to be a different system for authentication besides mobile devices as well.
 11. Rogers: We talk about Respondus and Lockdown Browser for Atech. I am against them for in-person classes, is there a way to limit using these systems or not having it up to a professor for in-person classes? In Blackboard when it detects if i am using AI, sometimes I don't use AI but it says that we are.
 12. Fedototzkin: I am a researcher in immersive technology, and a lot of people don't fully utilize VR tech. Students could practice interviews and further develop professionally. For an outreach kind of thing, maybe the computing department or the IT department in the future could utilize virtual reality in the future.
 13. McCann: What resources does GVSU IT have for things outside of Blackboard? A lot of my homework is done through a textbook app, so there can be confusion when prof's don't have answers to questions. We have to go through many hoops for this.
 14. Tavern: I know for my spanish classes we have an option for Connect. It doesn't connect due dates through connect to Blackboard. If we could find a way to move over notifications would be helpful.
 15. Almas: More classroom accessible charging in classrooms, and the new Lakerline usb ports are nice!
 16. Hartley: I could be wrong, but we weren't given a guide to blackboard, have you ever thought about partnering with orientation or RA's as a blackboard tutorial session?

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17. Sanour: On my laptop it works, but on my phone could I use a biometric authenticator like Face ID?

- a. All questions were further answered by Delgado, along with a final summary of what is to come with the Information Technology Division.

6. Reverse Vending Machine Legislation Vote

- a. Chair McDonough and Senator Hardgrave
 - i. Senator Hardgrave proposed the final draft of W-26-02, Reverse Vending Machines to the General Assembly before a final vote.
 1. Jackson: I will entertain a motion to vote on W-26-02, Reverse Vending Machines.
 - a. Vanlerberghe: So moved.
 - b. Almas: Second.
 - i. Motion passed with a vote of 35-0-0, and the bill was passed unanimously.

7. Call for Announcements

- a. Advisor Reports
 - i. Haight:
 1. Excited for all of the fun events coming up! Vanderbush awards are on the dean of students website, high-qualifying seniors and juniors are now open for nominations. I met downtown alongside Jeremy Paul with student groups to discuss campus vibrancy, and they had great ideas and great feedback. We discussed study spots, food options, parking and security issues. I will share this feedback with you soon.
- ii. Guzman:

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1. I yield.

b. Chair Reports

i. Allocations - Lukas Hartley

1. Hi everyone! Thanks for your attention to the budget presentation earlier this evening. Last week, Allocations approved two requests, Omicron Delta Kappa and Laker Vets. This week, we're hearing requests from Muslim Student Association and Young Democratic Socialists of America. As always, if you have any questions, please reach out! Have a great weekend.

ii. Public Relations - Sophie Gemmen

1. Hello everyone, and happy Thursday!

2. If you plan to submit a design for the merch design competition, you have one week to get it to me for PRC to vote on!

3. Otherwise, I look forward to seeing you all at the State of the Student Body next week, and in the meantime, enjoy the weather, get some sun, and watch some Olympics hockey. Have a good weekend!

iii. Advocacy - Genna Wright

iv. Policy - Cera McDonough

1. No report.

v. Events - Karen Theakston

1. Happy National Arabian Horse Day!

2. There will be a bonding event on March 5th, information will be given either tomorrow or beginning of next week. As usual, reach out to me if you are interested in the Events Chair position.

c. General Announcements

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- i. Eapen: Happy to announce we are running Multicultural Night again. Please spread the word!
 - ii. Hartley: Senate March Madness Senate Bracket coming soon.
 - iii. Vanlerberghe: There will be a Euchre Club tournament on Feb. 27th at 5:00 PM. There is a chance to win some cool prizes! You do need to register for the event.
 - iv. Finley: I had the opportunity to travel to a conference with the Provost's Office and the I&E cohort. This conference was centered around better understanding students' sense of belonging, and we do this by conducting focus groups to generate engagement and feedback. Please let me know if you'd like to join!
 - v. Hardgrave: Policy committee met today and I hope to discuss meeting with housing and residence life to connect about the pet policy.
 1. Haight: Email me so I can connect you to specific stakeholders!
 - vi. Jackson: Has anyone had a response from a legislator? If so, please let me know and I can provide further details.
 1. Gemmen: I was told to encourage friends and peers to send more letters to legislators specifically. Please encourage others to share with a Michigan representative!

8. Public Comment

- a. No comments were made at this time.

9. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM.