

Grand Valley State University Student Senate

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MINUTES

Thursday, September 11th, 2025

Kirkhof 2204, 5:15 PM

Chair: Evan Jackson

Vice Chair: Ty Vanlerberghe

Parliamentarian: William Laurin



Agenda

1. Call To Order

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

2. Public Comment

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

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. To our visitors, welcome.
 - ii. I want to start with some acknowledgements—first, a big thank you to our Events Committee and Public Relations Committee. You’ve been working overtime to ensure our events are set up to run smoothly and that our socials are performing on another level—your efforts do not go unnoticed. I also want to thank everyone who attended our Whitecaps baseball game with Ferris State University. Not only was it a fun time, but it was also another example of how the Student Senate represents Grand Valley well both on and off campus. Thank you for continuing to be examples of leadership.
 - iii. Externally, there are a few key partnerships I’d like to highlight. I met with Holly Jasinski from the Center for Women and Gender Equity to discuss further collaboration opportunities. This work will now be spearheaded by Senator Taylor, who is deeply passionate about advocacy. I also met with a commuter student who raised the need for food storage

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space for commuters. This project has been handed off to our Chief of Staff, William Laurin, who will be leading the charge on creating a solution.

- iv. Additionally, we met with CAB and Promotions to plan a launch for our new shared space. Please mark your calendars for October 1st from 5–7pm. This will be our Open House, co-hosted with CAB and Promotions. It will feature food, opportunities to connect, and a chance to learn more about how students can get involved with each of our organizations. You'll find all the details on Laker Link, but trust me—you'll want to be there.
- v. Now, for Senate-specific updates. We're working on a weekend programming grant designed to provide RSOs with funding specifically for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday events. This will give student organizations more opportunities to create vibrancy on campus, and more details will be coming soon.
- vi. Looking ahead, I want to give you a preview of what's next. On September 25th, we'll have an exciting GA activity—stay tuned for details, but please make sure you're there, and remember we'll also be taking headshots prior to the meeting.
- vii. I also met with Doug Wentworth to coordinate having catering at our General Assemblies moving forward—so expect to see that implemented soon. And later tonight, Laura Aikens and Elizabeth Doyle will be coming to Cabinet to discuss preliminary questions about Reach Higher. If you're interested, I encourage you to join us and bring your questions.
- viii. Now, I want to pause on something important: legislation. So many of you have incredible ideas—ideas that could make a real difference for

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students. But too often, those ideas never leave the brainstorming stage. I want you to know: you don't have to do it alone. Please reach out to me, your chair, or any member of the body. We are here to help you turn your ideas into action. Don't underestimate your ability to make change. This body is at its best when we're bringing forward the creative solutions only students can imagine.

- ix. Finally, here's what's on the horizon. October 1st – Senate, CAB, and Promotions Open House (5–7pm). October 2nd – our Student Solutions Summit at 5:15pm. Attendance is mandatory—this is one of the most important events of our semester. Next week, Academic Affairs will be coming to discuss their strategic plan with us.
- x. So, my call to action is this: every one of you has the ability to turn student concerns into real solutions. Let's make sure our peers know we're listening and acting—and that the Student Senate is here to deliver. Thank you all for your leadership. Let's keep building momentum.
- xi. With that, I'll turn it over to Vice President Vanlerberghe.

b. Vice President - Ty Vanlerberghe

- i. Happy Thursday, everyone! A couple quick updates for everyone today.
- ii. First, thank you to everyone who represented us at the West Michigan Whitecaps game last Thursday. This event was a huge success, and I received a lot of positive feedback from Ferris students and staff about our members which I was very pleased to hear.
- iii. Second, for some legislation updates, I am happy to announce that both the university taskforce for course marking has been officially started and new members from our body have been added. Additionally, the student legal services taskforce also has work underway, and has incorporated two

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presidential fellows to propel our work and continue the progress that we made last year.

