

# Grand Valley State University Student Senate

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY MINUTES

Thursday, February 12th, 2026

Kirkhof 2204, 5:15 PM

Chair: Evan Jackson

Vice Chair: Ty Vanlerberghe

Parliamentarian: William Laurin



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### *Minutes*

#### **1. Call To Order**

- a. Approval of the Minutes
  - i. Previous minutes stand approved.
- b. Passing of the Papers
  - i. There were no papers to be passed at this time.

#### **2. Public Comment**

- a. Students from Citizen's Climate Lobby presented to members of the General Assembly.

#### **3. Executive Reports**

- a. **President** - Evan Jackson
  - i. Good afternoon, I would like to begin with an important institutional update. Last Friday, the Board of Trustees formally endorsed the Reach Higher Together Strategic Plan. This marks a significant milestone for the university and reflects years of collaborative work across governance bodies, faculty, staff, and students.
  - ii. Also last Friday, the University Academic Senate met for the first time this semester. During that meeting, I had the opportunity to share the many initiatives Student Senate has been advancing—from SPARK Fund implementation to strategic partnerships and student advocacy efforts. Our colleagues in shared governance continue to express genuine respect for the seriousness and intentionality with which you approach this work. The impact you are making is visible beyond this room.
  - iii. As you saw in my message earlier this week, we will be doing something different during today's General Assembly. It was difficult to ignore the energy and focus you brought when Stacie, Jess, and Robert joined us.

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The level of engagement in that conversation made it clear that this body has both the capacity and the desire to advocate meaningfully for our university. Rather than letting that momentum pass, I believe it is worth channeling it. Tonight, we are joined again by Vice President Stacie Behler, who will help facilitate a structured letter-writing effort to our respective state senators and representatives. Focused, coordinated advocacy—particularly when it comes directly from students—has measurable influence. Legislators track communication. They count engagement. They pay attention when students speak clearly and collectively about the future of public higher education. This exercise is not symbolic. It is strategic. By sending these letters together, in a coordinated and intentional way, we demonstrate that students are organized, informed, and invested in the long-term strength of Grand Valley.

- iv. Beyond tonight, we will also discuss additional avenues for engagement—whether that includes continued written advocacy, coordinated outreach, or potentially organizing a visit to Lansing to further elevate the student perspective. I am genuinely excited about this opportunity. We have a real chance to demonstrate the collective power of the student voice.
  - v. Thank you for stepping into that responsibility. I now yield to Vice President Vanlerberghe.
- b. **Vice President - Ty Vanlerberghe**
- i. Hi, everyone! Happy Thursday! A short report from me today.
  - ii. First, and most excitingly, I would like to congratulate a Senator-Elect, Avery Schuen. Avery was recently appointed by the Padnos College of

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Engineering to fill its vacant representative seat. Senator-elect Scheun is a 4th-year engineering student and the president of the FanGV Robotics club here on campus.

- iii. Second, next week, I will be meeting with the Provost's Cabinet alongside Senator Rodgers to advance our Course Marking's initiative, as well as Vice Provost for Academic Advising and Student Success Cathy Buyarski to discuss potentially collaborating on an event aiming to reduce administrative barriers to student success at Grand Valley. I will continue to provide updates as needed.
- iv. Third, and finally, also next week, President Jackson and I will meet with members of Avanti Law—the law firm we have contracted to support the Student Legal Services project that is anticipated to launch in April. This meeting will serve as a meet-and-greet for the firm and Student Senate and I am excited to share back about what is to come from this exciting meeting.
- v. I now yield Chief of Staff Laurin.

c. **Chief of Staff** - William Laurin

- i. Good evening everyone, I hope you are all doing well tonight and are coping well with the coming midterms.
- ii. I wanted to take this opportunity to quickly run through the events requirement for the semester and the procedure for submitting completed events to make sure we are all on the same page. Each of you are required to attend four events over the course of the semester that are sanctioned by me and/or announced in the opportunities channel in slack. There is also a Google Sheet in the Drive labeled Events Requirement that I periodically update with valid events. At the bottom of this same sheet can be found a

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form to submit your completed events. This usually takes the form of a photo, however if you forget to snap a picture, just shoot me a message and we can get it figured out.

- iii. That's really it from me, if there are no questions, I will yield back to President Jackson.

#### 4. Letters to Legislators

- a. Stacie Behler
  - i. Vice President and Chief Communications and Public Affairs Officer, Stacie Behler presented a "Letters to Legislators" program to the Student Senate. Members of the General Assembly wrote letters to help their legislators better understand how Grand Valley impacts the state.

#### 5. RVM Legislation

- a. Chair McDonough and Senator Hardgrave did a first-read of their bill, W-26-02.
  - i. Gemmen: You talked a little about how this started, is there anything that sparked this?
    1. Hardgrave: Anything that you buy a drink in a can and don't recycle it yourself, you still get a deposit fee. If students are able to deposit it themselves, they'd get a better return on investment.
  - ii. Taverne: I think the biggest struggle with this would be getting students to care enough, especially sustainability. Something like this that would directly benefit students might be more beneficial if you can get this to administration.
    1. McDonough: When I met with Doug, he felt this was very possible. He said this idea does seem like something that is tangible.

