



Student Government Association
General Meeting
Tuesday, April 01, 2025
Meeting Minutes

Peter T. Mazza Student Government Association Room
Ely Campus Center

A livestream of the meeting for public viewing was not able to take place.

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, Irini Mahida, Ethan Haynes, Raymond Croteau, Troyelle Nosal, Evelyn Aiello, Isabella Centrella, Sophia Rebenciuc, Aviannah-Leigh Saulters, Mariza Monteiro

Members Absent: SAAC Representative, Benny Rosas, Raul Rosario, Puru Sharma

Members Excused: Dominic Zajko

Also present and participating was Guest Speaker the Outreach Counselor for the Counseling Center Kurt Morris, and SGA Advisors Matthew Dellea, Shannon Green, and Ryan Meersman.

Call to Order: President Joseph Bonilla called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. 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 March 25th, 2024, meeting, were approved.

Guest Speakers: Kurt Morris presented on Fresh Check Day 2025, highlighting that this year marks the 10th anniversary of the event at Westfield State University. Fresh Check Day is a fair-like mental health promotion and suicide prevention event featuring interactive booths centered around mental health themes, peer-to-peer messaging, campus-wide support, food, giveaways, and raffle prizes. Participants receive a stamp card to collect stamps from each booth they visit, which can then be exchanged for raffle tickets.

He shared the impact of Fresh Check Day based on the 2024 post-event survey results: 86% of participants reported being more likely to ask for help, 90% became more aware of available resources, 86% felt more comfortable discussing mental health, and 87% felt more prepared to support a friend. Kurt emphasized the importance of community involvement in creating a welcoming and supportive environment and encouraged students and organizations to get involved in making this year's event another success.

- Sarah Harrington asked if they have tried to get another location like Scanlon Banquet Hall?

- Kurt Morris explained that he tried to and that this was booked months in advance since November.
- Joseph Bonilla asked about what activities will be there.
 - Kurt Morris explained that the petting zoo will be there again.

President's Report: Joseph Bonilla introduced our guest speaker Kurt Morris then had a brief report talking about the upcoming service trip this Friday as well as the upcoming team bonding trip.

- Jacob Constant explained that the number required would be 30 people.
- Evelyn Aiello asked about when the date of the bonding trip would be.
 - Joseph Bonilla explained that the date is Wednesday April 16th.
- Ali Sutherland asked about Hot Table.
- Mariza Monterio asked a question regarding elections for next year and when do signature papers need to be in by.
 - Joseph Bonilla explained that they are due this Friday at 5 PM.
- Daniel Currier gave a point of information that Hall Rep positions will be running in the fall. Only Class Council's, Commuter Council, At Large positions and the E-board are being elected in this election.

Student Trustee: Daniel Currier opened his report with an April Fool's joke, jokingly announcing his resignation before reassuring everyone that he would be serving as Student Trustee until June 30th. He thanked those who participated in last week's Strategic Plan Open House and shared their feedback with Jen Scumaci and Mike Freeman, emphasizing the importance of the plan in guiding Westfield State over the next five years. He gave a shoutout to Raymond, Justin, Barney, Melissa, and Ethan for donating to the SGA Endowed Fund during Give a Hoot and, although disappointed more people didn't take part in his challenge, he reaffirmed his commitment to donate \$100. He encouraged others to give through westfield.ma.edu/give. Later that evening, he would be speaking with a doctoral student from the University of Georgia who is researching student trustees in American higher education, and although the title was a bit complex, he was happy to help with the research. Daniel is scheduled to visit the Massachusetts State House on April 10th to advocate for increased funding to address the deferred maintenance crisis, with a tentative meeting and tour set up with Representative Kelly Pease and additional meetings being arranged by Vice President Phelps. The next Board of Trustees meeting is on April 22nd in the President's Boardroom at the Horace Mann Center and will likely include approval of faculty promotion and tenure. He encouraged students to attend in support of their professors. Lastly, he informed the Senate that he will be attending an Academic Achievement Awards ceremony next Tuesday and may not be present for the SGA meeting unless the event ends early. He invited anyone with questions to reach out.

President Joseph Bonilla transferred chair of the meeting to Vice President of Student Life Justin Wald for the remainder of the meeting due to feeling unwell.

