

Grand Valley State University Student Senate

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MINUTES

Thursday, November 20th, 2025

DeVos Center Room 138E, 5:15 PM

Chair: Evan Jackson

Vice Chair: Ty Vanlerberghe

Parliamentarian: William Laurin



1. Call To Order

- a. Approval of the Minutes
 - i. The previous meeting minutes stand approved.
- b. Passing of the Papers
 - i. Elections Commission and University Climate Committee sign-ups were passed around.

2. Public Comment

3. Executive Reports

- a. **President** - Evan Jackson
 - i. Good evening, everyone. Welcome back for our last meeting of the semester. I hope you all enjoyed the Teach-Ins last week.
 1. I want to give a special acknowledgment to Senators Stang, Finley, and Rodgers, as well as Chair Wright, for the work they put into the Teach-In. Thank you as well for your candid feedback through the surveys you completed last week. We are working through every comment and every response, and we will provide follow-up so you know exactly how your input is guiding our next steps.
 2. As we close the semester, I want to recognize what we've accomplished together. A few highlights include: Hosting the Student Solutions Summit and our first-ever Open House, Raising over \$500 for Replenish, Launching our first-ever Disability Expression Forum, Delivering widely successful Teach-Ins • And so much more across committees, initiatives, and individual projects. This has been a semester of real impact, and I'm proud of the work this body has done.

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3. Although this is our last General Assembly of the semester, there is still plenty of time to get an early start on legislative ideas, potential events, and new initiatives. Over the next few weeks, I will be finalizing our winter schedule, meeting with you one-on-one to discuss legislative priorities, and helping identify the areas where each of you can make an impact in ways that are meaningful to you.
4. Looking ahead, winter semester moves quickly—it always does. Now is the time to begin thinking about stepping into leadership roles, writing legislation, and shaping the direction of this organization. Each of you has the opportunity to leave a lasting mark on Student Senate and on Grand Valley. My hope is that when we reach the end of the year, each of you can pause and say: I did everything I could for students, and I left things better than I found them.
5. With that, I'll turn it over to Vice President Vanlerberghe.

b. Vice President - Ty Vanlerberghe

- i. Happy Thursday, Everyone! I hope you all have had a great week and are preparing for upcoming holidays and final exams. A couple updates for you all today.
 1. First, since our last General Assembly, I have met with Michelle Rhodes, Associate Vice President for Financial Aid and Danny Velez, Associate Vice President for Admissions and Enrollment to discuss the GVSU pledge legislation that we passed last year. They expressed some roadblocks that come with our ask but also showed their support of our work and the purpose behind the bill. We

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brainstormed some alternative solutions to the ask of the bill, and plan to work with Institutional advancement.

2. Second, earlier today, Senator Rodgers and I met with the council of Assistant and Associate Deans to further discuss our Course Marking Legislation from last year. They all seemed very enthusiastic about the project and are excited to work in collaboration to get this implemented on Workday Student.
3. Third, Evan, Will, and I will all be attending the Reach Higher Together Collaborative Leadership Network meeting tomorrow morning. As mentioned in my Slack message today, we have decided to push back our formal endorsement vote until next semester in order to receive the finalized commitments. As soon as these commitments are communicated to us, we will send them to you all for review before break.
4. Finally, as previously mentioned, Evan and I will not be returning to Student Senate next year because of graduation and other academic commitments. Although it is very early in the year, we are committed to having a smooth leadership transition and invite anyone interested in running for President or Vice President next year to meet with us and ask questions. For a timeline, those interested should have a confirmed idea of their candidacy by the end of winter break, and we only have one more GA after tonight before the end of the semester.
5. If anyone has any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

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

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- i. Good evening everyone, its good to see you all again for our final GA of the semester. I will take this time to wish you all luck on your finals and a happy Thanksgiving.
 - a. I don't have a lot for you all this week, just a couple reminders. First, for our graduating senators, if you would like to submit an application for your graduation stoles for Student Senate, please shoot me a slack message at your earliest convenience and we can get the process started to make sure you are ready to walk.
 - b. Secondly, I want to remind you all that now is a good time to start thinking about potential leadership positions within senate. If any of you are interested in the role of chief of staff, don't hesitate to get in touch with me as I would be happy to share more.
 - c. That's all from me, I yield back to President Jackson.

4. Campus Dining & Food Access

- a. Laker Food Co.
 - i. Deb Rambant (Laker Food Co. Marketing Director), Chris Uhl (Director of Laker Food Co.), and Taber Gleason (GVSU's Registered Dietician) discussed their new implementations in dining experiences around both the Valley and City campuses. Rambandt, Uhl, and Gleason opened the discussion up to questions.
 - 1. Jackson: What are some of the most under-utilized resources students miss out on?

