



Student Government Association
General Meeting
Tuesday, March 4, 2025
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 Fernández, Daniel Currier, Jacob Constant, Nicholas Palumbo, Isabella Moniz, Anderson Dallaire, Travis McLoughin, Brenna Guliani, Jakob Trainor, Cody Hoisington, Melissa Kuzmeski, Barney Garcia, Ethan Mallinson, Christopher Lannan, Ali Sutherland, Angelina Cassella, Puru Sharma, Irini Mahida, Ethan Haynes, Benny Rosas, Dominic Zajko, Raymond Croteau, Troyelle Nosal, Raul Rosario, Evelyn Aiello

Members Absent: SAAC Representative, GianCarlos Arteaga, Aviannah-Leigh Saulters, Mariza Monteiro

Also present and participating was Guest Speaker the Associate Director of Residential Life John Zocco.

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

Approval of the Minutes: The minutes from the February 25th, 2024, general meeting was approved pending an amendment under the UCC report.

Guest Speakers: John Zocco the Associate Director of Residential Life gave a brief presentation on StarRez, the new housing selection system that is expected to eventually replace MyHousing. For this year, it will be used solely for housing selection for the 2025-2026 academic year, as the system is still being developed. He demonstrated parts of the application process, including the housing agreement and general housing selection features. The new system will include roommate group questions and a feature allowing students to describe their living preferences, making it easier to find compatible roommates compared to previous years using the Find-A-Roommate app.

- Jacob Constant asked a question regarding roommate groups and what to do when not having a full group.

President's Report: Joseph began by expressing his appreciation for everyone's patience and support during his hiatus and provided an update on his office hours, asking those who need an appointment to reach out in advance. He then introduced John Zocco, who provided information about StarRez, the new housing selection portal that will be implemented. He discussed several upcoming events, including Owl Ball, OWL Celebration, the SGA Banquet, and a team bonding trip at some point in the future. He also shared details about his upcoming meetings with the Governor's Commission, the Director of Belonging, Inclusion, and Learning, and Kevin Hearn, the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs. He noted that tonight's meeting would be longer due to Constitutional Review. Lastly, he appointed Evelyn Aiello as a Davis Hall Representative for the Fall 2024 - Spring 2025 academic

year and Jakob Traynor as President of the Class of 2028 for the remainder of the Fall 2024 - Spring 2025 academic year.

- Christopher Lanan gave a comment and added information about a previous team bonding trip.
- Irini Mahida asked about if there was a date set in mind.

Vice President of Student Life Report: Justin Wald reminded everyone that Relay for Life is just two weeks away, meaning there are only 18 days left to fundraise and spread awareness. He pointed out that no one has yet challenged Dan Currier, who remains the team's top fundraiser, and encouraged members to step up. This year's event will feature new sideline activities, including trivia, games, themed hours (such as an 80s theme), and a prize for the most steps taken. He urged everyone to join the team, donate, or simply show up to represent SGA at the event, which runs from 11 AM to 11 PM on Saturday, March 22nd. He jokingly warned that if no one else attends, he will be left questioning their loyalty through song lyrics. Finally, he gave a shoutout to **Maggie** for continuing the Relay for Life merch designs.

- Melissa Kuzmeski explains that she plans to donate.
- Dominic Zycho explained that it was a great report, and he is wearing a SICK hat.
- Angelina Cassella gave a point of information and explained that there will be booths at Relay for Life and to join the First-Year class doing their jump rope competition.

Residential Life Committee Report: Angelina Cassella reported that the Residential Life Committee met for the first time last Friday and discussed several updates. Lammers Hall will be offline for the 2025-2026 academic year while the university determines its future use. Welch Apartments will undergo repairs over the summer and will be operational for 2025-2026, while Seymour will be offline for repairs in spring 2026 and Conlin will be offline in fall 2025. Students applying to live in these buildings would begin in Seymour in the fall and move to Conlin in the spring. The housing application process will transition to a new system, with the updated form expected to be released by late March or early April. Some Living Learning Community (LLC) locations will also be shifting, with the first-year Honors LLC moving to Davis Hall, the rest of the Honors LLC relocating to the first floor of University Hall, JEDI housing moving to New Hall, and the Arts and Music LLC fully transitioning to the first floor of Dickinson Hall. She wished everyone luck on midterms and a SLAYTABULOUS spring break.

