

Grand Valley State University Student Senate

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Thursday, April 4th, 2024

Kirkhof 2204, 4:30pm

Chair: Sophia Bates / Quinten Proctor

Vice Chair: Selina Martell / Paris Lawson

Parliamentarian: Braylond Price / Braylond Price



Minutes

1. Call to Order at 4:35pm

- a. Native Land Recognition
- b. Roll Call - Part 1
- c. Public Comment - Part 1
- d. Passing of the Papers
 - i. Johnstone passes a card for a retiring staff member.
 - ii. Bates passes a sign up for lunch with Donta Truss.
 - iii. Proctor passes a volunteering sheet for Lions and Rabbits of Grand Rapids.

2. Elections Commission's Report

- a. Bates: First of all, congratulations everyone! I am so excited for you all to do some amazing things during the 2024-2025 academic year. We have a room filled with senators-elect who are incredibly passionate about making a difference on campus. Just some closing remarks. A couple of positions needed to be filled outside of the election process, and those are our international student representative and our graduate student representative. For our international student representative, I am happy to congratulate Senator-elect Immaculata James on being appointed to this position by the International Student Organization. Our graduate student representative is not finalized but we have Mae Zurita who is talking with Val and working on becoming our representative. Lastly, we have 4 remaining seats that are reserved for first-year students, and those will be filled in the fall. Applications for the 4 first-year student seats will open in the next few weeks. I am currently working on the Elections Commission Transition Report, making sure that all of the changes that have been made to this year's elections process compared to last year's are recorded accurately. I will make that available to the Vice-president elect Lawson as soon as I can. I am not sure how or if they plan to publicize it but I hope that will be made available to you all in an effort of transparency. Some things to keep in mind for next year, the elections commission will be absorbed into the judicial branch. We have paved the way with how elections will be run going forward, but there will still be some things to iron out in preparation for next year's election. My biggest advice is to start looking into this towards the end of the fall semester and laying the groundwork over winter break/beginning of the winter semester. I know a lot of this might go over some people's heads, a lot of this is foreign and I understand that. I'll explain a little more about

how the Senate will be functioning, what our branches are, and how that all works in a little bit. Some exciting news about the voting results. We received a total of 3757 votes during Election Week this year compared to only 1190 votes during Election Week last year. That is over 2500 MORE votes this year than last which is amazing!! Our outreach has grown thanks to you all who promoted your campaigns. We want our students to know who is representing them, and who to get in touch with if they have a concern or change they want made, so thank you for putting yourselves out there and engaging with our students! So thank you all for a very successful election season!

b. Questions

- i. Hoogwerf: Was the 3000 votes based on the number of people or number of votes?
- ii. Bates: That was the amount of votes cast. About 800 votes were cast. A larger percentage of students voted.

3. Advisor Reports

- a. I would yield to Valerie Guzman our Student Senate Advisor at this time, but she is not feeling well today. She is very excited to meet you all next week.

4. Overview of the Basics

a. Overview of the Basics

- i. Bates: First I just want to let you all know that if you feel overwhelmed at first, it will all make sense and you'll get the hang of things soon. I remember attending my first couple of meetings with Roberts Rules and weird acronyms and I just couldn't make any sense of it. Just know that we are somewhat trying a new structure next year, so everyone will be in the same boat learning as you go along, even those in the room who have served on the Senate for years. As formal and structured as it might seem, we really are all here for the same reason and that's to advocate for students and make a difference here at GVSU. How do we make a difference at GVSU? We listen to the concerns and complaints we hear from our classmates, roommates, friends, social media, yikyak, all of it. Once everyone is broken up into our smaller councils and we elect our chairs, you will have the opportunity to bring up what you're hearing in council meetings or talk to your chair about it. Then, your chair will communicate that with the president and the rest of the cabinet members when they meet. Or, your vice president can advise you on how to set up a meeting with the appropriate person. For example, if you have an issue with campus dining, you would get help setting up a meeting with Laker Food co. Sometimes just meeting with a department on campus can bring that change. Other times, we need to write legislation. Legislation is a project that might take a few weeks to research the issue you are addressing. Then you essentially draft a proposal or request to the university. You will present it to everyone in this room and if they vote to pass it, then we will send it to the right person with Senate's stamp of approval. This shows the

administration that hey, senate approved it and they speak for the students, so that means the students want this change and we better get working on it. Aside from legislation and meetings with staff members, each council has their little jobs. Public relations is mostly social media and promotions, Events will plan and host student senate events or collab with other student orgs, policy will focus mostly on those issues that students are most concerned about, like housing, dining, parking, and DEIB or Diversity Equity Inclusion and Belonging council will focus on issues such as disability awareness, mental health, LGBTQ+ resources, etc. More information to come about those. Overall, there are a lot of exciting opportunities to learn about all the inner workings of GVSU. You will oftentimes be the first to know about administrative changes that happen on campus. Of course if you have any questions, the chair of your council will be your first point of contact, and our President-elect and older senators would be happy to help outside of that.