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- a. Uhl: Some of the locations that could use more business. GV Brew, for example, we have noticed that there is an opportunity for more business.
 - b. Rambandt: From my perspective, I wish everyone would follow the Laker food Co.'s social media platforms. We post a ton of info for students that would really help us distribute more resources to students.
 - c. Gleason: Following social media and finding out about what's happening soon—getting awareness to students would really help us to connect with students.
 2. Zazula: Are there any conversations about having meal plan options at Qdoba?
 - a. Uhl: The challenge we're seeing is that there are already long lines and huge waits for Qdoba. Soon? probably not. However, we are open to changing this later in the future.
 3. Taylor: I really like GV Brew, and I loved the boba drinks. However, there was a lack of engagement with students from employees and a lack of supply.
 - a. Uhl: We've had the exact feelings with supplies and customer service. Changes will happen soon to offset these concerns.
 4. Dodaj: I really love what you've done for the cafe on the health campus. I really loved the half sandwich-half soup combo. Will that be coming back?
 - a. Uhl: We will note that!

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5. Vemalla: I am really happy with Halal options in Feta. Are you expanding this option into other dining halls?
 - a. Gleason: During Ramadan we are planning for this to happen! Outside of this though, we have not had that conversation quite yet.
 6. Hardgrave: So what does a meal at GV Brew look like?
 - a. Uhl: We are expanding the grab and go salads and sandwiches, alongside pastries. New pastry options will be served as meal options also.
 7. Taylor: In terms of increasing visibility, social media is great but have you thought about including even information in Laker Weekly? Something I've also noticed is there any plan of renovating or changing the lower level of Fresh Food Co.?
 - a. Rembrandt: We do submit frequently, but sometimes they don't make the cut for the final newspaper being distributed. We will take this back to them!
 - b. Uhl: We are having many preliminary discussions about utilizing this space. It probably won't happen very soon, however we are having those conversations.
 8. Almas: I was just wondering for GV Brew, are there conversations happening about expanding hours?
 - a. Uhl: We have noticed a need for more afternoon hours than early mornings.
 9. Finley: I was wondering if there were thoughts about placing more food options in Seidman.

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- a. Uhl: There aren't a large group of students that have classes in the evening. We look at hours of operation every year, but I cannot make promises as of this conversation today.
 - 10. Mulvenna: What used to be below Fresh?
 - a. Uhl: Pre-Covid, "Fuel" was a food court with a deli station, a Freshens station, "Jump" similar to panda express, and a Papa Johns. Back in my day, we had a Taco Bell and a Pizza Hut.
 - 11. Taylor: Do you guys plan on doing seasonal pastries at GV Brew?
 - a. Uhl: Right now we're working on our base with a new core menu, but yes, we have discussed this.
 - 12. Hardgrave: Can we get another vitamin water - esque fountain drink option on campus dining halls?
 - a. Uhl: We can look to see what Pepsi offers.
 - 13. Pandey: For students that don't leave during break, will they have food options for lunch and dinner?
 - a. Uhl: We won't have any dining halls open, but we are offering Thanksgiving dinners and packed lunches for students.
 - 14. Smith: I am personally an almond milk fan. Is there a plan to have rotating milks in those machines?
 - a. Yule: We will have to look at what products are available.
 - b. Gleason: We could potentially do that at the Dish, but Fresh is a no tree-nuts zone.
 - 15. Richards: I used to work at Fresh Food Co. and I didn't know how to do much there. Are there other plans to communicate training

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better? How much control as a student do you have over your meal plan?

- a. Uhl: It isn't something we've ever really thought about before. It is a challenge though, where we go from no one working to everyone working and train as much as we can. We do "Launch Crew" which brings in first-year students to come in a week-early onboarding for the first day of work.

16. Dykhuis: Are there currently any plans to expand more dining options onto South campus?

- a. Uhl: We are seeing switching menu items, and getting people to utilize more of those food options already there. There isn't really infrastructure to add, but we are trying to update and change menu items often.
- b. Gleason: Our grab-and-go options are also available.

17. Finley: Is there a way you can do the guest meals online?

- a. Rembrandt: It's not something we've been able to process unfortunately.

18. Almas: For Giving Tuesday, could that be possible every week in the future?

- a. Rembrandt: Donating a meal is something we do only 3 times a year for a 3-day stretch usually in October. Then for giving Tuesday. Then a food drive - esque donation. The need this year is greater, so we are going to push harder during those donation times.

19. Richard: Are there any plans to bring back chicken salad at Blue?

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a. Uhl: Unsure!

20. Taylor: When it comes to donating a meal, is there any transparent documentation to show the students who do donate a meal how they help?

a. Rembrandt: We put that into a fund, Replenish receives the request for free meals and they document everything. They will tell us which students get however many meals. We can certainly look at a list, but we wouldn't reveal any student information.