Vice President of Student Life Report: Justin Wald reported that he received an email from Dr. Hearn regarding student parking violations. The data shows 12 students have between 20 and 55 tickets, 31 students have between 10 and 19, and 90 students have between 3 and 9 citations. According to Parking and Traffic Control Rules and Regulations, Article K, Section 1, Subsection A, any vehicle with three or more university-issued citations may be removed or towed, and the owner is responsible for the costs. Dr. Hearn expressed concern and hopes SGA can help address the issue, as the goal is to prevent students from incurring further fines while also ensuring that existing parking policies are followed. Josh Hetrick, the university's parking clerk, stated that to avoid towing, students must pay all outstanding citations, purchase a parking permit if they do not have one, and park in the correct lots assigned to their permit. The Executive Board discussed possible solutions including issuing e-tickets, educating students, and sending out a campus-wide email with detailed parking policies and towing regulations. Justin also reminded everyone that the OWL Celebration Hype-Up event is happening this Friday from 4 to 5 PM in the SGA room, hosted by him and Lorraine. However, attendance is limited to club leaders.

- Sophia Rebenciuc asked if he knows the percentage of students who have gotten tickets are commuters.

- Tony Cassiano explained that we don't have that information. However, it explained that the majority of the tickets are from Lammers Lot.
- Sarah Harrington gave a point of information and explained about that when Joshua Hetrick came down to speak with us, he had that information
- Christopher Lannan gave a point of information and explained that it should be beyond us as student leaders to get parking tickets, further explaining that we know more stuff that the general campus doesn't know, and we should be following the rules more than others should be.
 - Justin Wald explained that he has gotten parking tickets, and one was very expensive due to not paying for it on time.
- Ethan Haynes asked to reiterate who has to pay for towing and storage if it has to happen.
 - Justin Wald explains that it is up to the student to pay for their car if it gets towed and stored.
- Christopher Lannan gave a point of information explaining that if you don't pay your outstanding parking tickets you might not be able to graduate.
- Ali Sutherland asked if the decal is digital.
 - Justin Wald explains that it is a digital decal that they will be able to see if you have it or not.
 - Tony Cassiano explains that you also get an email, regarding the decal.
- Nicholas Palumbo asked about when the event is this Friday.
 - Justin Wald explains that it is from 4-5 PM.

Dining Services Report: Cody Hoisington introduced himself and reported that the Dining Services Committee met last Friday for a short but productive meeting. The ice cream freezer is still on the way, and discussions are ongoing about the return of sushi in the DC. Justin and Jacob will be meeting with Melissa to finalize the logistics for when sushi might be offered. In retail updates, the Owl Café will be launching new coffee specials, and Ely Harvest will begin featuring a sub and smoothie of the month—starting with a chicken bacon ranch sub and a strawberry blush smoothie. Culture Pop is also being added to the Marketplace. Dining will continue hosting pop-up events throughout the month, with a focus on Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Fresh Check Day. Monthly dining agendas are now posted on napkin dispensers for better visibility, and Jacob will be sending an email to the Senate with the full schedule. On the dining operations side, deli waste management has significantly improved, overnight oats have been added with great success, and avocados are being scaled back due to cost and waste. A major highlight is the confirmation of a highly requested Boba Tea event, which will take place on April 17th.

- Sarah Harrington congratulated Cody on his first report!

Veteran Affairs Report: Ali Sutherland from Veteran and Military Services reported on a series of upcoming events. In April, the schedule includes the Second Annual Nonprofit Innovators Forum titled "Innovating Through Uncertainty" on April 7th from 12:30 to 5:30 PM in Parenzo Hall, an Honor Flight Movie Night on April 9th from 4 to 8 PM in the University MPR Room, and an All-Services Birthday Celebration on April 15th from 12 to 2 PM at MCEC. On April 16th, they will support Fresh Check Day from 1 to 4 PM by staffing the At Ease booth. On April 23rd, as part of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Awareness Month, they will host an Art Show from 1 to 4 PM at MCEC. The Veteran Graduation Celebration will take place on April 28th from 11:30 AM to 2 PM in the University MPR. Looking ahead to May, MRE Day will be held on May 2nd from 11 AM to 1 PM, followed by an Honor Flight Event on May 3rd. The month will close with a Memorial Day Breakfast on May 23rd from 9 to 11 AM at MCEC.

- Sarah Harrington congratulated Ali on his first report!
- Christopher Lannan asked a question regarding the time of the movie and the SGA debates.
 - Justin Wald explains that the debates will be in Wilson Hall.

Vice President of Academic Life: Sarah Harrington reported that campus visits for dean candidates are scheduled throughout April and into early May, with all student luncheons taking place in the Tekoa Room from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM, except for one. Candidates for Dean of Professional Studies will be on campus April 4th, 7th, and 8th;

candidates for Dean of Arts and Sciences will visit on April 9th, 10th, and 11th; and candidates for DGCE will be on campus April 29th, 30th, and May 1st. The April 9th luncheon will be held in the Dining Commons at the reserved tablecloth tables near the entrance closest to the Bistro. Catering for the luncheons may include chicken Caesar wraps, veggie wraps, tomato basil soup, chips, cookies, and beverages such as iced tea, water, and lemonade.