- iv. Third, also on the legislative side, I also have meetings on the books with Emil Delgado from IT, Libby Jawish from the Padnos International Center, and Edward Jones III from the Center for Health and Well-Being to discuss legislation from last year and am in the process of scheduling more meetings with other stakeholders relevant to our bills last year. Again, as I mentioned last GA, if you would like to attend any of these meetings, please let me know.
- v. Fourth, as Evan mentioned, our headshots have been scheduled September 25th from 4:30 PM to 5:15 PM. Please be on the lookout for a sign-up sheet for these headshots in the Slack soon.
- vi. Finally, if you are a college representative, expect a message from me sometime next week with some start-up information about meeting with your respective deans.
- vii. If anyone has any questions, please do not hesitate to Slack me or email me. I will now yield to Chief of Staff Laurin for his report.
- c. Chief of Staff - William Laurin
 - i. Good afternoon everyone, I hope your third week of classes is treating you well. I have a few updates for you all today, so I won't waste any time and get right into things.
 - ii. First, as I'm sure many of you saw in Ty's email on Monday, as well as from my Slack last Friday, the Events sheet is now up and running. This is the hub that registered events will be added to, and you will also find two Google forms for submitting attendance and submitting your own event to be considered. I have also completed an absence request form, which can

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be found in the google drive if you navigate to the Executives tab, and then my name. Please utilize this form if you know you are going to miss a GA, as this helps me keep track of our excused absences.

- iii. Secondly, I am saddened to share the resignation of five senators: Richard Dolnik, Javonte Jackson, Peyton Driver, Adrian Kosznicki, and Bri Gonzalez. The losses were a combination of class conflicts and personal matters, but if you see them around, be sure to say hello and thank them for their time on Senate.
- iv. In other news, I have completed judiciary committee interviews and selected our finalists for the upcoming year. I am in the process of scheduling our committee meetings and will fill you in once those have been completed, but until then I look forward to starting our judiciary and legislative work.
- v. Finally, I wanted to make a quick mention of our upcoming Student Solutions Summit. As many of you returning Senators remember, this event was conceptualized by our very own President Jackson and is a wonderful opportunity for students of the Grand Valley community to get together and share their concerns with their student leadership. We are scheduled to hold the Summit on October 2nd.

4. Guest Speaker

- a. Colleen Bailey - Director, Housing and Residence Life
 - i. Thank you, senators, for the invitation to continue partnering with you on behalf of students at GVSU. Before we begin today, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the anniversary of September 11. This is a day of remembrance for the lives lost, the families impacted, and the resilience that followed. It reminds us of the importance of community, compassion,

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and working together for a better future. Thank you for the powerful flag remembrance you placed this morning.

- ii. I want to start by offering my deep gratitude for each of you and your service to our students here at GVSU. The work you do is tough and you are in some deep conversations and advocacy to make GVSU the best place it can be for your student colleagues. Your service is invaluable and long-lasting. In my 22 years here at GVSU, I have worked with countless senators on important advocacy and the intense time and effort that you all contribute is worth it! I have glowing pride in seeing many familiar faces – amazing RA staff, who share their leadership in multiple ways here at GV! So, I start with, “Thank YOU!” for your commitment to representing our student body.
- iii. I’d like to share updates about students living on-campus with us this fall and some of the great engagement opportunities students have had the ability to participate in.
- iv. How many residents? Approximately 6,000
- v. How many first-year students? 3,800
- vi. How many upper-class students? 2,200
- vii. Number of Resident Assistants? 120 Call out to the great leadership opportunity and training they receive.
- viii. Any programs that have been a huge success? The Block Parties, Laker Welcome, Laker Kickoff, Thursday Nights in HHLC, Laker Late Night!
- ix. Future opportunities for student engagement in Housing and Residence Life? (tutoring, advising, student engagement series, pop-up events, floor programming, attending campus programming, Laker Late Night, Athletic Events, etc.)
- x. What is HRL currently working on to make housing more equitable and efficient for students?