b. Robert's Rules

i. Robert's Rules are just how we organize discussion to keep it orderly. We go through each line item in the agenda and let the speaker have their time to speak before opening up to questions. To ask a question, simply raise your hand once the floor is opened up to questions (we will be getting placards that have your names on them and a little Robert's Rules cheat sheet on the back). Once the chair calls on you, you will have the time to ask your question. If you no longer want to ask your question, or if your question ends up being answered, you can just say "I yield." Sometimes the chair will ask if your question was answered by asking "do you yield?", and to that you can also answer "I yield" To be completely honest, I was too scared to speak in GA for my first year of senate which meant I didn't get as much practice. Please don't be afraid to speak during General assemblies. If you accidentally blurt something out or do something that doesn't follow the Roberts rules, the chair will gently correct you so you know for next time. This is a safe space to learn. Anyway, like I said, I myself am not super well-versed in Robert's Rules and I've been here for 2 and a half years. I have NEVER made a motion before. Anyway, I recommend using the cheat sheet I sent in my email on Sunday. So yeah, Robert's Rules are just a way to make sure we don't talk over each other during General Assemblies. Your council meetings will probably be much more informal where you will have a lot more space to speak your mind right away, but this will be up to your Chair.

ii. Questions

1. Gessler: How long do we say president elect and senator elect?
2. Bates: I believe that it is until the start of the 2024-2025 school year.

c. Review new structure

i. Pres/VP direct election by students

1. In the past, the President and vice president have not run on a slate. They used to run individually. For this year we liked the idea of them running on a slate because then we have two individuals who chose each other because they know they will work well, rather than having a president and a vice president who were decided on somewhat randomly.
 2. Also new this year is the fact that our president and vice president were decided by the entire student body. Granted, we only had one slate running this year so there was not much of a competition, but in the future we hope it will be more competitive so that we can see the student body input. In the past, the president and vice president would have been nominated today along with the rest of the cabinet members.
- ii. At large vs college seats
1. At large vs. College seats. Those of you who were elected into college seats, we will be providing direction and expectations as to what that role will look like. You have your college's students that you represent and an opportunity to connect with your college and your dean and dean's staff in a new and exciting way.
- iii. Again, as I mentioned in the Elections Commission Report, we have our international student seat that was filled, separate from the elections ballot. We still have an open graduate student seat that will hopefully be filled soon. And then we have 4 freshman seats that are open for incoming first year students in the fall. As I briefly mentioned earlier, Cabinet is made up of the different Chairs of each council and the Chief of Staff, Vice President and President. Cabinet meets weekly after General Assemblies to further discuss topics covered in GA, to work on finalizing details of either legislation or event planning. They run a lot of the behind-the-scenes. Cabinet members or the chairs of our different councils are who we will be nominating here in a little bit.

5. Transition of Power

- a. Oath of Office
 - i. Proctor and Lawson: "I do hereby affirm
that I will support and defend
the Constitution of the Student Senate
and the students
and their diverse, ever changing needs;
that I take this obligation freely,
without any mental reservation,
or purpose of evasion,
and I will well and faithfully discharge

the duties of the office
of Student Senate President and Vice President
for Grand Valley State University".

6. Five Minute Recess

7. President's Report

- a. Excited to get to work with everyone this year. Plans to hit the ground running and pick up where we left off with the 2023-2024 Student Senate. Notes that there will be lots of work to get done, but is very optimistic about the upcoming year. Met with housing to discuss the 10 year master plan. Met with the Provost to discuss the recent town hall and how the University can support all students at GVSU. Chief of Staff interviews will be held after the meeting.

8. Vice President's Report

- a. For those who may not know me, my name is Paris Lawson and I am your new Vice President. I am extremely excited to get started and work with you all closely next school year. We will be holding our General Assembly Meetings on Thursdays at 4:30 in this room. The location that we meet will not change unless we specify ahead of time. For those of you who do not know, we do have a senate office which is located in the lower level of Kirkhof inside the student org center. This room is open to all of you to use if you need to work on senate tasks, homework, or to socialize with other senators. Furthermore, on Tuesday some of us joined students, faculty, staff and senior leadership at a town hall meeting. This meeting touched on a lot of issues we have discussed here in the senate like retention, resources and growing student numbers. I encourage you all to reflect on your own experiences so far at GVSU and think about how we can make it even better going into next term. Lately, tomorrow President Proctor and I will be attending UAS which is our University's Faculty Academic Senate. We will provide you all with updates from these meetings as we continue. Please reach out to me Via slack or email at any point if you have any questions, ideas or concerns and I will be happy to chat with you. Thank you, I Yield.

