

Grand Valley State University Student Senate

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MINUTES

Thursday, September 25th, 2025

Kirkhof 2204, 5:15 p.m.

Chair: Evan Jackson

Vice Chair: Ty Vanlerberghe

Parliamentarian: William Laurin



Agenda

1. Call To Order

- a. Approval of the Minutes
 - i. Previous minutes stand approved.
- b. Passing of the Papers
 - i. A thank-you card dedicated to Doug Wentworth.

2. Public Comment

- a. Alex Olstead presented a public report of international students regarding the safety of their community on campus.

3. Executive Reports

- a. **President** - Evan Jackson
 - i. Good evening, everyone. Thank you for being here tonight and for the commitment you bring to this space.
 1. I want to start with a quick acknowledgement: I had the opportunity to meet with Dean Lawson from the Seidman College of Business this week, and she will be helping us identify a new representative to fill our Seidman vacancy.
 2. I also want to share a very exciting initiative that connects directly to the campus vibrancy challenge President Mantella has asked all of us to support. Student Senate, in partnership with Event Services from the Office of Student Life, has launched a new pilot program we're calling the SPARK Fund—Student Programming and Recreation at Kirkhof. Here's how it works: starting this weekend, RSOs hosting Friday, Saturday, or Sunday events can apply directly through Event Services for up to \$500 in support. On top of that, after successfully hosting their event, they'll also receive a

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\$75 food credit for their next meeting. This is a revitalization and reimagination of a program the Kirkhof Center once ran, and the hope is that through this pilot, the University will see the appeal and ultimately take over funding long-term. If you're involved in an organization—or know students who are—please spread the word. The more successful this pilot is, the stronger the case for making it permanent.

3. As for tonight's meeting: after we process our funding requests, we'll be breaking into mixed teams made up of new senators, returning senators, and members from each committee. Each team will be tasked with answering three questions. You'll have 30 minutes to collaborate, think creatively, and put ideas on paper. Afterwards, we'll come back together to share the best answers and insights. I'm really looking forward to seeing what you come up with.
4. Outside of that, not too many other updates—I will be meeting with Colleen Bailey next week if anyone would like to join me. And of course, don't forget about our two big events coming up: our Student Solutions Summit and our Open House next week. Both are critical opportunities to show students who we are and what we do.
5. My call to action tonight comes from Margaret J. Wheatley, who said: "There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about." The work you do in your teams tonight is exactly that—discovering what matters, sharing ideas, and creating solutions. I encourage you to lean into it fully,

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because the insights you generate here can shape the direction of the Senate this year. Thank you all for your leadership. Let's keep building momentum. With that, I'll turn it over to Vice President Vanlerberghe.

- ii. McDonnough: When will the housing meeting be?
 - 1. Jackson: Anyone interested, please Slack me and I will get you the correct information.
- iii. Mulvenna: Can you send out some information regarding SPARK?
 - 1. Jackson: Yes, I will send it in Slack after the meeting.

b. **Vice President** - Ty Vanlerberghe

- i. Happy Thursday, everyone!
 - 1. First, thank you everyone for your participation in our semesterly headshots today. I appreciate those of you who utilized the sign-up sheet and those who helped us out by showing up early. I should have all of the pictures sent out to everyone later tonight or tomorrow. Be on the lookout in your Slack messages.
 - 2. Second, earlier today I met with Libby Jawish from the Padnos International Center to discuss the International Student Holiday Hosting program we passed legislation on last year and am happy to report that she and her office have begun working on implementing the program soon to support our international student population. Additionally, I have upcoming meetings with Michelle Rhodes and Danny Velez from Financial Aid and Admissions, Christine Renner from the Faculty Teaching and

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Learning Center, and Edward Jones II from the Campus Health Center. Please let me know if you would like to be included.

3. Third, on Monday, Senators Dykhuis, Finley, Rodgers, and I attended the first taskforce meeting for our Course Marking bill that we passed last year. We are working with several members of the Provost Cabinet and the Registrar to implement this project, with an expectation of full incorporation in registration for the Fall 2027 scheduling. This Sunday, Chief of Staff Laurin, Chair Gemmen, and I will be representing our organization at the OSU's e-board training, Ignite. If you are attending with another organization, please let me know. If anyone has any questions, please do not hesitate to Slack me or email me.

- ii. I will now yield to Chief of Staff Laurin for his report.

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

- i. Good afternoon everyone, it's great to see you all back today, I hope that your pictures treated you well. I have a brief report for you all today.
 1. To begin, yesterday I met with the Judiciary Committee and had a productive first session. As a reminder, if you know you are going to miss a GA, please submit the form found in our Google Drive.
 2. Secondly, I just wanted to say that a good number of you are well on your way to completing your events requirements. I want to encourage everyone to keep up their hard work, and of course, if you have something that you think should be counted as an event, be sure to utilize the form found in our event spreadsheet.