Vice President of Academic Life Report: Sarah Harrington reported that she met with the Provost on Thursday, February 27th, to discuss several key agenda items. The dean searches are progressing well, with over 100 candidates received, and the selection process will soon narrow the field to 3-5 finalists, who will visit campus for interviews, including lunches with students. She invited anyone interested in attending these lunches to reach out. Regarding the SUCCESS Fund, a decision was recently made to appoint Hillary Sackett Taylor as the Assistant Provost for Educational Excellence and Retention to oversee the funds. Listening sessions will be held with faculty to gather input on how to allocate the funds, and Sarah is working on scheduling a session for students as well. She also proposed using part of the funding to establish a shadowing program on campus, which the Provost supports and will gauge faculty interest while she does the same for students. The conversation then shifted to the AUC discussion on 400-level courses, which aligns with an initiative the Provost initially proposed upon arriving at Westfield. Historically, the institution has never had 400-level courses, which may cause external institutions or employers to perceive a lack of advanced coursework rather than understanding the university's structure. The Provost is pleased to see this initiative moving forward, as it will be beneficial in addressing this issue. The digitization of registrar forms on DocuSign was also discussed, with the Provost noting that these forms must be uploaded into DocuSign envelopes, which unexpectedly incurs a \$30,000 cost. He plans to bring this issue to the Cabinet, emphasizing that SGA will not be responsible for covering this expense. Lastly, Sarah addressed concerns regarding recent executive orders related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), thanking Isabella Moniz for bringing this to her attention. While details remain unclear, institutions engaging with DEI efforts could be at risk of losing federal funding, a situation that would significantly impact Westfield. The Provost affirmed his commitment to defending faculty academic freedom and supporting Jennifer in her role with affinity groups. Both he and Attorney Melinda Phelps are closely monitoring the situation, though much remains uncertain as the executive

orders are being challenged in court. Sarah acknowledged that this is a difficult time for many and encouraged students to reach out to her if they need to talk. She closed with the song of the day: "Where Is the Love?" by The Black Eyed Peas.

Vice President of Student Equity Report: Lorraine Fernández wished everyone a happy spring break and encouraged them to take time to unwind. She announced that she will be meeting with Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola, Director of the Office of Belonging, Inclusion, and Learning, on Wednesday, March 5th, at 3:00 PM to discuss several topics, including recruitment for the Advisory Committee for the Advancement of Equitable Representation (ACAER). The committee currently has six members, including Lorraine, and is expected to meet on Thursday, March 20th, at 4:00 PM after spring break, with an email to be sent once the room is confirmed. She also provided updates on Women's History Month events, which will be a collaboration between the Office of Belonging, Inclusion, and Learning, the Class of 2027, and her own event titled "The Art of Being a Woman". This event will be an art expression workshop where participants will receive a canvas to paint a piece reflecting what being a woman means to them. A guest speaker, possibly a faculty member specializing in Women's Studies, will be invited to provide opening remarks and, if possible, stay throughout the event. After the artwork is completed, there will be an open dialogue for participants to share their pieces and stories. She believes this will be a powerful way to celebrate Women's History Month through reflection, creative expression, and meaningful discussion. The event is scheduled for Wednesday, March 19th, from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM in the Owl's Nest. She invited anyone interested in collaborating on either the committee or the event to email her, message her on Teams, or speak with her after the meeting, and she is open to one-on-one discussions about these projects.

Vice President of Finance Report: Daniel Currier reported on behalf of the Vice President of Finance, announcing that due to spring break, a finance proposal was brought before the Executive Council for review. The History Club requested that SGA fund 50% of transportation costs for a trip to the FDR Home in Hyde Park, NY, totaling \$291.98, along with \$364 for mileage costs, bringing the total request to \$655.98. The Executive Council approved funding up to the full amount of \$655.98 with a vote of 6 yes, 0 no, and 1 abstention. This proposal will require a two-thirds majority vote to pass through the Senate.

