



Student Government Association
General Meeting
Tuesday, November 19, 2024
Meeting Minutes

Peter T. Mazza Student Government Association Room
Ely Campus Center

A livestream of the meeting for public viewing also took place on YouTube.

Members Present: Joseph Bonilla, Justin Wald, Sarah Harrington, Austin Morgan, Lorraine Fernandez, Daniel Currier, Elizabeth Mercer, Jacob Constant, Nicholas Palumbo, Isabella Moniz, Anderson Dallaire, William Connor, Travis McLoughin, Rachel Luo, Stella Greenberg, Ben Janes, Jakob Trainor, Barney Garcia, Benny Rosas, Brendan Major, Melissa Kuzmeski, Raymond Croteau, Laura Terry, Mariza Monteiro, Ethan Mallinson, Christopher Lannon, Akile Phakos, Ezekiel Tamarkin, Dominic Zajko, Will Onorato, Angel Bethea, Ali Sutherland, SAAC Representative, Angelina Cassella, Puru Sharma, Irini Mahida, Troyelle Nosal, Sophia Rebenciuc

Members Excused: Cody Hoisington, Sicilia Campbell, Ethan Haynes

Members Absent: Aviannah-Leigh Saulters

Also present and participating were members of STAT; Dean of Student Maggie Balch, Associate Dean of Student Conduct Shannon Green, and Chief of Police Tony Cassiano, and SGA Advisors Matthew Dellea, Ryan Meersman, and Shannon Green.

Call to Order: Joseph Bonilla called the meeting to order at 5:30pm. It was announced that the meeting was being livestreamed and recorded. Members were asked to review the meeting agenda, and a roll call was taken of members present (listed above).

Approval of the Minutes: Due to extenuating circumstances, the approval of the minutes from the November 12, 2024, general meeting.

Guest Speaker – STAT (Student Threat Assessment Team):

President Joseph Bonilla introduced members of the Student Threat Assessment Team, Dean of Student Maggie Balch, Associate Dean of Student Conduct Shannon Green, and Chief of Police Tony Cassiano. In their presentation, they informed everyone on the purpose of the team and how it focuses on campus safety and security. As well as responding to reports of potential threats. The composition of the team was discussed explaining how it is a multidisciplinary team from various campus departments. Also included was information about RAVE and RAVE Guardian. Ending the presentation with making sure everyone knows that if you see something say something especially with all student leaders being mandated reporters.

- Brendan Major asked about the RAVE notification test and what the timeline was for it.
- Christopher Lannan asked about holding a student forum to help give out more information about STAT and the resources that they have.

- Irini Mahida asked to clarify that we are all mandated reporters.
- Sarah Harrington asked about submitting a forum anonymously.
- Dominic Zycho asked about if the person that is submitting the report on will be told who submitted it.

President's Report: Joseph Bonilla explained that the Executive Council met with President Thompson and the cabinet to deliver the fall progress report. Joseph then explained that he was sworn in as a Public Officer last week to serve on the Governor's Commission on Higher Education Quality and Affordability. Then briefly talking about the SGA Senate Retreat, the Legislative Breakfast, and the Westfield Public Schools trip to present the check. Finally, ending his report with a reminder about the bonding trip scheduled for tomorrow.

All University Committee: Travis McLoughlin reported that the All-University Committee (AUC) met on Friday, November 15th, at 1:40 p.m. The committee unanimously approved five items for referral to the University Curriculum Committee (UCC). They then reviewed three items for referral to the Academic Policies Committee (APC), including the much-anticipated common hour policy, which passed with an 8-1-1 vote. Lastly, the committee reviewed 17 items for approval from UCC, and after correcting some typos in the agenda, all items were unanimously approved.

Student Trustee Report: Austin Morgan, speaking on behalf of Student Trustee Daniel Currier, shared that Dan could not attend the meeting as he was participating in the Student Advisory Council but wanted to express that he misses being with everyone. Austin provided an update on the special Board meeting held last Friday, where the Board reviewed and approved Dr. Thompson's comprehensive evaluation for the 2023-2024 academic year. Interviews with faculty, staff, librarians, students, and community members highlighted Dr. Thompson's visibility, listening skills, and innovative strategies, with one standout comment noting her transition from "trauma surgery" to her true role as President. In recognition of her efforts, the Board unanimously recommended that the Department of Higher Education grant her the highest possible salary and benefit increases. The next Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 2nd, from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. via Zoom, focusing on financial affairs, including the University's budget. Proceedings can be viewed live at westfield.ma.edu/live. Austin closed humorously by suggesting any questions be directed to Dan directly.

