

Grand Valley State University Student Senate

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Thursday, April 11th, 2024

Kirkhof 2204, 4:30pm

Chair: Quinten Proctor

Vice Chair: Paris Lawson

Parliamentarian: Evan Jackson



Agenda

1. Call to Order at 4:30pm

- a. Native Land Recognition
- b. Roll Call - Part 1
- c. Public Comment - Part 1
 - i. I am your graduate student associate and I wanted to introduce myself today.
- d. Passing of the Papers
 - i. Vanlerberghe: I am going to drop a survey for the laker food co in the slack in a few minutes. Please leave comments.
 - ii. Proctor: Please sign the rubber duck as a graduation present for Sophia Bates.

2. President's Report

- a. Proctor: First of all, I would like to congratulate the first ever Student Senate Chief of Staff, Evan Jackson. Evan came into his interview very prepared. Despite being new, he was very knowledgeable about the governing documents, and the restructuring process we undertook this past year. He brought up suggestions to improve the new governing docs, and highlighted work he's done within the University that's similar to what we do on Senate. We believe his fresh perspective could really benefit this position as we work to develop it for the first time, and we look forward to working with him.
- b. Last week, Vice President Lawson and I attended UAS, which is the faculty senate, where we talked about research-intensive courses, and how the University's marketing plans. We plan on attending UAS again next Friday.
- c. Yesterday, following our recent conversations on this topic, I attended the Chick-Fil-A meeting and listening session along with many of you. I know the University wants to make a final decision soon, and I just want to let you all know that Student Senate might need to say something in the near future. I am still gathering information on this subject for now, and I will be working with the new Cabinet to assess this further. I want to make sure you all stay in the loop on this, and if you have any questions, concerns, or thoughts about whether or not Chick-Fil-A should come to campus, please DM me on Slack.
- d. Also don't forget about our volunteer project on Tuesday! I will Slack those of you that signed up for this.

- e. Finally, I just want to wish everyone who's running for Cabinet some luck. I know there are some contested races lined up, but I am excited for you all, so keep things positive and don't take it too personally if you lose an election, I think it's an accomplishment to even run. I also just want to remind anyone elected to Cabinet should plan to attend next Thursday's required Cabinet meeting. Thank you.

3. Vice President's Report

- a. Lawson: Good afternoon, yesterday I attended a meeting with Chick Fil A representatives to engage in conversation about their company and possibly coming to campus. Then I attended a listening session afterward that was just student to student conversation. The overall concern was overwhelming and my takeaway was that many students feel silenced and not valued. I plan to continue working with senior leadership and students as we proceed to figure out what the best outcome is for everyone. Tomorrow I will be joining a couple senators to meet with Donte Truss who is GVSU Vice President for Enrollment Development and Outreach, we plan to talk about his plan for expansion and recruitment. If any of you have specific questions you would like me to ask on your behalf feel free to send them to me before tomorrow. Lastly, I just want to wish everyone luck in cabinet elections today, you will all do great!

4. Chief of Staff's Report

- a. Jackson: Good afternoon senators, as I sit here before you to deliver the first official report as Chief of Staff, I am filled with excitement and a deep sense of responsibility. It is a privilege to work alongside each of you. Though we have just begun, I am eager to lay the groundwork for a semester filled with collaboration and innovation. My vision is centered around supporting each and every one of you, enhancing the efficiency of our senate, and ensuring that our initiatives resonate positively across the campus. In the coming weeks I look forward to connecting with each of you. Please feel free to contact me anytime with questions, suggestions, or general conversation.

5. Review Elections Process

- a. Proctor: It will start with speeches in the order of which the candidates were nominated. From there, we have 10 minutes or 5 questions whatever happens first. This can be extended. Then the nominee will leave the room and we will have a general discussion about the candidate.

6. Cabinet Elections

- a. Allocations Chair
 - i. The senate reviews the responsibilities of the Allocations Chair.
 - ii. **NANCY SPEECH GOES HERE**
 - iii. Questions
 - 1. Gessler: What stood out to you with something you want to change or improve within Allocations?