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3. Third, I am saddened to share that we have had two more senator resignations; Sarah Buchanan and Harrison Shackelford. We hope to have them back in the future, but for now be sure to thank them for their contributions whenever you get the chance.
4. That's all from me, I yield back to President Jackson.

4. Funding Request

- a. Black Student Union - Aux Wars
 - i. Hartley: Allocations approved a request for the Black Student Union's "Aux Wars" event. The request has an adjusted total of \$22,991, and has events planned such as live games and other live entertainment.
 1. McDonnough: What time will the event be?
 - a. Hartley: Thursday of Homecoming week, at the fieldhouse.
 2. Dykhuis: I thought gift cards were not allowed to be distributed as a prize?
 - a. Hartley: Since the gift card purchase was a part of the contract, we have a special exception from the Business and Finance division. Students will be verified as they enter the Fieldhouse with their GVSU Student ID to make sure only students are getting gift cards.
 3. Taylor: Will Student Senate's branding be attached to this?
 - a. Hartley: Yes, we will move forward with this event with Senate branding.
 4. Dykstra: What event will this be replacing? Would it be team-based?

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- a. Hartley: Lip Sync battle will be removed and replaced with Aux Cord Wars. Teams will be made up of student organizations.
5. Wood-Burgeous: Are there any measures being taken for students to be safe with big crowds?
 - a. Hartley: I believe part of that is covered with the event planner Corporate Live and campus safety is also partnering with us to keep this event as safe for students as possible.
6. Wright: I would like to endorse my support for this event, I believe the BSU puts on very fun events with lots of students coming to attend. I motion to approve this funding request.
7. Vanlerberghe: Second.
- ii. Motion was approved unanimously, with a vote of 38-0-0.

5. Business

- a. The Student Senate body broke into teams made up of members from each committee to answer policy-related questions in a think-tank format. Teams' questions and responses were shared.
 - i. Group One:
 1. Loneliness epidemic for transfer, international, first-year, and commuter students. Could be resolved through a potential overnight orientation to build community.
 2. Resource accessibility for disability and minority communities, bus routes, affordability.

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3. Students have lost faith in admin in some capacity. With the importance of effective communication, inviting SLT to more events.
- ii. Group Two:
 1. More-involved welcome week. Make the welcome week longer, some students arrive on campus earlier and can attend more events. Evolving gen-ed courses, making these more guided towards a student's major.
 2. Bussing routes wanted towards Allendale. Also, providing another dining hall option. Higher pay for student wages and stricter regulations on quality control. Adding more bike and scooter lanes.
- iii. Group Three:
 1. Making sure all students feel welcome to reduce the drop-out rate. The Senate could work with CAB etc.
 2. Housing and Finances. Lack of internal scholarship, funding, merit scholarships, overall costs of GVSU. Aid rewards more clear and more consistent. Possibly adding a parking garage, more housing, and bus routes.
 3. Students can submit opinions and complaints on a 24/7 digital input on the senate or GVSU website to keep it more personal. Point of contact/liaisons for diff cultural groups on campus, seminars affecting these minorities (e.g. Visa's). Doing more events.
- iv. Group Four:
 1. Students understand resources applicable to them. Advertising can feel overwhelming, ensuring advisor pairings are correct.

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2. Sustainable agriculture project, Replenish, student accessible resources, supporting replenish for winter clothing drive, internal study on food insecurity, advertising public comment more, Isolating first-year classes in Allendale and major-specific courses downtown. Counselors should be clear about commuting for downtown classes before they enroll into the course. MyPath website showing textbooks.
 3. Focusing on freshmen living centers with no AC, RAs reinforcing friendliness and quality of life, room checks for trash and insects. Offices from the advocacy committee. Having prof's share info on committee's events in classes, incentives for prof's and students.
- v. Group Five:
1. Campus vibrancy, why cant every week be like welcome week. Lack of events in the winter. Updating north campus residence halls.
 2. Resources access has a lack of awareness of opportunities and resources as a whole. There are many resources out there, but students may not know how to ask. Promoting diversity, personality, and care of the people on the senate alongside the groups we work with and for.
- vi. Group Six:
1. Transportation/parking accessibility. Bus routes straight to campuses instead of conjoining.
- vii. Group 7:
1. Mentorship program for international students.

