

# Grand Valley State University Student Senate

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY MINUTES

Thursday, March 26th, 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. The previous meeting's minutes stand approved.
- b. Passing of the Papers
  - i. Chair Hartley passed around an overview for the Native American Student Association's Annual Powwow funding request.

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

- a. No comments were made at this time.

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

- a. **President** - Evan Jackson
  - i. Good evening.
  - ii. I'll be honest—I'm not usually someone who gets overly emotional, but this is one of those moments that might get close. Tonight marks the conclusion of the 2025–2026 Student Senate. And as I've been reflecting on this year, I tried to find a single word to describe it. I couldn't. Because one word doesn't do it justice. This year was remarkable. It was demanding. It was meaningful. And above all, it was impactful. From the very beginning to this final meeting, the level of dedication, seriousness, and ownership that each of you brought into this room never wavered. That standard—that consistency—is what made this year what it was. We didn't just stay busy. We built things. We advanced initiatives like the Student Solutions Summit. We delivered a State of the Student Body that reflected real substance and accountability. We created moments of engagement—from Pie-a-Senator to Disability Awareness Month—that strengthened campus culture. We pushed forward meaningful policy work,

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from sustainability efforts like zero-waste football games to legislation like Reverse Vending Machines. And beyond any one initiative, we strengthened Student Senate's role in shared governance. This organization is not just present on this campus—it is respected, it is trusted, and it is impactful. None of that is because of any one person. It took a collective. It took a group of people who showed up, who cared, and who followed through. You are that group. And on a personal note—thank you. Each of you, in different ways, has made me better. You've challenged me, supported me, and pushed me to grow as a leader and as a person. I hope, in some way, I was able to return even a fraction of that to you. Now, as we close this chapter, we all move forward in different directions. Some of you will return to this body and continue building on what we started. Some of you are graduating and moving into your next chapter. Others will go on to make an impact in entirely new spaces. But the common denominator is this: You made a difference here. Not just in ways that are visible today—but in ways that will continue to shape this campus long after we've moved on.

- iii. I also want to briefly reflect on something that is very top of mind, as we quite literally just got back. Our trip to Washington, D.C. It was, simply put, humbling. Our cabinet spent our time moving from meeting to meeting, sharing stories—our own, and more importantly, yours. The stories of the students we represent. We spoke about the impact of Grand Valley. We spoke about the importance of this institution as an anchor—not just for West Michigan, but for the state as a whole. We spoke candidly about how this university continues to punch far above its weight, even within a state funding model that presents challenges. And

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more than anything, it reinforced the weight of what it means to represent 22,000 students. That is a responsibility. And it is a privilege. I genuinely wish we could have brought all of you with us—not symbolically, but because the voices in this room are what make this work credible and meaningful. I can't promise immediate outcomes from those conversations. That's not how that process works. But I can promise this: This university was represented exceptionally well. With maturity, with clarity, and with purpose. And I am confident that the impression left behind is one that reflects exactly what Grand Valley students stand for.

- iv. As we transition into our final pieces of business today, we have three items in front of us: Student Organization Advancement Legislation, the Native American Student Association Funding Request, and a brief survey in partnership with Alumni Relations. To close—It has been a privilege to lead alongside a group that holds a high standard and consistently meets it. Thank you for the work. Thank you for the commitment. And thank you for making this year what it was. Let's finish strong.

**b. Vice President - Ty Vanlerberghe**

- i. Hi, everyone! As always, happy Thursday!
- ii. As we end our 2025-2026 Student Senate journey today, and following the words of President Jackson, I want to reiterate the importance of your work and my unwavering gratitude for each and every one of you.
- iii. Whether you have been a colleague on Senate for several years or just joined this semester, I know that you have had a profound impact on this university, on the people in this room, on myself, and most importantly, on the over 22,000 students that we represent.

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- iv. This year was full of surprises—good surprises. Surprises in the form of members of our body constantly pushing the envelope, consistently raising the bar, and perpetually setting the example of what true student-centered and student-driven advocacy looks like. This year has surpassed any possible expectations that I have had, and for that, I am so incredibly thankful.
  - v. On a more personal note, it is no lie that serving on the Student Senate for the past three years—and especially serving as your Vice President—has been the most rewarding and most profound aspect of my college experience. You all have allowed me to grow, helped me change in the best ways possible, given me the most extraordinary front-row seat to the power of collective action, and provided me with the never-ending reminder to find joy in my work and to realize that it really is the people you surround yourself with.
  - vi. From the bottom of my heart, thank you. I couldn't have asked for a better team. Please never be a stranger.
  - c. **Chief of Staff - William Laurin**
    - i. Good evening everyone, I only have one quick update for you all.
    - ii. Events requirements will be due for those who are returning by the 16th of April. If you have any questions or concerns about this, please reach out to me at your earliest convenience. Other than this, It is great to see you all for our last GA of the 2025-2026 student body.
    - iii. Additionally, I would like to tell you all what an honor it has been to serve alongside you during these past several months. It has been a true gift to see all of your personalities and leadership traits blossom as we have spent

