

Grand Valley State University Student Senate

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MINUTES

Thursday, October 16th, 2025

Kirkhoff 2204, 5:15 PM

Chair: Evan Jackson

Vice Chair: Ty Vanlerberghe

Parliamentarian: William Laurin



Agenda

1. Call To Order

- a. Approval of the Minutes
 - i. The previous meeting minutes stand approved.
- b. Passing of the Papers
 - i. Zero Waste Football Signup
 1. Laurin: Here is a sign-up for Senate volunteers to sort trash and recyclable materials at future football games, in order to boost sustainability efforts.
 2. Hardgrave: I will be passing the virtual sign-up for The Green Team which is a volunteer group that helps to boost sustainability efforts around campus. They are looking for more volunteers to join!

2. Public Comment

3. Executive Reports

- a. **President** - Evan Jackson
 - i. Good evening, everyone. I hope you're all doing well and settling into the rhythm of mid-semester.
 1. I want to start by acknowledging two major successes—our Student Senate Open House and the Student Solutions Summit. Our Open House was a huge success—thank you to everyone who showed up, greeted students, and helped make our newly renovated space feel welcoming and alive. The turnout, energy, and engagement we saw that day were exactly what we hoped for. And our Student Solutions Summit exceeded expectations. We had an incredible turnout, meaningful conversations, and, of course,

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plenty of pizza. More importantly, we heard directly from students about their experiences, ideas, and challenges. We're now finalizing that feedback and will begin mapping out next steps to move those ideas forward. I strongly encourage each of you to keep those conversations going—take action on the ideas that stood out to you and continue asking questions. This is our shared campus, and we all have a role in shaping it.

2. This past week, I also had the opportunity to meet with the Student Government President at Ferris State University. We shared ideas and discussed opportunities for collaboration between our organizations. I'm excited to see how we can build stronger relationships with other student governments across the state to share strategies and amplify student voices collectively.
3. On Saturday, I attended Make a Difference Day, where I had the chance to connect with some incredible student leaders from NPHC, YBBW, and BLACK. We're planning to meet soon to explore ways to collaborate and create a greater impact for students on our campus—especially in areas of service and community building.
4. Now, while it's hard to believe, we're already halfway through the semester. That means it's also time to start thinking about next year's leadership. For those of you considering stepping into a leadership position—whether that's Committee Chair or Executive role—now is the time to start having conversations. Reach out to the person currently in that role, learn from their experience, and

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start preparing early so you can make the best decision for yourself and for Senate.

5. And to close—we've accomplished a lot this semester, but there's still plenty of work to do. The Student Solutions Summit reminded us that students are engaged, thoughtful, and eager to see change. Let's keep our foot on the gas and finish this semester strong. Thank you all for your leadership and dedication. Let's keep building momentum. With that, I'll turn it over to Vice President Vanlerberghe.

b. **Vice President** - Ty Vanlerberghe

- i. Happy Thursday! I hope you all have a productive week before the start of Fall Break, and crushed your midterms last week. A couple updates for you all.
 1. First, since we last met, I've met with both VP Jenny Hall-Jones and Vice Provost Christine Renner to discuss our previous Student Legal Services legislation, our communication barriers legislation, and our disability training legislation. Both of these meetings were very successful. We have roots in place for Student Legal Services to be up and running this winter or next fall, and will be working with SAR to build a mandatory neurodiversity and physical disability training for new faculty.
 2. Second, this past week, Evan and I met with Eric Ballmore from Information Technology to discuss the student perspective on the University potentially requiring laptops for all students and creating a low-cost laptop purchasing system that can be routed

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through financial aid. I know there were several questions about this, so I wanted to go over some confirmed points that we gained from the meeting. This will tie into financial aid in the same way that books do. Low-cost program computers will be up-to-spec for all programs and will be able to run complex programs needed for engineering, etc. Low-cost program computers will be business refurbished laptops from around the University or directly from Dell. The program is opt-in only. If a student doesn't have a laptop and chooses not to opt-in, no one will go head hunting, but they will be expected to have one in class. Low-cost program computers will have a 3-year warranty, no questions asked. Can drag cost throughout the semester, not just one lump sum of money needed.

3. Third, last week, I also met with Belinda Boardman who heads IT's switch over to WorkDay Student about how to engage students' opinions during the transition. If anyone would like to be included in these student conversations, let me know and I can connect you.
4. Moving forward, I have meetings with the Course Marking Tasks Force, financial aid, and the Campus Health Center. Please let me know if you are interested in any of these.
5. Finally, as we are nearing the end of the semester, if you plan on writing legislation soon or in the Winter semester, you must let me know. If you have plans, please come to me after the meeting and let me know + use the dashboard in the Drive.
6. If anyone has any questions, please Slack me. I yield to Chief of Staff Laurin.