9. Discussion

- a. Scheduling
 - i. Proctor: This past year, we did General Assembly meetings which lasted from 1-2 hours. Then we would have council meetings which would be about 30 minutes. Finally, we would have cabinet meetings for another hour to two hours. We used to do council meetings another day. The options would be moving either councils or cabinet meetings.
 - ii. Discussion
 1. Hoogwerf: Because senators are not getting stipends, we should keep council meetings on the same day to streamline the time for senators.
 2. Bartlett: I would agree with this because then it doesn't conflict with senator schedules.

3. Proctor: I think it is important to have the General Assembly available for senators.
4. Bartlett: I think there should be a zoom option for senators that want to participate in cabinet.
5. Wright: I think councils themselves should decide if they want to do meetings another day that works best for everyone.
6. Hoogwerf: It will not be accessible to everyone if we move the cabinet, but I believe that it will increase productivity.
7. Stang: It is important to have councils at the same time so that we can talk to other councils during meetings.

b. Policy priorities

- i. Proctor: My number one priority is that we can get resources to every student so that they can succeed. The other one is finding a way to reignite campus life after the pandemic. This factors into the mental health and engagement issues on campus. Having some sort of campus life will bring people back to Grand Valley
- ii. Discussion
 1. DeVries: What about the master plan?
 2. Proctor: I think that we will look into the specific aspects of the plan.
 3. Gessler: I would like to see if we can add the ID into the apple or google wallet. I would also like to raise motivation on campus.
 4. Hartley: I would like to focus on increased wages for students as well as get a representative from laker food co in to talk to us.
 5. Bartlett: I think that I would like to focus on mental health and medical leaves of absence.
 6. Wright: I would like to make students aware of all of the resources on campus.
 7. Gemmen: I would like to inform students about the national elections and ballot access.
 8. Hoogwerf: I would like to continue with on campus engagement and student organizations.
 9. Eschelman: I would like to decrease the cost of parking permits and tickets.
 10. Rienas: I would like to get a Kosher and Hallal food plan.
 11. McDonough: I would like to work with transfer students and help them have a smooth transition into life here.
 12. Bernardi: I would like to work on sexual assault awareness especially in Greek Life.
 13. Strand: I would like to work with non-traditional students/diversity of students.

14. VanDyke: I would like to expand bus routes and have a unified bus app that shows times.
15. Stang: I would like to work with the replenish food bank and take away the shame of asking for these resources.
16. DeVries: I would like to increase staff knowledge on disability.
17. Wright: I would like to talk about ways that minority students can feel included in campus and that there are resources here for them.
18. Theune: There has been an issue with campus hiding professors names for classes. I would like to know why they do this.
19. Green: I would like to bring awareness to the fact that student organizations are divided on campus.
20. Gessler: I think that we need increasing knowledge for students of how to love themselves.
21. Luitel: I would like to focus on international students and their transitions. I would also like to work with Laker Food Co. to do Halal meal plans.
22. Johnstone: I would like to get more professors to use GVSU Save and online resources.
23. Johnson: I would like to have ASL be recognized as a language.
24. DeVries: Why do they not want to have ASL recognized as a language.
25. Johnson: The board of trustees believes that it does not have a culture that goes along with it and is therefore not a language.

10. Overview of Cabinet Positions

- a. Public Relations Council (PRC)
 - i. The Public Relations Council will be responsible for gauging student opinions and communicating Senate's actions with the student body. Senators on PRC will be responsible for running the social media platforms, spearheading recruitment efforts, updating the bulletin board, and designing Student Senate merchandise and apparel.
- b. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Council (DEI+B)
 - i. The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Council will be responsible for tackling issues on campus related to intercultural policy, practice, and climate, as well as maintaining relationships with all social justice centers across campus. Senators on DEI+B will be responsible for helping with the annual Teach-Ins, and advocating for disability awareness, mental health, LGBTQ+ topics, multicultural affairs, international students, gender equity, and more.
- c. Policy Council
 - i. The Policy Council will be responsible for addressing the issues faced by students and campus residents. Senators on the Policy Council will be responsible for working on

issues related to housing, parking, dining, public safety, sustainability, textbooks, the libraries, the transition into college, and more.

d. Events Council

- i. The Events Council will be responsible for planning on-campus events and encouraging student engagement. Senators on the Events Council will be responsible for planning and facilitating events such as Campus Life Night, the 9/11 Memorial, the GVPD campus night walks, Exam Cram, ElectHer, Last Lecture, internal Student Senate bonding events, and more.

e. Allocations Committee (ALLO)

- i. The Allocations Committee works externally with the Office of Student Life to administer the Student Life Fund to various student organizations to enhance and develop campus life. The Allocations Committee will be made up of Senators from each of the different councils on Student Senate.