21. Gemmen: For grab-and-go options, to purchase those options do you still go through the line?

a. Gleason: Yes.

22. Zazula: I think many students would want Taco Bell on campus.

a. Uhl: Taco Bell unfortunately rarely partners with campuses anymore.

23. DeFever: Are there any utilization plans for the space under Fresh?

a. Uh: Re-purposing that space is a plan for the future, but we aren't there yet,

24. Richard: I know you have an option to have dining dollars at Jets. Do you plan on expanding this elsewhere?

a. Uhl: Not at this time unfortunately.

25. Rodgers: Is there potential to expand hours at Fresh?

a. Uhl: What we saw last year was from 11 to 3 o'clock, that was our peak hour span and after that, there weren't many transactions happening. So right now, not currently.

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26. Taylor: In regards to dining halls, how do you determine pricing for anyone who just walks in?
- a. Uhl: our goal is to be more affordable than our competitors. We do market research in the area at other all-you-can-eat-buffets.
27. Almas: Could we get Redbull in the POD stores?
- a. Uhl: I can't speak on that one. I do know that the university has an exclusivity process with Pepsi.
28. Dykhuis: Are there plans on increasing pricing for meal plans?
- a. Uhl: This is based on the university, not us.
29. Smith: Is there a way for us to get lactose-free milk at POD stores?
- a. Uhl: We can look into this.
30. Hardgrave: So the university decided meal pricing?
- a. Uhl: Yes, it is dictated by the university through board-approval. We have some discussion about that, but they make our decisions.
31. Bhandari: Is there any way you get feedback from student employees on management?
- a. Uhl: If there is a specific conflict, student employees can get into contact with Will, our HR rep.
32. Taylor: Is student payment determined by the university or by your budget? Do you have plans on increasing these wages?
- a. Uhl: it is usually driven by us trying to mirror the university's pay scale. Starting Jan. 1st, we will be increasing pay.

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33. Yamalla: Do you plan on giving meal plan options to student employees?

a. Uhl: the discussion we had with student employees in the past was a trade off between meals or an increase in pay.

5. Academic Affairs Strategic Plan Endorsement Vote

a. Jackson: Our reasoning to push our vote back is due to finalized Reach Higher Commitments not being released until tomorrow. I want to have a general discussion as to how everyone is feeling?

i. Taylor: I was wondering if UAS will vote before we do.

1. Jackson: Yes, this was an issue with this being our last meeting of the semester. They vote on Dec. 5th, so our vote will come after. The plan is to have votes approved before the board meeting in February, we will probably be the last to bring it home.

ii. Hardgrave: If all divisions are making their own strategic plans, are we expecting more parallel plans next year?

1. Jackson: These plans will all sprout from Reach Higher Together.

2. Vanlerberghe: These “parallel plans” to Reach Higher went out first because it’s the most central division to the university. Other plans will be more secondary and probably won’t be considered by us.

iii. Taylor: When it comes to digital literacy, I have come to see concern and disliking from professors about bringing AI-use into classrooms. Does it fit our university’s mission?

1. Hartley: We can’t really stop the development of AI becoming intertwined with our future careers.

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2. Theakston: I think it's good GVSU is getting ahead of it because if it becomes a bigger issue later we have something prepared.
3. Vanlerberghe: I think we just have to trust the process with UAS. Faculty can express their concerns to UAS.
4. Gemmen: I agree with the concerns, but I do think we need to effectively discuss responsible use.
- iv. Dykhuis: I don't feel comfortable endorsing a proposal that doesn't endorse the environmental aspects of this.
 1. Smith: I second.
 2. Vattori: I second.
 3. Vanlerberghe: Not that this is a specific commitment in the Academic Affairs Strategic Framework, but RHT did expand to include a stand alone commitment about sustainability.
- v. Dykhuis: I agree, but endorsing specifically to AI is that it isn't a strong impact against it.
 1. Laurin: There is a huge debate with infrastructure regarding whether a data center would be built around West Michigan. We unfortunately cannot stop the implementation with AI regardless of our vote.
 2. Dodaj: I feel like the university is using AI as more of a tool. If every professor used a whiteboard for every lecture, they wouldn't have slideshow presentations. If we don't implement this, it might be a negative move for the university's future.
 3. Jackson: I will agree with you on the environmental and ethical uses of AI. However, the university is without a method to utilize AI. I think this opens the door for the university to actually

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regulate these things. Unfortunately, in the workforce, welcome or not, AI-use is hugely implemented into careers now.