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- xi. In Housing and Residence Life, we are actively working to ensure our processes are both equitable and efficient, with students at the center of every decision we make.
 - xii. Housing and Residence Life continues to prioritize affordability and access for our students. We regularly conduct off-campus market analyses to better understand our local rental trends and to ensure our rates remain competitive and fair. At GVSU, our housing costs have consistently been among the lowest quartile in the state, and we are committed to keeping them that way. Efficiency for us also means listening to students, adapting processes to reduce barriers, and making sure housing remains a resource that supports student success.
 - xiii. Student Success and Belonging: We continue to expand support for living-learning communities and inclusive programming to ensure every student feels welcomed and supported in their residential community.
 - xiv. Our goal is to build housing systems that not only meet students' logistical needs but also foster a strong sense of belonging. We are grateful for your partnership as student leaders in shaping this vision and are excited to continue partnering with your leadership to help us continue moving forward.
 - xv. What does HRL plan on doing regarding the ever-growing expectations and duties listed for RA and CDs (specifically regarding the recent changes during the first week of Sept)?
 - 1. The residential experience is at the heart of our work, and safety sits at the center of that commitment. As expectations evolve, our role is to remain flexible and thoughtful in how we approach responsibilities. These changes do not happen in isolation; they invite us to reimagine the work, clarify priorities, and strengthen the partnerships that help us deliver this experience. We will continue to adapt with care, ensuring that both our professional and student staff are supported in meaningful, sustainable ways.

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2. We know that Resident Assistants (RAs) and Community Directors (CDs) play a vital role in shaping the residential experience, and we recognize that expectations for these positions have grown in recent years, especially with the adjustments made at the start of September. Our plan to move forward is focused on balance, support, and sustainability.
 3. Our goal is to empower our staff to succeed without overwhelming them—because when our RAs and CDs are supported, our entire residential community benefits. We truly value your advocacy and partnership in keeping these conversations moving forward.
- xvi. Are you concerned the growing number of incidents on campus will cause RAs and CDs to reconsider their positions?
1. We recognize the challenges our staff face, and we are deeply committed to supporting them. One of our guiding principles is co-authoring the residential experience with our student leaders and professional staff. That is why we restructured our programming model, added both professional and student staff, and expanded partnerships across campus. These efforts—alongside ongoing dialogue with student leaders—ensure our team feels supported and heard. Togetherness will continue to guide us through this moment. We are aware of the increase in incidents on campus and want to reassure you that supporting our staff and students remains a top priority.
 2. While the nature of incidents may shift over time, we believe by fostering a culture of care, teamwork, and support, we can help our RAs and CDs continue to thrive in their positions and remain deeply committed to serving their residential communities.
- xvii. Does HRL plan on hiring more GAs and other full-time staff to deal with the growing number of incidents since RAs are people first, students second, and third RAs and are being left to deal with an unrealistic number of incidents?

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1. We agree RAs are first and foremost people and students, and their RA leadership role should never overshadow their well-being or academic success. We regularly review our organizational structure and budget priorities to ensure that staffing aligns with current needs. While adjustments cannot always happen overnight, it is our ongoing goal to evaluate resources, explore additional staffing where possible, and adapt responsibilities so no one is left with unrealistic demands. This very conversation reflects our shared commitment to addressing these concerns and responding with care.
 2. Our goal is to ensure incident response is equitable, manageable, and sustainable—so that RAs can focus on being students and community leaders, while knowing they are supported by a strong team of professional staff.
- xviii. For living centers that will not have entrances reduced to a single location, how will the new rules regarding residents only having one guest be enforced?
1. We know that any change to guest policies can raise concerns, and we want to reassure you our goal is always to balance community safety with student freedom and comfort.
- xix. For living centers that will not have entrances reduced to a single location, our approach to the new one-guest policy will focus on education, shared responsibility, and community accountability rather than strict policing at every door?
1. The reduction of entrances is just one strategy to support safety and accountability, but the policy itself relies on a shared commitment from our community. We view students as partners in this effort; agents of change who help hold one another accountable to community expectations. Enforcement is important, but so is dialogue. We want to continue these conversations, learn what is working, and make thoughtful adjustments where

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necessary. Our goal is not just to enforce rules, but to build a safe and respectful community together.

2. We believe this approach reflects a partnership between Housing and Residence Life and our students—trusting residents to take ownership of their communities, while also providing staff support when needed.

xx. I am happy to take questions and again want to express my deep appreciation for your work on behalf of the students of GVSU.