2. Hoogwerf: I would like to give senators better knowledge about what goes on with Allocations because there is a lot more that senators can know.
3. Palumbo: Is there anything you would like to do to change the student life fund?
4. Hoogwerf: Grand Valley is getting a larger check for the next fiscal year. I would like to increase the fund in the coming years due to this.
5. DeVries: Do we have a tight budget? Can you elaborate?
6. Hoogwerf: We spent 89.4% of the total budget not including the amount that we had to turn away. We were able to zero out some groups which means we spent the total that they were allocated.
7. DeVries: Do you have any idea why the budget is so tight?
8. Hoogwerf: I am asking the same questions. There is inflation, growth of campus, and more.
9. Wright: Are there any goals that you want to accomplish in the upcoming year?
10. Hoogwerf: I would like to talk to e-boards of student organizations over the past year. I was able to start this but am hoping to continue this into the next year.

iv. Discussion

1. Vanlerberghe: I had the privilege of working with Nancy on Allocations this past semester. She was gone for a semester and jumped right back into things. She got the position when the decisions become very hard. She has been very professional throughout it all.
2. Gessler: Nancy is a very hard worker. Everything she does is impressive.
3. Palumbo: As a cabinet member, she put a lot of care and thought into the position. She knows the importance and expectations. There is not a better candidate.

b. Public Relations Chair

i. The senate reviews the responsibilities of the Public Relations Chair.

ii. **TY SPEECH GOES HERE**

iii. Questions

1. Gessler: What is your leadership style?
2. Vanlerberghe: I prioritize communication. I want everyone to know their expectations and that I am open to help whenever necessary.
3. Wright: What are you most excited for this next year?
4. Vanlerberghe: I want to work on promotions and I would like to see the senate grow. I would also like to have posts about what events we are funding. This would show what they are and where they are.
5. DeVries: How do you plan to gauge public opinion from students? The approval process to get a student wide email is very difficult.

6. Vanlerberghe: I agree that it is hard to get a survey out to all students. We came up with reconfiguring our bulletin board in some way where students can voice their opinions of us. The department of student affairs newsletter can be used as well.
7. Zurita: What is the current perception of student senate?
8. Vanlerberghe: I think that most people are aware of what we do and have appreciation. I do know that a lot of people do not know what we are or what we do. I would like to continue trying to reach as many students as possible to gain that momentum.
9. Theakston: Are there any other changes that you want to implement in social media?
10. Vanlerberghe: I would like to do small things. I would like to archive our election posts as these are not relevant anymore. I would like to update our linktree and try to work with the new feature on instagram that is collaborative votes.

iv. Discussion

1. Gessler: Ty is a very hard worker. I needed a poster made for an event and he did it very quickly. He is a very good communicator. He would be perfect for this position.
2. Price: I think that he had a great amount of professionalism in his speech. He has done everything to be prepared for this position including the work he did last year.
3. Theakston: I had the pleasure of working with Ty last semester. He was always great at getting things done and having great conversations with me.
4. Hoogwerf: He sat on Allocations last year. He asks great questions and is a great person to be around.
5. Zurita: I look forward to being able to collaborate with this position. It is important to have someone who is knowledgeable. From what I am hearing, Ty would be perfect for this role.

7. Recess

8. Cabinet Elections

a. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Chair

- i. The senate reviews the responsibilities of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Chair.
- ii. Wright: Hi Everyone! My name is Genna Wright (as you all probably know) and I am running for the position of chair women of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and belonging council. First off I want to share a little bit about myself. I am a criminal justice major

and I am minoring in psychology. I've always had a passion for understanding the legal system, and promoting a climate where everyone feels safe, included, and equal.

Throughout my life I've had many opportunities, where I was able to showcase my passion and leadership skills for the greater good. During my Junior and Senior year of high school, I was elected to be on the E-board for our Student Council, where we had the chance to present and compete at the MASC/MAHS state leadership conference. I also had the opportunity to be one of three ambassadors of Junior Leadership Macomb, which is a non profit organization and program that introduces students to the assets, issues, and leaders in Macomb County. And in my senior year of high school I sat as the president/liaison for our schools Diversity Club. I believe that all of these experiences have helped strengthen my leadership skills, and have fully prepared and equipped me for future positions and roles to take on.