4. Taylor: I agree. I do think they could tailor it for specific fields, but making it a general topic throughout all university departments would have a large environmental impact.
5. Westbrook: I would like to double down that AI is unfortunately something that is happening. The general argument against it is the environmental concern; and without downplaying this, it sounds like we want to stop something that is nation-wide as GVSU's Student Senate. We cannot do that.
6. Smith: The way that I am viewing AI currently is like a steam-engined problem. I think having plans for individual fields with AI usage specifically would be good. I think it's dangerous for the university to implement this university-wide.
7. Vanlerberghe: I think it goes back to the scope of what the university exists to do, which is to prepare us for the workforce. I have personally seen firsthand the usage of AI in the workforce. I think we have to recognize we are harping too much into AI for digital literacy. I think we need to open up to a larger scale as to what this plan is.
8. Hartley: GVSU cannot stop AI being used, but they can teach us how to stop it and implement it into careers.
9. Hardgrave: We shouldn't downplay what we can do as a senate for the university. I believe we should use precautionary principles.
10. Dykhuis: Even without any environment or ethical impacts, I would still be against the utilization of AI in university

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implementations. By encouraging the use of AI across academia, this could hurt our university later.

11. Taylor: On that topic, I have witnessed other programs where professors are using AI in their classrooms already. If the university wants to have students be careful with this, then professors shouldn't use it either.

12. Potter: Even if we don't think we do, we do have a voice and the fact that Academic Affairs is coming to us with this is huge. I just think it'll become a part of our carbon footprint.

13. Krupa: I think we as students have a far removed idea of pursuing a long-term career. We are seeing AI in unpredictable places. We have to have places to collect this data too. I personally don't agree with the environmental impacts, but it is my personal opinion that we need to be further ahead than we are.

vi. McDonough: I motion to exhaust the speakers list, then end discussion.

1. Vanlerberghe: Second.

a. Motion passed with unanimous vote.

vii. Westbrook: If we are missing a vital part of digital literacy, I think it would be selfish if you don't agree with it in your field but I do agree with it in mine.

viii. Vettori: I personally dislike AI, I just think it's such a tricky situation because everyone is saying AI is so large. Having very strict rules with utilization is where I stand.

ix. Taylor: We are here to make the difference. We can make a difference on a local scale, and I don't think this should be the forefront topic for GVSU.

b. The Senate moved into a strawpole.

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i. Academic Affairs Strategic Framework

1. Results: 25-4-1

ii. In favor of Reach higher:

1. Results: 30-0-0

6. Call for Announcements

a. Advisor Reports

i. Guzman: I yield.

b. Chair Reports

i. Allocations - Lukas Hartley

1. Hi everyone! Hope you're doing well tonight. One last Allo report from me tonight.

a. First, tomorrow, Allocations will be hearing two requests, from the Belly Dancing Club, and Enterprise Systems Student Union. Over the last two weeks, we have approved: 494 Fashion Magazine for their Fall Showcase, You Beautiful Black Women for their annual hairshow, Irish Dance Club for their Fall showcase, and African Student Council for their global lounge event.

b. Second, I am going to drop the Allocations Interest Form in the Slack for all those interested. If you are not currently on Allocations and are interested in serving on our committee for Winter 2026, please fill that form out!

<https://forms.gle/JQwmfn9ZivMUKKdf9>

c. One more thing, on a personal note, I will be serving as the founding president of the Kappa Alpha Pi pre-law and pre-government co-ed pre-professional fraternity. If anyone

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is interested in joining the founding board, please let me know.

d. Thank you all, and enjoy your holiday weekend.

ii. Public Relations - Sophie Gemmen

1. Happy Thursday, everyone! I hope you're all hanging in during these last few days before break.

a. As we're wrapping the semester up, I just wanted to note that merch has been ordered, so keep an eye out for updates about that from me in Slack.

b. Other than that, I've had a wonderful semester with everyone, and I look forward to celebrating the end of the year with you all! Have a great weekend and a lovely break!

iii. Advocacy - Genna Wright

1. Hi all, I cannot believe this is our last meeting of the semester.

a. I want to take a moment to thank the entire Advocacy Committee for your dedication, creativity, and commitment to uplifting student voices. Every event and initiative we carried forward this semester happened because of your hard work.

b. I also want to thank all of Student Senate for consistently supporting and collaborating with us along the way. It has been a meaningful and productive semester, and I am truly grateful for everything we accomplished together.

c. I am excited to continue this momentum into next semester. I hope everyone has a great thanksgiving break!

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iv. Policy - Cera McDonough

1. I yield.

v. Events - Karen Theakston

1. Happy National Absurdity Day!

a. Thank you to everyone who attended last lecture on Tuesday, it was such a great event and Professor Austin was truly an inspiration! Our end of the year celebration is coming up and I will be sending out a form in general business to submit any photos you may have taken throughout this semester.

b. Have a great Thanksgiving!

c. General Announcements

i. Jackson: Thank you all for such an amazing semester. I am going to try to get a one-on-one scheduled with all of you to see how experiences are with the Senate.

7. Public Comment

8. Adjournment

a. The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 PM.