



# UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–LA CROSSE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

2244 THE U 1705 BADGER STREET LA CROSSE, WI 54601 (608) 785-8775

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## Student Senate Agenda

Date: **March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021**

Time and Location: **6:00pm; Zoom**

- I. Call to Order
  - a. 6:03
- II. Roll Call
- III. Consent Agenda
  - a. Approval of Minutes
    - i. Approved unanimously
  - b. Approval of Agenda
    - i. Cayo: I would like to add a discussion point about fire department station near Coate Hall.
    - ii. Ericson: I would like to add a resolution.
    - iii. Approved unanimously
- IV. Guest Speakers
  - a. Training from Director Evans
    - i. Evans: I want to give credits to graduate assistant Kab Vue for helping with this. I think we need constant reminders of what allyship is. What it looks like and what it is not. Do y'all have ideas or thoughts on what an ally is? It would be great to hear a couple.

Cayo: I consider an ally to be someone who isn't a member of a group, but still supports that group and is in solidarity with them.

Fisher: I think of it as people who center around the voices of marginalized folks. They don't just do performative action but use their privilege to help marginalized folks.

Evans: Those are both great. Ally is a term that a lot of us have heard and we all are kind of familiar with. The dictionary definition is to unite and form a connection in support with members of a group. We can share some mistakes you have made in your ally work. I know my problem can be being aware of how much space I take up.

Wheat: I know that when bad things happen, I say 'oh I'm reading a book so that helps', but it really doesn't.

Cayo: I struggle with when I should be passing the mic or helping explain for them.

Xiong: I still learn more, even though I do have a marginalized identities and experiences, they don't always transfer to other groups.

Ericson: I know that I can always be doing more.



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Evans: One of the biggest things is admitting your mistakes and holding yourself accountable so you can do better. Let's start with what it is 'no'. You can't call yourself an ally. You can't use that as a way to add things to your identity. You can't use that as a way to introduce yourself. It also isn't a status. It doesn't mean that you are an ally forever and in each field. It only speaks to what you are doing at the moment. Allyship isn't about individual growth, adding things to the resume. It is important that we know our place and know how much space we take up. We don't get to take breaks. Folks who are oppressed don't get to take breaks so we can't retreat into our privilege when things get hard. This is often called fragility. A big thing is that allies can't exist in isolation. Not talking to anyone or doing any action isn't being an ally. Its about having folks around you to hold yourself accountable. Its about knowing you have people around you who will call you out when you need to be called out. This is what allyship is—it is constantly educating ourselves, actively listening, knowing your own problems, being actively engaged and listening into these conversations. You can't retract when you don't want to engage. Educating yourself is a huge thing. Don't expect the marginalized groups to educate you. Just Google it or read books. If you feel comfortable, you can ask questions of people. But it is important to listen to what they have to say. Allyship isn't standing in a room with marginalized people telling them their own experiences. It is being in a room with people who share identities and are sharing thoughts. You should focus on those who aren't marginalized. Allyship is about making a million mistakes. You are going to make a lot of mistakes, and it sucks because it is really important work; but for me, it helps to remind myself that I am actively trying to be better. It is hard to admit your mistakes. You need to be prepared to screw up and be prepared to listen to those you hurt, and apologize sincerely and learning to do better in the future. It takes a lot of work to recognize the mistakes and actively try to not do them. It is a constant thing that you strive for. You shouldn't feel the need to be in the spotlight. Supporting the work from behind the scenes. Don't expect recognition for your work, or praise, gratitude, and people or marginalized groups aren't obligated to thank you for being an ally. This makes sure that you do it all for the right reasons. Once you are an ally, you can work towards being an accomplice, which is basically fighting all the systems that oppress the marginalized. It is going against a system that you most likely benefit from. Ask yourself what you are willing to do, give up, or call out. Are you willing to lose relationships, are you willing to destroy the systems that you probably benefit from? Are we willing to spend our institutional likeability? Important for college students because we are in an institution. Are you willing to commit crimes or lose your job? Allyship is something that so many of us know and hear about but it is so important to remind yourself of your mistakes, and work towards being an accomplice, dismantling the oppressive systems.