Student Advisory Council: Austin Morgan, speaking again on behalf of Daniel Currier, humorously remarked on Dan's busy schedule, comparing him to a "professional meeting attendee" like Dr. Hearn, as he attended yet another meeting. Dan is currently participating in the Student Advisory Council to the Board of Higher Education, which includes all student trustees and SGA presidents across the Massachusetts public higher education system. The council is undergoing media training, hearing reports from advisors to the Board of Higher Education and conducting elections for key positions. Austin also updated that Dan is continuing to work with Joseph on planning the legislative breakfast, aimed at convincing lawmakers to address deferred maintenance on campus, with more details to come. Austin encouraged anyone with questions to reach out directly to Dan.

Vice President of Student Life Report: Justin Wald shared updates from his meetings with Chris Willenbrock, Director of Residential Life, and Mike Norman from the Counseling Center. Chris mentioned that the Area Coordinator position for University Hall, vacated by Mark Mankus, is expected to be filled by Winter break. Justin also encouraged participation in the Skyfactor survey, which offers prizes, including a housing fast pass. Mike Norman announced that applications and flyers for the Green Bandana Project will be available after Thanksgiving break and remain open until the end of the semester. The program aims to grow by 5-8 members and is a great opportunity for those passionate about mental health advocacy. Justin invited anyone with questions to reach out.

- Isabella Moniz asked about other platforms that aren't sports, such as the news.
- Christopher Lannan mentioned that a lot of students have been complaining about the lack of notification regarding the removal of Xfinity stream.
 - Joseph Bonilla gave a point of information that there was a message sent to campus.

Special Committee on Club Relations and Celebrations: Troyelle Nosal reported that the Special Committee for Club Relations and Celebrations met last Thursday at 4 p.m. to discuss ways to celebrate clubs and club leaders

while boosting student engagement. The committee explored increasing advertisements for clubs and events in residence halls to improve participation. Planning also began for an end-of-year celebration for all recognized clubs, including awards for exceptional achievements, with the top-performing club receiving a plaque or small trophy. To enhance communication and support, the committee proposed creating a Teams chat for all RSOs and linking a survey in emails to gather direct feedback on how the committee can better assist clubs.

- Sarah Harrington congratulated Troyelle on her first report!

Student Affairs Committee: Justin Wald reported that the Student Affairs Committee met last Friday to brainstorm ideas for the area outside the fitness center. He emphasized the need for more student suggestions, as without broader input, a small group of students, faculty, and staff will make the final decisions, limiting the opportunity to complain later if outcomes are unsatisfactory. Current ideas include replacing or balancing the existing carpet with new furniture in a blue and white color scheme and removing the Mac computers to repurpose the space. Justin encouraged everyone to share their ideas to help shape the project.

- Sarah Harrington asked about adding whiteboards.
- Ethan Mallinson asked about the process of voicing their ideas.
- Ali Sutherland mentioned that the whiteboard idea would be good for putting messages and such.
- Austin Morgan asked if they are going to be tabling to get more ideas.
- Ben Janes mentioned that the whiteboards would be a good idea because artists could put their work there.
- Samantha Dyer asked about the smell from harvest might be uninviting.

Vice President of Academic Life Report: Sarah Harrington reported that on November 14th she met with Provost Dr. Salka to discuss digitizing registrar forms, which is now in progress and expected to be completed by winter break or spring. They talked about the Student Affairs Committee's idea of a speaker series during the common hour, with each academic department hosting student-oriented speakers; the Provost supports this and noted there is a budget available. They also discussed progress on Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) initiatives, aiming to establish an office or division by spring, hire a JEDI officer for the president's cabinet, and prioritize creating more affinity spaces. Dan proposed limiting residential students to taking no more than 1-2 online courses, which the Provost liked but anticipates pushback; further discussion with Associate Provost Brian Jennings is planned. Dr. Salka highlighted the lack of 400-level courses and suggested forming an Ad Hoc Committee to reclassify certain 300-level courses as 400-level without each going through governance individually, to streamline the process and reduce the University Curriculum Committee's workload. Sarah's next meeting with the Provost is on December 11th, and she is seeking someone to fill an extra seat on the UCC; she invited those interested in governance to contact her. She reminded everyone about an opportunity to earn office hours by helping make goodie bags for her event on Friday at 1:30 p.m. in the SGA room and asked them to inform Jacob if they plan to participate.

- Isabella Moniz asked about to move on with caution about taking classes off of online.
- Irini Mahida asked about her event.

University Curriculum Committee: Melissa Kuzmeski reported that the University Curriculum Committee met on Friday, November 15th, from 1:40 to 3:30 p.m. The committee discussed updates to the Pre-licensure Nursing program, approving a change to the program description to better reflect course content and confirming that the required GPA must remain at 2.5 or above, except for freshman year. They also met with the SCORE committee to discuss pilot courses and their role in exploring complex issues, which was approved. Additionally, the University Curriculum Committee recommended forming a new committee to replace the SCORE committee to manage General Education courses moving forward.