- Sarah Harrington asked to redo the motion to include the new language that we added during the Executive Meeting the night before.

Vice President of Publicity: Elizabeth Mercer gave her monthly senator of the month award to Angelina Cassella!

Executive Secretary Report: Jacob Constant reminded everyone that office hours are canceled this week due to midterms. He also announced that State Senator John Velis will be speaking at the SGA meeting on Tuesday, March 17th, which is the first meeting after Spring Break. This will be a dress-up meeting, and he encouraged members to plan accordingly. He invited anyone with questions to reach out.

- Joseph Bonilla gave more information explaining that he will provide more information about Senator John Velis.
- Isabella Moniz asked about a question regarding the agendas and them having the wrong information on them.
- Justin Wald explained that him not being on the agenda was his fault as he asked to be added after everything was already printed and prepped.
- Joseph Bonilla gave a Point of Information explaining that due to some people giving Jacob the information late not allowing all the information would be correct on the agenda.

Rules and Regulations Committee Report: Ethan Haynes reported that the Rules and Regulations Committee met this past Wednesday to review the constitution for the Physical Therapy Club of Westfield State, which was submitted just before winter break. After working through the process, the committee recommends approval pending the edits that were sent out at noon yesterday. He requested a motion to approve the WSU PT Club constitution, pending edits.

Junior Class Report: Travis McLoughlin moved to nominate Raul Rosario as Class Council Representative for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year. He noted that more updates from the Class of 2026 will be provided after spring break.

First-Year Class Report: Jakob Traynor reported that the Class of 2028 met on Tuesday, February 25th, to discuss future events. They are currently planning a Penny War competition between Courtney and Davis Halls, where water jugs will be placed at the front desks of both halls for students to drop in change. The hall that raises the most money will win an ice cream social, and they are awaiting approval from Residential Life and the RDs before moving forward. They are also planning a Kickball Tournament in April, where different class teams can compete for victory, with more details to come as the weather warms up. Additionally, the Class of 2028 will have an activity table at Relay for Life and encouraged attendees to stop by and participate.

- Anderson Dallaire asked about what their plan was for the Jugs in the dorm.
 - Anderson Dallaire readdressed and explained that the RA's don't have access to the RD office however it could be put in the RA office.
- Sarah Harrington congratulated Jakob on his first Presidential Report
- Ethan Haynes suggested for the event to be called Jar Wars.

RECESS WAS ENTERED FOR 10 MINUTES TO ALLOW SENATORS TO GET FOOD PROVIDED BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Constitution Review Committee: Ethan Haynes the Student Government Association Parliamentarian introduced the new Constitution with many of the changes in a 138 pages long report. Highlighting the big changes that were made.

All the questions asked were for a specific slides of the presentation, putting them here in the minutes would make questions be very confusing as not all are questions. Here is a link to the live stream starting at when the Constitution Committee report. <https://www.youtube.com/live/eFLC1o1hiPg?si=kZ-yX286WGMGYxO1&t=3893>

MOTION made by Ethan Haynes, seconded by Daniel Currier, to amend the Constitution and Bylaws on the Recommendation of the Constitutional Review Committee, Rules and Regulations Committee and the Executive Council.

There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE 20 YES, 0 NO, 6 ABSTAIN** passed unanimously.

Announcements: The following announcements were made:

- Ethan Haynes explained to make sure to sign up to be a New Student Orientation Leader!
- Jacob Constant advised to everyone that if the Constitution does get approved at the next meeting Signature Papers will be out the week we get back!
- Nicholas Palumbo stated that there are 73 days till Commencement.

Adjournment: There being no further business, President Joseph Bonilla adjourned the meeting at 6:19 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 March 4, 2025.

Executive Secretary Jacob Constant

Signed: _____

Date: _____