- iii. This council means so much to me because diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging are all such important values that I prioritize and pride myself on advocating for and acknowledging. I believe these values are all important for the climate of GVSU, and to make this school a place where our diverse study body feels accepted and that everyone believes they are valued and wanted here.
- iv. With that being said, over the past several months I've taken the time to talk to students, and attend events where minority students have voiced their concerns, and as troubling as it is to hear, I deeply believe in GVSU and Student Senate and I believe this council has the profound ability to provide a voice for students and to actively and impactfully make a difference in the 2024-2025 school year. As I've stated before, it is of utmost importance to me to help promote diversity, equity, inclusivity, and belonging!
- v. As chairwoman for DEIB, my job is to work simultaneously with all senators, to make sure everyone in my council will feel seen and heard as everyone should be able to comfortably voice their opinions and ideas without feeling judged.
- vi. My goals for the year is to keep active communication and contact with as many GVSU organizations as possible, and to be able to support them and to come together to plan events, and take initiative. I also feel that it is very important to hear from students on what they believe are some of the rising issues on campus.
- vii. In this role as chairwoman I plan to help guide and lead this council towards our common objectives, and I plan to use my leadership skills to promote an environment of diversity, equity, inclusivity, and belonging.
- viii. Although I've only served one semester on, I believe it will be really impactful and beneficial, for a fresh perspective and voice
- ix. Thank you everyone for listening, and whether or not I get this position. I am overall very excited for the coming year and plan to put 100% effort into the senate and this council.

x. What is something that stood out to me in the transition report- Something that stood out to me in the transition report was that former councilwoman Paris mentioned how her goals for DEIB is to make it more an event based council which is totally for, and which I believe will be very beneficial, as I believe we will benefit best by interacting with the student body.

xi. **ZURIEL SPEECH GOES HERE**

xii. Questions

1. Gessler: This is for both. What stood out to you on transitions report
2. Wright: Lawson wanted to be more of an event based council and reach out to the student body more.
3. Johnson: We talked about ideas for bringing a light room for people when it comes to seasonal changes.
4. Dolnik: You both mentioned working with PRC. Are there any ways you plan to work with other cabinet members?
5. Johnson: I would like to work closely with events and promote more of our events especially with LGBT. I would like to work on creating connections.
6. Wright: I would like to work with all councils. Specifically events because we can plan events. I have talked to many minority students and they would like more outreach for the events happening.
7. Hoogwerf: There are concerns raised about retention for minorities. How will you use your position to do this?
8. Wright: I am very passionate about this. A lot of students are unaware of resources on campus. I want students to be aware and know that they have people to talk to.
9. Johnson: I would like to have sit down conversations with students in these organizations about their feelings and then further bring their feelings to senate.
10. Luitel: What new event ideas do you have?
11. Johnson: I want to re-input events for every week during black history month. I want to do more with deaf awareness month, asian culture month, and more.
12. Wright: I would like to plan working with the BSU on campus. I would also like to partner with some fraternities and sororities to plan events for this group of students.
13. Zurita: Conversations have been happening about holding GVSU accountable for performable diversity. This is a label to say that institutions are appearing diverse rather than actually have a diverse community. What do you think the role of Senate will be in this issue.

14. Wright: This has to go with the Town Hall. We have a more diverse student population, but students do not know about resources that we have. I think we can hold the school accountable.
15. Johnson: One thing that students do not know about are the events that are put on for scholarships. If you go to events, you are able to get either a \$300 or \$500 dollar scholarship. I want to work with PRC to promote these events.
16. Lawson: I motion to extend by two questions.
17. Jackson: Second
18. 2 yays - 0 nays - 0 abstentions
19. DeVries: Based on what I heard many issues that have to go with this position are not being mentioned and staff don't have the training to deal with it. Thoughts?
20. Johnson: With disabilities, I have worked with them. They are one of the toughest groups to get a hold of. I would like to try to have a conversation with them. I think it is important to be more communicative with them so they know what is going on. That is something we can focus on as a senate this next year.
21. Wright: I do believe students with disabilities are underrepresented. I want to reach out to students with disabilities. I want to talk about ways we can make students feel safe and important on campus. I want to work on gender, cultural disability, and more. I want to make sure that every aspect is talked about.