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c. **Chief of Staff** - William Laurin

4. **Reach Higher Together**

a. Laura Aikens & Elizabeth Doyle

- i. Laura Aikens, Elizabeth Doyle, and Evan Potter from the Strategic Planning committee presented their goal of advancing the continuation and enhancement of the Reach Higher strategy–Reach Higher Together–for the academic years from 2025 through 2030. Objectives through this presentation included topics such as understanding what Reach Higher is, learning how community engagement shapes enhanced commitments, and how input from the Senate can influence the endorsement of the Board of Trustees in February, 2026.
- ii. Senate members participated in an engagement activity that involved “Loving” or “Questioning” certain topics geared towards the goals of the Reach Higher Strategy and the floor was opened for questions.
 1. Gemmen: For clarification, the priorities are the how and the strategies are for the what?
 - a. Aikens: Exactly, both cover our strategic goals and plans for this initiative.
 2. Dykhuis: Thank you for this. The sentiments I believe are headed in the right direction. I definitely agree with most.
 3. Hartley: I can see how these goals have been nitpicked, these come off as very polished in my opinion.
 4. Hardgrave: I believe this was presented extremely well.
 5. Jackson: This is now my second year on RHCLN. It’s been amazing to see how this project has developed and grown from last

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fall to now. I think the growth has shown the future of our university, of our city, and for our state.

- a. Vanlerberghe: To piggyback off of that, I thought it was so interesting to see where we started on those drafts and to see where it is now. In reality, small wording changes can really make or break these commitments. I've seen these commitments develop over the short period of time i've been on RHCLN and I know your input will make a difference in these drafts in the future.
- b. Laurin: To echo the sentiments of both Evan and Ty, us serving in this organization gives us a really unique experience and perspective. I know I am excited to see where these goals and strategies go from here.

5. General Business

a. Tabling Revision

- i. Jackson: It;'s become clear that there's a fatigue around tabling, and it's not a very enticing or engaging effort for reaching out to students. I would like to hear feedback on tabling from all of you.
 1. Mulveena: The Events Committee had a whole conversation about this today. Overall, we don't think putting away with tabling is a bad idea as we couldn't really brainstorm much. We had ideas such as meeting by the clock tower or making tabling more interactive. The Creation Station has crafting supplies, my idea was that we could even make a large arrow or create some way to be more engaging to students.

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2. Taylor: I concur. I was thinking about being proactive outside of the Events requirement. If we were to get rid of tabling, how would that affect events requirements?
3. Schwallier: I think we could even have free snacks or popcorn at the table to create an incentive.
4. Dykhuis: What if we had an opt-in Senate newsletter? That way students know what is happening at each GA meeting.
5. Richards: Football games are also a great way to advertise and promote us. We could even table at football games.
6. Almas: Making weekly posts on Instagram could also promote us and GA meetings more. Could we even get Louie to come? That would be awesome!
7. Taylor: Could we work with the Division of Student Affairs for us to get a spot on their newsletter for us?
 - a. Jackson: Yes, we will look into that.
8. Hartley: If you're tabling at the right spots for the right thing, tabling is really beneficial. In Kirkhoff, there is always someone sitting. Tabling specific events geared more towards us could help us get more outreach.
9. Gemmen: I think it would be interesting to change dates and times as well, because schedules may just not be aligning with Senators.
10. Mulveena: To piggyback, we did also talk about how schedules have been rough. Setting a timeline further in advance could be an actionable idea towards this.
11. Potter: I love the newsletter idea. Flyers and pluggers can also be beneficial too. Every GVSU sports event could be an avenue of

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collaboration for promoting us or our upcoming events also, not just with football games.

12. Zazula: What if we did walking tabling? Instead of standing in one spot, we could walk up directly to students.

13. McDonough: Promoting more downtown opportunities could help us reach other student groups that maybe don't hear too much about us.

14. Taylor: Making a poll or form for the most availability in Senators schedules could be beneficial.

15. Mulveena: What if we used the multi-purpose rooms around campus to table? Could we do that?

a. Jackson: It's worth researching! We can look into that.

16. Schwallier: If we do table or promote at sporting events, I think we should do something big, like giving out gift cards. It creates more incentive.

17. Finley: Could we go into student clubs or organizations and present who we are there too?

a. Vanlerberghe: I believe this could be beneficial for us.

b. New Website

i. Jackson: I am so excited to announce that we have officially launched our new Senate website. I would like to invite Chair Gemmen to walk us through the new website.

1. Gemmen: I am so excited to show the hard work we've put in on this new website. I am looking for any feedback and questions any of you may have regarding this new layout.

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- a. Robinson: I love it, it looks amazing! My question is about the section for elections. Is there a new petition signature amount? It says 50 instead of 75.
 - i. Jackson: We will fix that!
 - b. McDonough: When we get our committee photos taken, will our photos be represented in the committee sections? Are summaries of liaison meeting minutes on the website, and if so where will they be?
 - i. Gemmen: Yes, I would absolutely love to update that. I imagine having some sort of news panel where committees can report their news or meetings for students to view at any time.
 - c. Hardgrave: One possible idea. If you do make a news or update panel section, could we have a committee report or event timeline posted on the website?
 - i. Gemmen: Yes! That sounds like a wonderful idea. We will work on that ASAP.
 - d. Taylor: A legislative dashboard included on the website I believe could also be very valuable. In terms of the legislation list, is there any way we could have a button to view archived minutes or reports?
 - i. Jackson: We will be meeting with archives soon and can cover that.
 - e. Schwallier: When I click on the bylaws, it says I do not have access.
 - i. Laurin: I will fix that!