Vice President of Student Equity: Lorraine Fernández provided updates on her recent meetings with Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola, Director of Belonging, Inclusion, and Learning, held on November 14th and November 19th. They discussed the ongoing development of the Unity Council and the ACAER (Advisory Committee for the Advancement of Equitable Representation) committee, which will be co-chaired by Lorraine and Jenyka. The

ACAER committee is still in development but is expected to be finalized by the end of the semester. Lorraine also announced that the Unity Council will meet on Wednesday, December 4th, to discuss Spring semester initiatives, including Unity Fest, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and a DC Global Diversity Mural project. She looks forward to sharing more updates as these initiatives progress and invited any questions.

- Joseph Bonilla asked to reiterate what unity week is.
- Akile Phakos asked if families are able to cater food.
- Matt Dellea mentioned that they can't buy their food because of Board of Health regulations but if they can get the paperwork, yes.
- Sarah Harrington asked about collaborating with dining.
- Brendan Major asked about unity council.

Finance Committee: Chris Lannan, Class of 2026 delegate to the Finance Committee, reported on the committee's November 15th meeting, where they reviewed proposals from FACES and the Chess Club. The committee recommended amending FACES' request to cover 100% of their \$64 cost for Crumbl Cookies, exceeding the usual 50% cap on food costs due to the club's limited funds and the fact that this is their first event. This recommendation, passed unanimously (3-0), requires a two-thirds majority roll call vote for final approval. For the Chess Club, which is hosting an on-campus chess tournament with UMass Amherst, the committee recommended approving \$28.75 to cover 50% of their food and drink costs. The club's proposal included items like trophies, which cannot be funded under SGA bylaws, and their president was informed. The Chess Club plans to fundraise by selling the drinks at the event. The recommendation passed with a 2-0-1 vote. Chris concluded by noting that the next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 22nd, and encouraged senators to contact Austin Morgan with any questions.

MOTION made by Christopher Lannan, seconded by Daniel Currier, to amend the finance proposal from FACES from 50% to 100%.

There being no discussion, a **ROLL CALL VOTE** with a result of **29 YES, 0 NO, 12 ABSTAIN**. Motion passed.

MOTION made by Christopher Lannan, seconded by Daniel Currier, to decline the finance proposal to the Chess Club.

- Raymond Croteau asked if we are giving 100% of the previous proposal why not give 100% to this one.

VOICE VOTE declined unanimously.

Vice President of Publicity: Elizabeth Mercer had no report however he wanted to let everyone know that she will be making a reel at the team bonding event.

Executive Secretary Report: Jacob Constant reminded senators about the proper use of abstaining from voting, emphasizing that it should be done in cases of conflict of interest, such as last week when a senator abstained from voting on the Accounting and Finance proposal due to being the club president. He encouraged senators to ask questions during discussions to avoid abstaining simply due to a lack of information. On a lighter note, Jacob reminded everyone attending the bonding trip tomorrow to complete the travel waiver, which requires being part of the SGA organization on Teams. He noted that an email has been sent to those who haven't joined yet and clarified that the link is still valid despite saying it expired. Jacob encouraged senators to reach out with any questions.

- Akile Phakos asked about the Travel Waiver.
- Sarah Harrington emphasized the importance of abstaining.

Commuter Report: Raymond Croteau reported that the Commuter Council met on Monday, November 18th, to finalize details for their upcoming hot chocolate event. The event will take place on Tuesday, December 3rd, from 9

a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Commuter Lounge. It will include a survey to gather insights about the needs and experiences of commuter students. Raymond invited everyone to join, stay warm, discuss the commuter experience, and enjoy hot chocolate and holiday treats.

- Ben Janes congratulated Raymond on his first report and asked about who can go to go the hot chocolate event.
- Sarah Harrington congratulated Raymond on his first report.

Senior Class Report: Nicholas Palumbo announced that the Class of 2025 Lawn Signs fundraiser launched last night and encouraged everyone to spread the word, with signs available for \$20 on University Tickets. He also shared updates on Senior Week, noting that some adjustments were made to the schedule and a call with Mohegan Sun is scheduled to confirm details. A finalized itinerary and ticket sales are expected to be ready by Friday, December 6th. Nicholas concluded by wishing everyone a great day.

- Anderson Dallaire asked if the signs will be double sided.
- Ethan Mallinson asked about sales.
- Isabella Moniz asked what the food was.