xiii. Discussion

1. Gessler: I think Genna is very prepared. She has a lot of prior experience and has grown a lot to the point where she is ready for this role.
2. Hoogwerf: I gave Zuriel some critiques about his legislation and I will say that there was some defensiveness about these.
3. Vanlerrberghe: I think that Genna has a very important experience when it comes to the Macomb leadership program. She accomplished many things while participating in this program.
4. Bernardi: I know that Genna is a very amazing person and can bring an interesting perspective when it comes to the different types of faith. I think that neither of them had a great response to these questions they were asked. I wish they would have come more prepared to answer these questions today.
5. DeVries: What did you say previously Nancy?
6. Hoogwerf: When I was going through his legislation, I was making a lot of comments to reach our high bar set by past legislation. It was brushed off as not important. There was a lack of communication and time allotment within this.

There were a lot of traits shown of how a person would act in a leadership position.

7. Gessler: I think we all think they have the leadership abilities, but to me Genna seems like the better prepared one.
8. Theakston: I think that Genna has the better qualities for leadership and can adapt in the position.
9. Price: I agree with what is being said. Do we want to fill this position or do we want to give more time?
10. Eschelman: Coming from an unbiased perspective. From what I have heard, I think Genna inspired more confidence in me that she could do this role the best.
11. Palumbo: I am glad that we are having a productive discussion. I do not think we need to expect these people to be immediately ready. As someone who had a cabinet position last year, there is a learning curve of learning responsibilities, how to be a good leader, and more. I think that everyone would also have the learning curve that happens when someone steps up to take a position.
12. VanDyke: It is important to remember that summer is coming and they will have time to prepare.
13. Bernardi: I still believe that Genna would be the better candidate. She prioritizes a lot of time for this. They should use the summer to educate themselves better on the things that they are going to be reporting on.
14. Hartley: There is room to improve. When it comes to this set of issues, these are the most difficult to answer and we should keep that in mind.
15. Price: I feel that Genna will do better in this position due to the willingness to learn, however I wonder if it would be better to reconvene after learning more.
16. Eschelman: We should consider which candidate has the better starting point.
17. Theune: I try to stay very educated on these topics. The openness to learn is very important.
18. Theakston: I agree with what Braylond is saying about going back after summer to see who the best candidate is.
19. Lawson: Both were on my committee. They both are very passionate. Genna reached out a lot wanting to go to events, wanting to help out, and more. Zuriel was working on his legislation so they both have good attributes.

b. Policy Chair

- i. The senate reviews the responsibilities of the Policy Chair.
- ii. Dolnik: I rescind my nomination
- iii. **MICHAEL SPEECH HERE**
- iv. **TOM SPEECH HERE**

v. **ALEC SPEECH HERE**

vi. Questions

1. Dolnik: Since this is a new council, how do you plan to do things within this council?
2. Eschelman: I am excited to have the opportunity to pave the way for what we will do in the future. I would like to see the policy become more independent within the council itself. I want to see what individual senators can do on their own.
3. Johnstone: I would give the council their room to work and lead them in the right direction.
4. Palumbo: I think the good news is that you get to directly focus on policy which is our goal. What problems can be addressed and what should be prioritized. I think we should expect good work but give them the resources to do what they should do.
5. Gessler: Looking at last year, what is something you would like to improve on this year?
6. Johnstone: I would like to work on digital alternatives to textbooks and nutrition.
7. Palumbo: I would like to work on mental health services and create more campus engagement. A positive atmosphere will also help with mental health. I would like to listen to the students to see what the most important issues are.
8. Eschelman: I did a lot of work with parking, so I would like to reduce the cost of parking permits on campus here. Right now they are funded by permits and tickets themselves.
9. Hoogwerf: None of you have passed legislation, so how will you teach yourself and others how to write high quality legislation?
10. Palumbo: I wish I could have done this last year. My first step is going to be learning how to write legislation and possibly begin writing some for practice. Once I feel confident, I can teach my council members as well.
11. Eschelman: I wanted to do a lot of listening and learning for the first semester. I would like to look at the large group of legislation that has been passed already and teach myself how to write it as well as what goes well in it.
12. Johnstone: I would like to reach out to former senators as well to see how I can learn how to do it.
13. Vanlerberghe: You all have previous experience, so what are your plans to work with other committees that have been merged.
14. Eschelman: I think this is important. I think the best way to go about it is to listen to former senators and what they have to say given that we don't want

these to be separated. No matter what they are working on they should be involved.