1. Dykhuis: Firstly, thank you for coming and speaking with us. My question was that housing costs are some of the lowest in the state. Does this compare to just educational institutions or off-campus housing too?
 - a. Bailey: We compare our rates against the 15 public institutions in Michigan. We are in the bottom quartile in the state consistently each year.
2. Hartley: Regarding the new policies, are there any timeline and implementation updates?
 - a. Bailey: We are still in the understanding phase of implementation. I have daily conversations with Jenny Hall-Jones about implementation of the one-guest policy. In terms of blocked entrances and security staff, it is an ongoing conversation amongst our staff.
3. Gemmen: All of this info has been great. I was wondering if there are specific talking points for us to mention if students ask us any questions?

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- a. Bailey: Safety is the center of decision-making. Students come first, including student safety. We listen to students with every concern, and welcome them to join the conversation.
 4. Shackelford: Is there any concern of the growing concern of extra people/students joining campus? Is new housing being built?
 - a. Bailey: The number of spaces for people to live is limited. We will always have to work with enrollment to decide the right balance and to make the best choices in planning. Conversations are being had to accommodate as many students as possible.
 5. Robach: Will there be any info on streamlining the process of registering guests?
 - a. Bailey: The intention is that it will be a quick registration process. There should be a QR code for students to scan to register their guests.
 6. Taylor: In terms of landlords and off-campus housing, what info can you share regarding discussions with them?
 - a. Bailey: Our discussions mainly consist of sharing resources to understand what's happening between the disconnect of living off or on-campus. We want to make sure everyone is well aware of safety trends, no matter if they are a part of GVSU or not.
 7. Finley: I was wondering if you could go into detail about security staff?

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- a. Bailey: We are contracted with an outside security company that also helps with the football games and other athletic events. They are a wonderful team of security staff. They are unarmed and are simply there to watch over / monitoring guests and students, guest registration
 8. Stang: What makes someone a guest?
 - a. Bailey: Anyone that lives on campus can be here without being a guest. Anyone, student or not, that does not live on-campus is a guest.
 9. Dykhuis: What is the current occupancy rate?
 - a. Bailey: 6,012 students are our sweet spot. The way floor plans and buildings are built, if there is a larger student body, then we can flex up. If there is a smaller student body, we flex down.
 10. Wright: Is there any way for students to shape housing policies?
 - a. Bailey: Evan and I meet often to discuss student concerns. Other Senators are more than welcome to join those meetings.
 11. Mulvenna: I would like to hear more about on-campus landlords. Examples of what safety policies/precautions look like?
 - a. Bailey: All of us are separate entities. We all come together to find the best route to take to serve students. We are working to bridge the gap between housing and GV students. Rates, safety, and occupancy are our main concerns regarding this collaboration. We are just a gathering of folks trying to make the GV experience the

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best it can be. Every entity is invited and they choose to participate.

12. Robinson: Regarding security policies moving forward, are these temporary?

a. Bailey: I've heard great feedback from students feeling more safe because of the changes we've made. These policies will probably last for a while.

13. Shackelford: With security moving forward, money-wise does this affect students paying for housing costs?

a. Bailey: We are looking into cutting costs to make room for affording these new policies and staff.

14. Richards: Are there any plans for upgrading current living centers?

a. Bailey: We regularly look at renovations and upkeep of new buildings. We have regularly scheduled housing renovations. We are always looking at how to refresh spaces.

15. Hardgrave: Has housing thought about easing policies for first-time students regarding living on campus?

a. We have a residency requirement set for first-years, our reasoning is that students that live on campus achieve more academic success. We prioritize this to start off their academic year.

16. Taylor: With planning on cuts, what will the potential cuts be?

a. Bailey: We are unsure.

17. Robach: Will there be updates to Robinson, Kistler, etc.

a. Bailey: Yes!

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18. Potter: If you're a Michigan resident compared to an out of state resident how do rates compare?

a. Bailey: Housing is the same for everyone regarding in or out of state. Tuition is all that changes.