- Evelyn Aiello asked where to sign up.
 - Sarah Harrington explains to reach out to her.

Academic Policies Committee: Ali Sutherland reported that the Academic Policies Committee (APC) held a meeting on March 22nd. The committee discussed the university's attendance policy and whether Westfield State should align with standards set by other state universities. Currently, the school does not have a fully up-to-date attendance policy, and the goal is to establish one that fairly supports students who may be representing the university or dealing with multiple absences due to chronic illness, medical reasons, or military training. The aim is to avoid students needing to constantly send medical notes to professors and instead create a more streamlined, equitable process. The committee also approved an increase in the required credits to graduate with Honors, moving from 18 to 24 credits to match other institutions within the Commonwealth Honors Program. Additionally, SGA needs to revise and resubmit survey questions to better capture student feedback, as the previous survey only received 70 responses out of a student population of over 4,000. Ali, along with Puru Sharma and Austin Morgan, encouraged students to email them with ideas for questions, suggesting basic demographic information such as commuter status, graduation year, and whether students work or have children.

- Daniel Currier asked about why $n = 63$. Then explains that it would need to be explained that it wouldn't be next year.
- Evelyn Aiello explains that it would be better to give an incentive.
- Cody Hoisington asked about with the drop of honors students and increase of credits will there be an increase in the number of classes.
 - Ali Sutherland explained that the short answer is yes, but it would be better to ask Dr. Sacket-Taylor.
 - Austin Morgan added and explained that there are going to be less students accepted into the honors program and there will be fewer classes.
 - Daniel Currier gave a point of information explaining some of the new requirements for the honors program, the discovery seminar, intro to CHP, complex issues course in honors, and additional credits in course by contract.
- Sarah Harrington mentions that they need to explain that there already is a common hour.
- Evelyn Aiello asked if there would be a cap now of when you can enter the honors program
 - Christopher Lannan gave a point of information saying that he joined the honors program his sophomore year
 - Evelyn Aiello further asked that it is a thing now, but will it still be the case with the increased number of honor credits.
 - Ali Sutherland explained that he will get the answer and reach out with it.

Vice President of Student Equity: Lorraine Fernández shared that this week has been busy in preparation for Unity Week, which will take place from Monday, April 7th through Sunday, April 13th. She first encouraged everyone to support events for Transgender Week of Visibility, sponsored by All Out, the Office of Belonging, Inclusion, and Learning (BIL), and the Campus Pride Committee. Events include a Heartstopper Watch Party currently happening in the Owl's Nest, an Empowering Identities Presentation with genderqueer bassist Miss Christine on Wednesday, April 2nd at 4:30 PM in the Owl's Nest, a concert by Miss Christine and band on Thursday, April 3rd, and an Advocacy Email Writing Session with All Out on Friday, April 4th. Flyers are available with more details. For Unity Week, the Asian & Pacific Islander Student Union will kick off the week on Monday, April 7th with a Boba Café Night from 5:30–7 PM in the University Hall Multipurpose Room. On Tuesday, April 8th, the African Student Association will host "Wild N Out: West vs. East Africa" from 5–7 PM in the Owl's Nest. Wednesday, April 9th features "Habibis vs. Parceros: Cultural Takeover" hosted by the Muslim Student Organization and the Latinx

Association for Empowerment from 3–6 PM on the Green. On Thursday, April 10th, the Black Student Union will host “Rep Your Flag Cookout” from 5:30–7 PM at Dickinson Courtyard and the Common Room. Additional club events are still being finalized and will be included on a flyer to be posted on Instagram later this week. Weekend events include the “In Da Club, We All Fam” party hosted by Unity Council and BIL on Saturday, April 12th from 7–10 PM in the Owl’s Nest, and Unity Fest on Sunday, April 13th from 12–4 PM between the Campus Green and University Hall Multipurpose Room, featuring food, inflatables, music, and hip hop/poetry-themed performances. Lorraine invited anyone with questions to reach out to her via Teams or email.

- Christopher Lannan asked if the “We All Fam” event will be like how triple threat was last year.
 - Lorraine Fernández explains that it is just them coming up with another name.