15. Lawson: Motion to extend the time for questions by 5 minutes.

16. Jackson: Second

17. 2 yays - 0 nays - 0 abstentions

18. Johnstone: I dealt with lots of campus affairs due to other things I was involved in. I would take this knowledge with me.

vii. Discussion

1. Gessler: I think that Alec will be best suited for this position because he's been in the cabinet. He does his work quickly and knows what to do.

2. Price: I think they're all really good candidates, but being that this is a new council, I think Alec will be best for this role. I think his task force idea is the best way to get senators to step out of their comfort zones and talk about what they are passionate about.

3. Dolnik: I see Alec's cabinet experience as very valuable, Tom is very involved in policy, and Michael is someone who can grow into the role with his young age.

4. McDonough: I think Michael carried himself very well and it was very inspiring that he wanted to learn.

5. Theakston: I think Alec would be great due to his leadership role. He is very easy to communicate with and the task force is a very good idea.

6. Vanlerberghe: I think they all did a very good job. In my opinion, the task force stood out to me because Alec talked about making them informal. This goes along with the restructuring process of being able to work with other councils. This fits what we are aiming to do this year.

9. Recess

10. Cabinet Elections

a. Events Chair

i. The senate reviews the responsibilities of the Events Chair.

ii. Palumbo: I rescind my nomination for the Events Chair.

iii. Vanlerberghe: I nominate senator elect Theakston

iv. Vanlerberghe: I spoke with her between the last two meetings and it became apparent that she would be good for this position.

v. Proctor: Do you accept your nomination?

vi. Theakston: I accept.

vii. **GESSLER SPEECH HERE**

viii. **THEAKSTON SPEECH HERE**

ix. Questions

1. Hoogwerf: Allocations collaborates closely with student organizations. What previous experiences will you draw upon to create these successful programs?
2. Gessler: I planned last lecture, exam cram, work with the library, and I have grown a lot in the past two years. I would like to get to know more people to know what they want to happen. I plan events for the band, so this is experience.
3. Theakston: I was a part of student council. I planned events including powderpuff at my high school. I would like to connect with other organizations.
4. Schwallier: How do you plan on reaching out to the student body to get ideas
5. Theakston: I think a big thing will be working with PRC so that we can share what is going on. Doing surveys and polls is important.
6. Gessler: I am in a lot of groups, and so I plan on using my connections to get information from people. I do not have fear about talking to people, so I would like to talk to everyone about events.

x. Discussion

1. Schwallier: I think that Riley answered the question better. She also has a lot of connections that would benefit her planning events.
2. Gemmen: I worked with Riley, and I think that her enthusiasm is contagious. She is an excellent leader and a very good candidate.
3. VanDyke: It seems that Karen read the transitions report better.
4. Hartley: I think that Riley has a very good style of leadership that helps people grow.
5. Vanlerberghe: Karen and I worked well together and would fit well. Riley had very good attendance at Last Lecture which she planned.
6. Luitel: Riley has been a very inspirational person. She is nice and easy to talk to.
7. Palumbo: I worked with Riley and I had a great time working with her. Karen has grown on senate and would be a good fit as well. \
8. VanDyke: I think Karen had the better speech overall.

11. Advisor Report

- a. Guzman: Hello to everyone I haven't met! You can reach out to me whenever for whatever!

12. Adjournment

- a. Public Comment - Part 2
 - i. Bates: I am meeting with Donta tomorrow, so if you have any questions you want to bring up or things you want answered, feel free to reach out to Paris, Ty, Genna, or I.
- b. Roll Call - Part 2
- c. Call for Announcements
 - i. Gessler: Please sign up for exam cram!

- ii. Hoogwerf: Please RSVP for student life awards! Last Friday was the final Allocations Board. Out of the last 3 years we spent the most out of the student life fund. We saw only 23.5% of the budget spent in 2021. We are seeing increases and I am excited to continue the work next year.
- iii. Proctor: Congratulations to everyone who was elected and everyone who ran! After we take a picture meet me in the office so I can get you sworn in!