19. Frikken: I was wondering how the money for different living centers is allocated?

a. Bailey: We work closely with facility services to discuss infrastructure projects. They recommend what we need to add or refresh. It remains a very collaborative effort. With so many rooms and residents, priorities have to be solidified in order for money to be spent.

5. Funding Training

a. Bri Slager - Assistant Director of Student Organizations, Office of Student Life, and Lukas Hartley, Student Senate Allocations Chair.

i. Slager and Hartley completed funding training for all members of the General Assembly, and opened the floor to questions.

1. Robach: How much funding does the Student Life Fund receive, and how much is spent per year?

a. Slager: Since 2020, we have used almost all of the SLF and that number continues to increase. Overall, each year the Student Life Fund receives \$1.2 million, but the Allocations Committee doesn't oversee all of that. The Allocations Committee only oversees around \$200,000. The rest is mandatory spending that is pre-budgeted by the Student Senate for critical student organizations such as CAB, etc.

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2. Dykstra: Do you give money if a club/org wants a host speaker?
 - a. Hartley: That is up to the discretion of the Allocations Committee, and the event must be open to all students.
 - b. Slager: A speaker falls under contracts. The Allocation Committee considers cost per student attendee and other factors to decide if a speaker is worth it.
3. Wordfork: If a member of the Allocations Committee is a part of an org requesting funding, could they vote or would they sit out?
 - i. Slager: We typically would ask a member to abstain from that decision to prevent any bias.
4. Robinson: I was wondering if there was ever a case where the SLF runs out of money? Does money from a previous year roll over?
 - i. Slager: We track the budget very closely to avoid ever running out of money. Residual funds do not roll over. Any extra money is transferred to a reserve fund that only Cabinet can vote to allocate.
5. Finley: How do you track when money is about to be out?
 - i. Slager: I have two finance assistants that track everything down to the penny. They help ensure we do not run out of money, and help us do an internal audit at the end of each year.
6. Krupa: Does the yearly allocated amount include the summer semester?
 - a. Slager: Depending on if senate members want to vote in the summer. We try to attempt early allocations and early requests to avoid any summer requests.

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7. Zazula: Is there a funding limit?

- a. Slager: There is no more limit, just more hoops to jump. If a request is over \$10,000, the request must come to the full General Assembly, not just the Allocations Committee.

6. Tabling Expectations & Etiquette

- a. Karen Theakston, Student Senate Events Chair, and Genna Wright, Student Senate Advocacy Chair.
 - i. Chairs Theakston and Chair Wright presented on proper etiquette during tabling in the Kirkhof lobby and opened the floor to questions.
 - 1. Zazula: Doing shifts back to back, do those count as fulfilling two events requirements?
 - a. Theakston: If you are tabling for the same purpose, no. If you are tabling for a different purpose, yes.
 - 2. Hardgrave: What is the dress code?
 - a. Theakston: Respectful clothing. No curse words or graphics, etc.
 - 3. Taylor: Will the Hispanic Heritage Month tabling be in the events google sheet?
 - a. Theakston: Dates and shifts will be announced on Slack soon!

7. Appointment of New Members

- a. New members were officially appointed to their respective committees.

8. Call for Announcements

- a. Chair Reports
 - i. Allocations

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1. First, all of you are now funding trained, so congratulations! If you are interested in sitting on the Allocations Committee, please fill out the form in Slack and meet in Kirkhof 2215 tomorrow at 1pm.
2. Thanks guys, and have a good weekend.

ii. Public Relations

1. Hello everyone! It was great to see you all at the Whitecaps game last week and the 9/11 Memorial event this morning.
2. Just to keep you all in the loop, I have a few quick updates about what PRC is up to. We will be working on several promotional campaigns in the coming weeks, including the Office Open House on October 1st, and the Student Solutions Summit on October 2nd.
3. Additionally, and excitingly, website updates will officially take place on October 12.
4. In the meantime, we are looking forward to collaborating with Events and Advocacy to promote tabling initiatives for Hispanic Heritage Month and updating the student body on what you are all up to via Instagram.
5. Lastly, to Senator Hardgrave's question about email signatures two weeks ago, there are now available templates that can be found in the "2025 Style/Brand Guide" document which can be found in the PRC Committee Hub folder.
6. Thank you all, and have a great weekend!