V. General Student Body Open Forum

VI. Officer Reports

a. **President:** Cate Wiza

i. Director Kara Oslund is looking for a student representative for the director of Access Center search and screen committee. Please let me know if you are



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interested. I sent out an email today so you can respond to that. Let your constituents know about this too.

- ii. Legislative liaisons are looking for students to testify support for Prairie Springs part 2. Send me an email if interested.
  - iii. Coming up for the elections, on April 5<sup>th</sup> president and on April 9<sup>th</sup> senate election papers are due. If any questions, refer those to Cate or Kyle.
  - b. **Vice President:** Olivia Ahnen
    - i. An email from iComm was sent out but I just wanted to let you all know that as of April 5<sup>th</sup> everyone 16 or older will be able to register for a vaccine. There are a number of locations available in the area. The one on campus, pharmacies, Mayo and Gundersen. You can look at that email for more info.
    - ii. There is no more mask mandate in Wisconsin, but masks are still required indoors and outdoors on campus. Chancellor Gow contacted me and urged me about the importance of this.
    - iii. Make sure that you and your constituents are getting vaccinated. If enough people are vaccinated, we may be able to do normal commencement. That is highly dependent on the next couple weeks. Read your email for all the options Monday April 5<sup>th</sup> is when it starts.
    - iv. If you want a stole for the spring semester, so if you are graduating in spring of 2021, they are in the office. You can go and get it. Just swipe in and you should be good. Let me know if you have questions.
  - c. **Director of Staff:** Faith Fisher
    - i. I just have an update about the scholarship- we are over \$3,000. Jenna is keeping the campaign open for a few more days since we are close to our goal. I'm just waiting to hear back from a few people.
  - d. **State Affairs Director:** Grant Mathu
    - i. Olivia covered everything I was going to say. I will put the link for vaccine in the chat.
    - ii. Vote in the election on Tuesday!
  - e. **Local Affairs Director:** Amy Schweiner
    - i. Most of what I have is what Grant and Olivia said.
    - ii. You can vote absentee at city hall. They will provide a list of write ins if you ask.
  - f. **Inclusivity Director:** Camoya Evans
    - i. Meeting with LIT tomorrow in their weekly meetings for the campaign and talk about how they want to go about the rest of the semester.
  - g. **Public Relations Director:** Holly Korfmacher
  - h. **Sustainability Director:** Jake Myers
    - i. Submit art to the green fund email by 4/11. The winner gets \$75. Members of the committee should come on the 12<sup>th</sup> so that we can vote on that winning design to be printed on the tote bags.
    - ii. I think we are going to collab with SFS and Cab, to show Wall-E at the stadium on the projection screen but that is it.
- VII. Advisor Reports
- a. Burke: I just want to let everyone know that the reactivation plans were approved yesterday by the chancellor's cabinet and COVID policy group. We are now working on the messaging that will go out to the students. It will include opening for the use of rooms



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in the U for meetings of up to 10 people. More information will be coming through the Cove soon. This also includes outdoor tabling at U, Whitney, and the clocktower. We will start outdoor programs soon as well. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday outside the Union next week. We will have Patio Days, the outdoor barbeque, next Wednesday. We are working on adding a bunch of programs, trying to bring back life and reengagement to campus. We need to encourage compliance with safety guidelines. Just stay the course and get through this. We have a few weeks left of classes as we get through this, testing and mask wearing is important for the success of these events. There are cases going up on campus, so we really need to buckle down and do that so we can keep doing fun things.