11. Cabinet Nominations

a. Allocations Chair

- i. Dolnik: I nominate senator elect Hoogwerf.
- ii. Proctor: Do you accept your nomination?
- iii. Hoogwerf: I accept.
- iv. Rationale:
 1. Dolnik: I was on her committee for about two weeks. She is a very hard worker and I am excited to see what she can do with this next year.

b. Public Relations Chair

- i. Price: I nominate senator elect Vanlerberghe.
- ii. Proctor: Do you accept your nomination?
- iii. Vanlerberghe: I accept.
- iv. Rationale:
 1. Price: He is extremely dedicated to senate. He is a hard worker and when you look at our social media you can see all the great work that he has done.

c. DEI+B Chair

- i. Bartlett: I nominate senator elect Wright.
- ii. Proctor: Do you accept your nomination?
- iii. Wright: I accept.
- iv. Rationale:
 1. Bartlett: Senator elect Wright has a lot of passion for senate. She has lots of ambitions and I think she will make an excellent cabinet member.
- v. Stang: I would like to nominate senator elect Johnson.
- vi. Proctor: Do you accept your nomination?

- vii. Johnson: I accept
- viii. Rationale:
 - 1. Stang: He has dedication to campus. He also creates a safe space for everyone to belong.

d. Policy Chair

- i. Eschelman: I nominate senator elect Dolnik.
- ii. Proctor: Do you accept your nomination?
- iii. Dolnik: I accept
- iv. Rationale:
 - 1. Eschelman: I have had the pleasure of working under him. He is very dedicated to serving the student body here in GVSU.
- v. Dolnik: I nominate senator elect Eschelman.
- vi. Proctor: Do you accept your nomination?
- vii. Eschelman: I accept.
- viii. Rationale:
 - 1. Dolnik: He was on my committee. I was very impressed with the work he did with parking especially. He has big goals for senate and cabinet would help him get to these goals.
- ix. Gessler: I would like to elect senator elect Johnstone.
- x. Proctor: Do you accept your nomination?
- xi. Johnstone: I accept.
- xii. Rationale:
 - 1. Gessler: He works very hard and does things in a timely manner. He is very dedicated and works hard for senate.
- xiii. Dolnik: I nominate senator elect Palumbo.
- xiv. Proctor: Do you accept your nomination?
- xv. Palumbo: I accept.
- xvi. Rationale:
 - 1. Dolnik: He did well on cabinet last year and would do very well to have this position in the future.

e. Events Chair

- i. Johnstone: I would like to nominate senator elect Gessler.
- ii. Proctor: Do you accept your nomination?
- iii. Gessler: I accept.
- iv. Rationale:
 - 1. Johnstone: As a member of her committee, she worked tirelessly to work hard for events like Last Lecture.

- v. DeVries: I would like to elect senator elect Palumbo.
- vi. Proctor: Do you accept your nomination?
- vii. Palumbo: I accept.
- viii. Rationale:
 - 1. DeVries: He did a great job planning the bonding events and the end of the year party.
- ix. Strand: I would like to nominate senator elect Vanlerberghe.
- x. Rationale:
 - 1. Strand: He is passionate and events would be something that he would do very well at.
- xi. Proctor: Do you accept your nomination?
- xii. Vanlerberghe: I will not accept as I have priorities with Public Relations at this time.

12. Adjournment at

- a. Public Comment - Part 2
 - i. I am the graduate assistant liaison on senate and it will be finalized soon. I am the graduate assistant for the office of multicultural affairs. There will be a report about expressive speech on campus. I will put the report in the slack.
- b. Roll Call - Part 2
- c. Call for Announcements
 - i. Dolnik: AOD and I will have a volunteer opportunity coming up. April 17 from 1-3pm will be on the North Lawn. It will be a drunk driving simulation. Ride the bus is planning a welcome week event. They would like a small group of senators to work with them over the summer. If you are interested, reach out to me on slack.
 - ii. Hoogwerf: Tomorrow is our final meeting for this school year, so if you would like to see what we do we have a meeting at 1:30pm across the hall.
 - iii. Gessler: Exam Cram will be going up by monday. So please sign up for tabling for exam cram. Exam cram is where we hand out pizza and snacks. It is a way to motivate our students.
 - iv. Proctor: It would be beneficial to see where the senate office is. Follow senator elect price to see it.