iii. Advocacy

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1. Hi everyone! Happy Thursday. I am so happy to have both Josh and Cameron sworn in today, and I am excited for the following year ahead as a committee!
2. Today I had a meeting with Mara Spears to discuss this year's Teach-In (GVSU Teach-In is a two-day campus event where students, faculty, and staff lead educational sessions focused on raising awareness, sharing knowledge, and inspiring action). This will be taking place November 12th and 13th. I will be serving with Mara in the marketing subcommittee, to find the best ways to promote this year's teach-in. If this sparks anyone's interest and you would like to submit a proposal for a session, please feel free to reach out to me as the deadline is October 20th.
3. We are partnering with the events committee, and the office of multicultural affairs, for hispanic heritage month tabling on 15th and 16th. We are also tabling for suicide prevention month on the 22nd and 23rd which we will be getting both sign ups for that to you all soon.
4. With that being said, if anyone has any questions or concerns about anything please feel free to reach out to me over slack or after GA! Thank you, I yield.

iv. Policy

1. Good evening everyone! I hope everyone is having a good week. I wish I could have been here today to meet all of the new senators. Policy has started to get things running. As of right now, we currently have two scheduled meetings. One with the director of sustainability on 09/19 @ 12pm and replenish on 09/29 @ 4pm.

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The other teams are in the works with reaching out and potentially scheduling a meeting with their liaisons. If anyone has any questions or wants to be more involved with what the policy committee is doing, please reach out to me. I am a huge mental health advocate, so if anyone is needing to talk to someone or going through a hard time, I am here for you always.

v. Events

1. First I want to start off by saying thank you to the senators who showed up bright and early this morning helping set up the 9/11 memorial! Your efforts were greatly appreciated.
2. Next week Sept. 15th and 16th the events and advocacy committee collaborated to do tabling for hispanic heritage month, I will be sending a sign-up sheet in the opportunities channel in slack.
3. We have begun planning for our next bonding event and I will have more information to give at the next GA.
4. Last thing, I strongly encourage all of you to join me in taking down the flags on the kirkhoff lawn, especially if you did not help out this morning, after we adjourn. It will go by way faster if everyone can help out!
5. Have a great weekend!

b. Advisor Reports

- i. Haight: Thank you to everyone who attended the Whitecaps event. Positive feedback and encouragement to repeat and expand involvement.
- ii. Thank you for your remembrance of 9/11. I was in this very building watching the events of that day unfold and experienced it

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with students just like you so I appreciate that the day is not forgotten.

- iii. Finally, my heart is heavy. Two very violent events yesterday with another school shooting in Colorado and assassination of Charlie Kirk in Utah. Both spaces of education and learning. Your generation experiences this too often and deserves better.
- iv. President Mantella and I both reached out to the student leaders of Turning Point offering support and I want to offer it to all of you as well. For those that are struggling, know there are resources available including University Counseling and the Center for Civil Discourse.
- v. I spoke last week about expressive activity in higher education, specifically the marketplace of ideas and how we need to hold that sacred. I continue to believe this.
- vi. I have often said that the Student Senate gives me hope for our future. Different opinions, different backgrounds, different experiences, different hopes and dreams, but you share and listen in ways that are respectful and with an eagerness to learn. I hope we can continue to build relationships and care for each other no matter our politics, religion, or identity.

9. General Announcements

- i. Jackson: Please help pick up flags from the memorial today.
- ii. Theakston: Nominations for homecoming court are live, please consider nominating someone from Senate.
- iii. Vanlerberghe: New Senators, please come up to the head table to be sworn in after adjournment.

Grand Valley State University Student Senate

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MINUTES

Thursday, September 11th, 2025

Kirkhof 2204, 5:15 PM

Chair: Evan Jackson

Vice Chair: Ty Vanlerberghe

Parliamentarian: William Laurin



10. Public Comment

- a. A public comment from the gallery was made regarding expanding the bus routes to include past Allendale locations run over breaks.

11. Adjournment

- a. The General Assembly adjourned at 6:50 PM.