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so many weeks together. While I may not be returning next year, I will continue to be a resource, a friend from afar. I cannot wait to see what becomes of this organization and the success that you will bring not only to Grand Valley, but to your own careers as well. I am immensely proud of the dedication you all have brought this year. You have made my job as Chief of Staff one of the most rewarding experiences I could have asked for, so thank you.

- iv. Thank you all for being such a wonderful group of Senators.

#### **4. Native American Student Association Funding Request**

- i. The Vice President of the Native American Student Association presented a funding request for their Annual Powwow before the General Assembly. Allocations Chair Hartley and Bri Slager also helped in presenting the funding request.
  - 1. Fedototzkin: If we attended the Powwow, how should we dress?
    - a. Hartley: Come as you are. Whatever you feel most comfortable in.
- ii. Vanlerberghe: In Slack, I just shared a link for Powwow etiquette. Please read this if you plan on attending. Also, I personally have attended and volunteered at the Powwow, and I am expressing my great support for this event.
- iii. Westbrook: I would also like to voice my support for this Powwow. I see a lot of growth and engagement with your organization, and great job.
- iv. Boujulian: I would also like to express my support for this event.
  - 1. Vanlerberghe: Motion to approve in full.
    - a. Theakston: Second.

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- i. The motion passed unanimously, with a vote of 38-0-0, and the funding was approved.

### 5. Student Organization Advancement Legislation

- a. President Jackson presented his bill, W-26-03, to the General Assembly for the second time. President Jackson then opened the floor to questions.
  - i. Hartley: I think this is a phenomenal bill. I would like to voice my support.
  - ii. Vanlerberghe: I know this bill came around a little quickly. Can you give some insight into meetings you've had recently?
    1. Jackson: I have met with Vice President Jenny Hall-Jones, Valerie Guzman, as well as Aaron Haight. Each has approved this idea, and see it as part of an ongoing conversation that we have had with them throughout the year.
  - iii. Lipscomb: I love this, and voice my full support for passing this bill.
  - iv. Smith: I appreciate that this bill already recognizes the goal of GVSU. I think this is incredibly worth it.
  - v. Wright: I want to voice my support for this bill. Student organizations are incredibly important for the university. I am curious, do you have any information as to what this proposal looks like for other universities?
    1. Jackson: Western Michigan University has a full overlay for example. There are many organizations that utilize this student resource center idea, to encourage collaborations, meetings, and event-planning.
  - vi. Stang: Thank you for working on this, I love that you are keeping it open-ended for leaders to see what work needs to be done. Do you have any specific envisionings for this space?

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1. Jackson: Mostly for students just to have somewhere to meet, sharing synergies with other organizations. GV has a mosaic of many different organizations, and the opportunity for other student organizations to meet other orgs and have conversations about their specific events and such is so important.
- vii. McCann: I am on the executive board for a relatively smaller and newer club. I want to say thank you, because it allows for new and start-up clubs to have more access to resources and communications with other larger student orgs.
- viii. Rees: What would the design process look like in this space?
  1. Jackson: Jeremy Paul from the Office of Student Life has been an incredible help with this planning. He envisions inviting student leaders of organizations to come together and presenting their ideas for the space.
- ix. Hartley: Motion to approve W-26-03.
  1. Laurin: Second.
    - a. The bill passed with a unanimous vote of 38-0-0.

### **6. Alumni Relations Input Survey**

- a. Chair McDonough and Senator Rodgers presented an Alumni Relations Input Survey to the Senate. This survey was put together by both members of Senate and the Alumni relations team to help bridge the gap between current students and alumni, as well as build a deeper relationship with alumni relations.