Sophomore Class Report: Samantha Dyer introduced herself as the delegate for Brenna the class president. Then, gave a brief update from the last class council meeting. Things mentioned were upcoming events, such as cookie decorating and nursing home card decorating. Using the event to help to try and fill the rest of the class council seats.

- Sophia Rebenciuc asked to repeat the date.
- Ali Sutherland asked where the event will be held.

First-Year Class Report: Ben Janes gave a report about the last council meeting, and they discussed their week of kindness that they are planning. He then explained all the days and what each day will have, ending with the final day a meeting and greeting the first-year class council.

- Irini Mahida asked what the dates were.
- Christopher Lannan thanked that they are taking after their sister class.
- Justin Wald thanked them for being so much more creative during their week of kindness.

New Business:

MOTION made by Joseph Bonilla, seconded by Justin Wald, to open new business.

There being no discussion, **VOICE VOTE** passed unanimously.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding SGA Resolution #007 to recommend an increase in the student activities fee for the 2025-2026 academic year and the development of a per-credit student activity fee for part-time undergraduate students.

MOTION made by Joseph Bonilla, seconded by Jacob Constant, to recommend an increase in the student activities fee for the 2025-2026 academic year and the development of a per-credit student activity fee for part-time undergraduate students.

- Angel Bethea what barrier they are seeing for part-time students.
- Joseph Bonilla gave a point of information and that we are the people who govern the money.
- Christopher Lannan let everyone know that in past years we covered the PVT A and that was part of the fee.
- Joseph Bonilla gave a point of information that part-time student cannot partake in activities because they aren't paying the fee.
- Sarah Harrington let everyone know that it is a \$15 increase not a \$26 increase.

- Irini Mahida asked why to make it be to pay off of a per credit bases.
- Angel Bethea asked for a reclarification about the \$15 increase for full time students and \$8 per credit for part time students and if that the amount is negotiable.
 - Angel Bethea readdressed asking if the amount isn't negotiable.
- Christopher Lannan recommends a NO vote for everyone due to the points discussed.
- Ben Janes asked if there will be 2 motions or one.
 - Ben Janes readdressed and explained that a YES vote would be great because of the part-time students.
- Ethan Mallinson asked to be given the information before the vote.
- Ezekiel Tamarkin asked if the student activities fee would be able to be funded by financial aid. Akile Phakos asked if it would be sent to all of campus before making the vote.
 - Akile Phakos readdressed asked to table the vote to be able to speak with other students about this before voting.

MOTION made by Akile Phakos, seconded by Christopher Lannan, to table and to amend the resolution into separate votes.

- Joseph Bonilla gave some information that if the motion is tabled, we would have to call an emergency meeting to be able to vote on the motion in an executive session.
- Sarah Harrington let everyone know that they are the ones appointed to represent the students.
- Isabella Moniz asked if it gets tabled.

MOTION made by Ben Janes, seconded by Daniel Currier, to have a 5-minute recess.

VOICE VOTE passed unanimously.

- Justin Wald explained that what Daniel and Austin are correct.
- Christopher Lannan asked if there will be a decision be made tonight.

ROLL CALL VOTE denied with a vote of **12 YES, 24 NO** and **5 ABSTAIN**.

- William Connor explained that if we don't recommend it that the cabinet could just pick a number and it could be higher.
- Ezekiel Tamarkin let everyone know about it for the better of the university.
- Angel Bethea asked where William Connor got the information from that it will be higher
- William Connor explained that it could be higher.
- Troyelle Nosal explained that they hear all the time about wanting to attend more event if they were better.
- Ezekiel Tamarkin to make it aware that where the money will be going.

ROLL CALL VOTE passed with a vote of **33 YES, 2 NO, 6 ABSTAIN**.

MOTION made by Joseph Bonilla, seconded by William Connor, to close new business.

There being no discussion, **VOICE VOTE** passed unanimously.

Announcements: The following announcements were made:

- Justin Wald make sure to get RAVE Guardian.
- Sarah Harrington asked for her team huddle to meet with her after the meeting.
- Isabella Moniz reminded everyone about the event happening in New Hall till 8:30 where you can donate clothing.
- Austin Morgan thanked everyone for enduring that process.
- Jacob Constant reminded everyone to sign up for Breakfast with Santa!

- Ali Sutherland asked to help donate things for his GPS class for people in need.
- Joseph Bonilla thanked everyone for being able to have a constructive conversation.
- Nicholas Palumbo There are 178 days till Commencement.

Adjournment: There being no further business, President Bonilla adjourned the meeting at 7:04 pm.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the approved minutes of the Student Government Association (SGA) general meeting held on November 19, 2024.

Executive Secretary Jacob Constant

Signed: _____

Date: _____