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- iii. Sanour: I think you put a lot of thought into this! I think of students who don't have transportation means to deposit cans, this is a great option for them.
  - iv. Smith: I just wanted to say that living in one of the older dorm styles, a lot of students unfortunately throw a lot of trash into the ravines. I think this plan will help curb that and it will really benefit our campus environmentally.
  - v. Garrett: I love this idea, however, one of my concerns is that not every brand is accepted. Will that be an issue too?
    - 1. Vanlerberghe: I have had conversations with Doug, this would only be applicable to items sold on our campus.
  - vi. Boujoulian: I am fully on board. A couple thoughts, how big will these be and where do you see them being placed?
    - 1. McDonough: The university admin will probably choose specific locations where they believe these to be best fit.
  - vii. Senour: What will students get for their return?
    - 1. McDonough: The university will also probably decide that in the future, whether it will be a meal credit or something different.
    - 2. Vanlerberghe: If this were to pass, we would send this off to Jenny Hall-Jones and then have many conversations on how this would look. Sometimes things shift! Conversations on how this can be specifically implemented will happen then.

### 6. Call for Announcements

#### a. Advisor Reports

- i. Haight: I loved the activity for today! Have a great week, I hope to see you at President's Ball!

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ii. Guzman: I yield.

b. Chair Reports

i. Allocations - Lukas Hartley

1. Good evening everyone! Hope everyone has had a great week. One important update from me:
2. Next week, I will be presenting the proposed 2026-2027 Student Life Fund Budget to our General Body. It will then be voted on the next time we formally meet, after spring break.
3. Aside from that, last week, Allo approved Miracle Network Dance Marathon and Black Student Union for campus programming.
4. This week, we're hearing requests from Laker Vets and Omicron Delta Kappa.
5. As always, if you have any questions, reach out to me.

ii. Public Relations - Sophie Gemmen

1. Hello everyone, and happy Thursday!
2. First, PRC is as busy as ever, and I'd like to give a big shout-out to all of my committee members for their efforts so far this semester, as well as a thank-you to everyone who reposts what we design on Instagram!
3. Second, an action item! To help us launch our TikTok, don't forget to send Senator Bella Frikken!! Her number is posted in the Random channel in Slack.
4. Lastly! It's beginning to look like merch season, and we need designs for sweatshirts, quarterzips, t-shirts, and crewnecks! To spice things up a bit, PRC will be holding a small and friendly design competition. Make a merch design, send it to me before

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Thursday, February 26th to have the PR committee vote on our favorite design to have on our next round of merch!

5. If you're interested in PR Chair, please Slack me to set up a meeting time. If you have any other questions – Slack me too!
6. Thank you all, and have a great weekend.

iii. Advocacy - Genna Wright

1. Hi everyone! I have a few updates.
2. First we had our sex ed week tabling partnered with the health and wellness center, it went amazing, thank you to everyone who stopped by.
3. We will also be having our first ever black history showcase February 23rd 1-4 in kirkhof rm 2263, partnered with black student union, we would love to see you all there and we will be having another post go out on our instagram and it would be awesome if everyone could repost.
4. Lastly, as I say every week, please reach out to me if you are interested in running for advocacy chair in our coming election.
5. I yield.

iv. Policy - Cera McDonough

1. Good Evening yall, Policy has been reaching out to our relevant liaisons and in the process in scheduling meetings to meet with them. This Saturday is the Zero Waste Basketball game so if you're interested in volunteering, please reach out to senator Hardgrave.

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2. As well, Senator Lloyd and Senator Fedototszkin are in the works in hosting a Yoga class to promote mental and physical health. They will discuss this further about this in public comment.
  3. Today during our committee meeting, the Citizen Climate Lobby came and spoke to us about their initiative to input solar shading windows and energy efficient lighting around campus. They asked for our opinions and helped to guide them to implement this. We had a very exciting conversation and we are excited to help support them. If you are interested in their initiative, please reach me or Senator Hardgrave for further information.
- v. Events - Karen Theakston
1. Happy national giving hearts day! I wish I were feeling well enough to deliver my report in person, but here are our updates.
  2. For Elect Her, we're beginning to send invitations to elected officials to serve on the panel, and we're also finalizing the event agenda. We will be tabling for this event, so look out for a sign-up sheet coming soon.
  3. Our next bonding event is scheduled for March 5th and will take place in place of our GA. More details will be shared next week, but please keep that date free.
- c. General Announcements
- i. Senators Fedototszkin and Lloyd described a proposed Policy event they will be hosting, which is a yoga class to promote mental and physical health.
  - ii. Hardgrave: We need some extra volunteers at the 3PM zero-waste basketball game! You will still have time for Valentine's day plans!

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- iii. Frikken: Re-cap on the DCIH event! It went really well, and it is exactly everything we had been planning and hoping for.
  - iv. Gemmen: Tomorrow is senior night for GVSU men's hockey. We are working with a chuck a duck at the game. If you are attending, please check in with me while you're there so that I know who can help clean up ducks off the rink.
  - v. Jackson: Last thing, I need all of you to fill out the Day of Giving tee shirt form.

### **7. Public Comment**

### **8. Adjournment**

- a. Meeting adjourned at 6:57 PM.