### **7. Call for Announcements**

- a. Advisor Reports

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- i. Guzman: I just want to congratulate everyone for your continued dedication and hard work this year. You have all put in some amazing work, and it has been an honor to work with you.
  - ii. Haight: Thank you to the executives, Cabinet, and to all of you Senators. I have shared this before, but as the world is really heavy and work is really hard, but despite that, I always find hope in this room. Thank you for your passions, your dialogue, and everything that makes you and GVSU a better place. Also, a big thank you to Valerie Guzman for her continued dedication and hard work. Also, a huge congratulations to those who are leading next year! I am looking forward to working with you soon.
- b. Chair Reports
- i. Allocations - Lukas Hartley
    1. Good evening everyone.
    2. Before I begin my report, I want to take a moment to show my appreciation for our outgoing leaders. First, Evan, Ty, and Will for their phenomenal leadership this past year. The amount of work you have done, so much of which doesn't show up in a weekly report, has elevated our body to a level it has never been before. You guided us, motivated us, and provided us with true examples of ethical, effective leadership. To Genna, Karen, and Cera, thank you for your tireless efforts to put things into motion for our group. The end results, the events and bills, don't always reflect how much time and effort go into your work. Thank you for everything you have contributed to our body. And finally, to all the Senators who are not returning, thank you for taking the leap to

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join this group and put the work in to make our campus a better place. I appreciate each and every one of you,

3. Now, on to my Allocations report. First, thank you all for engaging with the Powwow request. Apologies for the technical difficulties. Next, last week, Will did me the honor of chairing, and we approved requests for Native American Student Association, Latino Student Union, and the Panhellenic Association. This week, we are hearing requests from the Criminal Justice Student Association, 494 Fashion, African Student Council, and Monarcas.
  4. Thanks everyone, have a great night, and if I don't see you next week, thank you for all you have done for us.
- ii. Public Relations - Sophie Gemmen
1. Hello and happy final Thursday of the 2025-2026 term!
  2. I'd like to say a quick thank you to you all, and especially the members of the public relations committee for such a lovely year. I want you all to know that I'm walking out of this year happy, hopeful, and excited for what's next for this organization, and for all you as individuals, returning or not. I hope you all feel the same.
  3. It wouldn't be a report without an item of business, though, so I ask that you keep an eye on slack and your email as info about merch comes in. We are using a new process this year, so once all is ready, there will be a two-week period with an open website you all will order directly from. Send senate bloopers to Carma on slack! From pie-a-senator, tabling, other events... etc! Other than

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that, please let me know if you have any questions, and I look forward to seeing you all—in some capacity—soon!

iii. Advocacy - Genna Wright

1. Hi everyone! I first want to plug a few events the advocacy committee has coming up:
2. First, we are hosting Multicultural Night this Friday from 6-7:30 PM in Kirkhof, in room 2263. Secondly, we will be celebrating Women's History Month with our Women's History Movie Night! We'll be watching Hidden Figures, Tuesday 8-10 PM. We will have popcorn, so please stop by! Finally, we will be tabling for Trans Visibility Awareness Day on Tuesday, March 31st, from 11-2 in Kirkhof.
3. As most of you know, this is my last GA, and I will sadly not be returning to Senate because I will be graduating in the fall. I'm incredibly grateful for the past three amazing years and so proud of everything we've accomplished together. I'm excited to see all that you'll achieve next year. Please know I'm always just a phone call or text away. Wishing you all the very best.

iv. Policy - Cera McDonough

v. Events - Karen Theakston

1. Happy National Spinach day!
2. The last thing I have to report on is that Cabinet will be putting through a funding request to upgrade our tabling set up and I'm so excited for the next year of senators being able to utilize them.
3. Now to get into the sappy stuff, I have been on senate since I was a sophomore. It has been the most impactful part of my college

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experience. Meeting everyone who has been a part of Senate is forever going to change my life. To be able to have become Events Chair for 3 semesters was an amazing opportunity that was given to me and I have loved running our events and helping support other senators' ideas. To self-reflect, I was still so introverted and did not understand what was going on within our college. Now graduating from this university I can say I have become so confident as a person and have Student Senate to thank for that. So, thank you all for working with me throughout the years, whether I've known you since I've joined or if you've just joined. Know that I will always remain a connection that all of you can have and that I am so excited to see where this next year of senate will go! Now if you need me I'll be in Florida getting a tan and working with Mickey Mouse soon!

### c. General Announcements

- i. Driver: NAACP is hosting an event to educate students on voting. Stop by and get some free wings!
- ii. Westbrook: LSU is having our biggest event of the year! Please consider attending!
- iii. Stang: Professional Clothing Swap is coming up soon! Tell everyone you know to come!
- iv. Hardgrave: I am the sustainability intern for Laker Food Co. Due to me graduating soon, they are looking to fill the position, so if you're interested you can see my message on Slack.
- v. Vanlerberghe: Just an election update: results will be announced tomorrow at 8 AM. So please keep an eye out for that!

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### **8. Public Comment**

- a. No comments were made at this time.

### **9. Adjournment**

- a. The meeting adjourned at 6:26 PM.