Executive Secretary Report: Jacob Constant reminded everyone that the deadline to submit signature papers is quickly approaching—Friday, April 4th at 5 PM—and emphasized that no candidate may begin campaigning until he sends out the official email permitting it, which will be sent on Friday. He also urged members to respond to the Presence poll included in the email he sent last night regarding apparel. The Executive Council debate will be held next week on April 9th at 5 PM. Jacob encouraged anyone with questions about signature papers, elections, or the debate to reach out to him directly.

- Sarah Harrington asked whether or not to fill out the survey with bottoms or tops in mind.
 - Jacob Constant responded with tops.
- Ethan Haynes gave a reminder that it is an expectation going forward with it being in the new constitution about checking your emails.

Commuter Council Report: Barney Garcia reported that the Commuter Council has met several times this semester and, while their attempt at launching a newsletter didn’t generate much interest, they held a successful Valentine’s Day event on February 11th. The event aimed to connect with commuters and encourage involvement, offering Rice Krispie treats as a conversation starter. The council is now planning future events, including a potential coffee hour where commuters can meet one another and grab a drink, and are in discussions to collaborate with CAB during their spring event. The council has also started decorating the commuter lounge bulletin board and is committed to keeping it colorful, engaging, and up to date with activities and events. While meetings were initially held weekly, the council has shifted to biweekly meetings with continued discussion taking place via Microsoft Teams in between. The next scheduled meeting will be on April 15th.

Senior Class Report: William Connor thanked everyone who helped work the 50 Days Toast last Thursday, expressing appreciation for their support and noting that it hopefully gave underclassmen ideas for future events. He also thanked the seniors who attended, highlighting that their participation is what makes these events meaningful. Thanks to their involvement, there is now a new graduation sign to walk in with, as well as to use at future reunions—special thanks to Ryan for that. He reminded everyone about the upcoming Foxwoods trip this Friday, with buses leaving from in front of Scanlon at 5 PM and encouraged sign-ups due to limited seating. The final Senior Send-Off will take place on Friday, May 2nd on campus, with more details to come next week, but he did reveal that all attendees will receive a high-quality Westy Sherpa blanket. He also reminded seniors that caps and gowns are now available at the bookstore and that lawn sign sales are open until April 11th.

First-Year Class Report: Jakob Traynor appointed Celia Rocino as a Class of 2028 Representative for the remainder of the academic year. He also reminded everyone living in Courtney or Davis Hall to consider donating to the ongoing Jar Wars fundraiser, which will run until April 11th. All proceeds will go toward supporting the Class of 2028 and funding future events.

- Justin Wald asked how much they have raised so far?
 - Cody Hoisington responded with \$12 and thanked Ethan for the big donation.
- Anderson Dallaire asked if someone from the class council could be with the Jar at some points during the day to provide information about the event.

- Sarah Harrington suggested if you don't have anyone to sit by the Jar, just put a flyer.
- Ethan Mallinson asked about what would happen if one hall donated more than the other?
 - Angelina Cassella gave a point of information explaining that you will get a sweet treat prize of an ice cream sundae bar.
- Ethan Mallinson asked if there was a way to get lids on the jars to help prevent people from stealing money.
- Sarah Harrington gave a point of information arguing that the dorm halls have plenty of cameras.

Announcements: The following announcements were made:

- Austin Morgan explains that it is imperative that everyone fills out the surveys.
 - Anderson Dallaire gave a point of information he is wearing the clothing item from last year.
- Sarah Harrington let everyone know that Owl Ball tickets close on Monday at the latest.
- Anderson Dallaire let everyone know that Courney Hall is doing a building event tomorrow.
- Isabella Moniz let everyone know that New Hall is hosting an event tomorrow starting at 6 PM.
- Anderson Dallaire forgot to mention that their event will be starting at 7 PM.
- Sophia Rebenciuc commuter will be decorating a bulletin board so give some ideas.
- Travis McLoughlin encouraged everyone to go to April Showers, Bingo Hours on Friday.
- Barney Garcia reminded everyone about all out and the transgender visibility week.
- Angelina Cassella talks about the play that she is a part of called “Into the Woods” from the 16th the 19th!
- Dan the Man Currier encourages everyone to come next Thursday in the Owls nest for Financial Literacy night about learning a whole bunch of info that you wish you had learned in high school.
- Christopher Lannan talks about the FDR House trip that the history club is putting on.
- Lorraine Fernández mentions something that she forgot to mention in her report that clubs are hosting different things each week, but they are campus wide events.
- Nicholas Palumbo stated that there are 45 days till Commencement.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Acting Chair Justin Wald adjourned the meeting at 6:31 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 April 01, 2025.

Executive Secretary Jacob Constant