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2. Encouraging more family events for students without vehicles. More opportunities for them to have families travel. Instead of “family weekend”, renaming it.
3. Being able to find people within the same major. Mixer events don’t really work. Connecting UAS and senate with bonding events.

viii. Group 8:

1. Housing; Lack of awareness of clubs and activities can be overwhelming in communications. Intentionally challenging the mindset of the college experience. Students grow by learning about other student groups. Structuring classes and environments with overnight orientations, cohorts, really connecting with peers. Public transit.
2. Prof’s that give “the ick”. Attendance policies being inconsistent, phone policies are inconsistent, laptop use is inconsistent. Understanding and rewarding thought processes by prof’s as well instead of just getting the right answers, participation grades. GVPD not seeming PD-like. Lack of security infrastructure. Lack of parking infrastructure.
 - a. Vanlerberghe: I liked what you had to say about safety surveillance. I will be sending a link for “Campus Safety Nightwalks” to help identify potential safety hazards with a fresh perspective.
 - b. Olivia: Have they followed up with safety concerns?
 - i. Jackson: We will be hearing more from GVPD.

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3. Better communication and general awareness of our org. And programs. Broadcasting to students to achieve tangible announcements for students to be a part of. Breaking stereotypes to be a part of an organization and to shine with our own personalities and walks of life to create change for the student body as a whole.

6. Call for Announcements

a. Advisor Reports

i. Haight:

1. Great conversations tonight, and changes have been made with the safety walks. Have a great weekend!

b. Chair Reports

i. Allocations

1. Hartley: Hi everyone, thank you for your hard work today working through the Aux Wars Request. A few updates from Allo this week.
 - a. Last week, we approved three requests: \$1,245.73 for Renaissance Fair, which will take place during Homecoming Weekend, \$108.08 for Amnesty International, who is hosting a speaker event on October 14th with an artist from Gaza. Finally, we approved the Aux Wars request to come to GA.
 - b. This week, we're hearing requests from Latino Student Union, Diverse Educators for Change, and Prism.
 - c. Also, I'm super excited to announce the return of the use of General Students on the Allocations Committee. Last week, two general students, Stephen and Brayden, attended our Allocations Meeting. They are now Funding Trained and will be attending meetings and voting. If you know anyone

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who is interested in Senate but missed the application window, being a general student on Allo is a great way for them to get involved.

d. Thanks everyone, and have a great weekend.

ii. Public Relations:

1. Gemmen: Hello everyone, and happy Thursday. I hope you've all had a fantastic week.

a. Thank you to everyone who helped out with our various tabling and bulletin board projects, and for your participation in our recordings during headshots—you're all greatly appreciated!

b. We are officially one week away from the Student Solutions Summit, which is one of the larger opportunities for us to interact with students, discuss campus issues, and brainstorm steps we can take as senators. It also helps us make connections with other advocacy groups and organizations on campus, so please reach out to everyone you know so we can grow our network! Keep reposting our material on Instagram, and reach out to any of the chairs if you have any questions. I also can't wait to see you all next Wednesday at the Open House!

c. Thank you all, and have a great weekend!

iii. Advocacy:

1. Wright: Hi everyone. Happy Thursday!

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- a. Chair Theakston and I want to thank everyone who volunteered for suicide prevention month tabling. Although it didn't go exactly as planned, it was still informal and got the message across.
- b. There are still spots open for Teach-In tabling (Monday Sept 29th), please feel free to sign up for any time slots you have available. Also if anyone is interested in submitting a proposal for the Teach-in please feel free to reach out to me, the deadline is October 20th.
- c. As usual if anyone has any questions or concerns please feel free to reach out to me!

iv. Policy:

1. McDonough: Good evening everyone.
 - a. Last week, the sustainability team met with Director Yumiko Jacobcic. We discussed how the senate can have more involvement in the zero waste football games, access to the SAP, and future collaboration with replenish to host a donation. If anyone has any questions please reach out to either me, Senator Annis, Senator Vettori, or Senator Hardgrave.

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- b. Our upcoming meeting will be with Replenish this following Monday @ 4pm. As well as, the Citizen's Climate Lobby is hosting a sustainability workshop Monday @ 6:30pm. They would love to have senators input on this topic and this also counts as an event requirement.

- 2. I hope everyone has a good weekend

v. Events:

- 1. Theakston: Happy National Quesadilla Day!!
 - a. Thank you to all the senators who helped with all the tabling this week! In October you can expect a tabling for Breast Cancer Awareness month and the sign-up will be sent out next week.
 - b. Additionally, expect possible dates to be posted in the slack about our bonding event to a farm.
 - c. Finally, I am sending the last lecture nomination form in the general business channel. This form is used for an event we are going to put on in November where we will recognize a professor who really shows up for their students and has made a significant contribution to GVSU. So, please recognize one of the many professors you guys have had the pleasure of learning from for this event.

c. General Announcements

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- i. Vanlerberghe: I am passing around a thank-you card to Doug Wentworth to thank him for his catering contributions.
- ii. Uppala: I believe Laker Food Co. should allow their student employees to bring food home with them. I hope we can talk more about this conflict soon.
- iii. Theakston: Last lecture nominations can be sent through a survey I will be sending in the slack!

7. Public Comment

- a. No public comment was made at this time.

8. Adjournment

- a. GA was adjourned at 6:58 PM.