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- f. Vemalla: The organization of Cabinet members is off on my phone.
 - i. Vanlerberghe: Thank you for that! We will fix that ASAP.
- g. Taylor: On the phone, I really like how it shrunk the banner. Having the banner on a computer smaller fits with the other GVSU website design layouts.
- h. Dykhuis: Beautiful website. I believe on the previous website, we had information on each Senator. Would having a small statement from each Senator on the website be beneficial?
 - i. Gemmen: Yes! We can update that once elections come around.

6. Call for Announcements

- a. Advisor Reports
 - i. Height: I am more than happy to chat with you all about everything. Remember, what is your “why”? Why does the Senate do the things we do? Making yourself distinctable and visible helps, people like to talk more than they like to listen. Have a happy fall break!
- b. Chair Reports
 - i. Allocations - Lukas Hartley
 - 1. Good evening Senators, I have a few things to cover tonight. First, today I had the opportunity to attend GVSU’s semesterly President's Forum, with keynote speaker AMy Privette Perko, CEO of the Knight Commission on College Athletics. To sum up that meeting quickly, it is very unlikely GVSU makes a move to

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Division 1 anytime soon. Second, myself, Anna, and Lasaya are all on homecoming court this year! Lookout for voting after Fall Break. Finally, Allocations has met twice since our last GA. We have denied quite a few requests, but we have approved: Delta Tau Lambda for their Salute to Latina's Event on November 11th, Model Entertainment for their Chic or Freak Fashion show on October 25th, Diverse Educators for CHange for Pumpkin painting on October 29th, And Ethics Bowl, Groove, and Laker Racing for competition fees! If you ever want more information on approved or denied requests, or the remaining budget, reach out to me! Otherwise, enjoy fall break!

ii. Public Relations - Sophie Gemmen

1. Hello everyone, and happy Thursday. I hope you all were kind to yourselves during midterms, you are looking forward to the extended weekend, and, most importantly, are excited to be back in action, feeling inspired from the Student Solutions Summit. First, thank you all for walking through the new website with me; please Slack me if you have any additional thoughts, questions, or suggestions as we continue to update and brainstorm new ways to utilize this platform. Then, during committee meetings today, my committee set goals and a gameplan for finishing out this semester strong, and I look forward to our continued collaboration with all of you. Thank you all, and have a great weekend!

iii. Advocacy - Genna Wright

1. Thank you to everyone who tabled for breast cancer awareness, it did not go as intended but thank you for everyone who stepped up

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to volunteer, please remember that if you have available please sign up for tabling or it will fall on Karen and I.

- a. Last week senator finley and I attended the nfbpa emerge strategic leadership conference where we learned new ways to improve our leadership skills and learned from experts in the public and private sectors
- b. Two weeks ago president jackson and I met with Marlene and Latoya (who are apart of the inclusion and equity team) to discuss ways to collaborate and how we can work to promote equity and inclusion, we had a great meeting and expect to see them at ga in the winter
- c. Teach-In proposal submission due October 20th, Teach-In itself is November 12th and 13th- we will be tabling the beginning of november
- d. Advocacy Committee- Disability Expression Forum will be taking place October 28th in Kirkhof, promo will be going out for that soon, please spread the word ,we will also have disability awareness tabling on the 27th.

iv. Policy - Cera McDonough

1. Good evening everyone, I am going to keep my report sweet and simple by just hoping everyone has a relaxing, safe fall break. For further clarification, we can host zero-waste sports games at any sporting event in the future, not just football games! Looking forward to seeing you all next Thursday.

v. Events - Karen Theakston

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1. Thank you all for your recent efforts with tabling, it's truly appreciated! We also appreciate your nominations for Last Lecture. The top three professors will be voted on during the cabinet meeting following GA, and the results will be announced at the next GA through a presentation. Some important dates to keep in mind are Last Lecture is November 18 in Kirkhoff and our Bonding Event is October 24 (next Friday). For the bonding event please complete the form shared in the bonding channel on Slack so Senator Schwallier can get an accurate headcount. If you have any questions about the bonding event, feel free to reach out to him directly, he has the most details about the location and time. Finally if you have any overall questions feel free to slack me!

c. General Announcements

- i. Annis: If you are available Monday and Wednesdays, my professor is looking for a few more students to join our US vs. China course. Please join!
- ii. Rogers: Announcement for general announcements: Hi everyone! Yesterday morning, a group of College of Liberal Arts Representatives met with Dean Anderson to discuss CLAS Voyage, touch base on campus climate, and discuss partnerships with the Student Advisory Committee. In a few weeks, a few CLAS senators plan to go to the Student Advisory Committee meeting to talk about problems current CLAS students are facing and how we can help. If you have any questions or would like to chat about any of this, please reach out via Slack.

7. Public Comment

8. Adjournment

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- a. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.