- b. Also, the monitor for the 1<sup>st</sup> floor student union to replace the bulletin board for Student Association was installed, and Holly will be trained to post stuff on that.
- VIII. Committee & Organizational Reports
- a. Cayo: SUFAC met on Monday and we are going over bylaw changes. We are considering adding more at-large seats. Right now, we have 5 and writing bylaws for 5-7. I would encourage other committees to do the same because more student seats can only help.
- IX. Unfinished Business
- a. **SA2021-043**
    - i. Ahnen: The first one is to support student orgs meeting in person. Is there any discussion on this?
    - ii. Passes unanimously
  - b. **SA2021-046**
    - i. Ahnen: for the Respondus lockdown browser resolution, is there any discussion?
    - ii. Passes with one abstention
- X. New Business
- a. **SA2021-047? Number might change**
    - i. Wiza: This is a resolution in support of mental health days for students. As you know, the decision was made to get rid of spring break. That decision was made at many other UW schools as well. The reason why we extended winter break and get rid of spring break was, so the curriculum still had the same number of instructional weeks. We have been talking to students to try to figure out how students are doing any many of them are struggling. This is a hard time for students. Especially those who are living in the dorms, missing out on the experiences associated with the normal stuff.

Ericson: I did send out the survey for mental health testimonies and within two hours, we had 800 responses, then we were at 1250 by the end of the day. The responses were clear that this is the hardest semester for students in their entire career. This is a wakeup call that something needs to be done. We need to be working on what we can do

Byrne: I would just echo what Cate and Andrew said. Without any break from academic work and then have COVID going on, and the disconnect between students and faculty, it feels like there's no safety net. I feel like we just need to show students that we are supporting them.



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Zwettler: Is this something we would like to pass tonight?

Wiza: I would advise to not suspend the two-week rule.

Cayo: Is this being sent out for individual professors?

Wiza: Do we want to add anymore recipients, like faculty senate, the provost or chancellor?

Cayo: Would we like to add additional whereas where we send this to their offices?

Ericson: I think that the chancellor and provost have shown resistance to doing this and worry that it might only stir the pot more.

Wiza: Olivia and I set up those meetings with those people to talk about that; let's just wait and see what comes out of them.

Byrne: I would like to say that the process of writing this resolution was enlightening to me. Students don't feel good in regard to mental health. And there isn't much coming from faculty and administration. There is a culture of not being able to talk about how much you are struggling I would just say that you should start conversations about mental health in your circles, start the feeling that it is fine to talk about. We really don't have a culture here that is open about discussing it, at least in healthy positive ways.

Ericson: I want to see if anyone would respond to this. Is asking for mental health days the right path? Or are there other pathways that we haven't considered? When dealing with faculty senate, options are always good.

Fisher: I know that when we were first asking for mental health days, we had talked about asking faculty to consider reducing the course load a little bit. Something that does worry me is that if it is still the same course load, but a single day off, it still harms students. Maybe that could be an alternative. I worry that asking for a mental health day is going to be a big ask. Hopefully we can have a conversation about it again.

L'Ecuyer: I've heard some opinions from my peers and I have found that there is a general misconception about what is possible and what we want. I've heard that a lot of students think its feasible to get four days off in a row. The idea of getting more than one would never work and more definitely won't be possible. Regardless of what happens, students won't be happy with what we get.

Ericson: Yeah, there isn't a perfect solution unfortunately. Hopefully faculty will make a different decision this time.



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Burke: I want to give a quick thought. In developing an academic calendar within the guidelines, there are a certain number of course hours that must be held. Even when they schedule a day off in advance, classes need to have a certain number of instruction hours for meeting those regulations. There have been a lot of changes with the switch to online and asynchronous stuff. But there are instructional requirements that still need to be met. I don't know the details on this, but I know that is how a calendar is created.

Wheat: I agree with Faith. I can hear a lot of professors saying that since we have a mental health day, they will give us something to do over that day off. I do support this day off, obviously but I can just see that happening. In regard to what Kyle said, can we just on the down low tell professors that they should just take a break? It isn't the best thing for Student association to do, but it's the only way to get what we need.

Baumann: How do those requirements transfer to asynchronous? Can we ask professors to just switch their hours to online?

Burke: I think that is where they have made some changes recently. That is most likely already factored in. Please don't quote me on this, but I think that faculty members that would give a day off or reduction in workload likely already have. The faculty were asked to be as flexible as they could for this semester. They were asked to be flexible and a lot of them have been from what I have gathered. I think they have been trying, those who are open to it.

Ericson: There are some fantastic faculty out there who are compassionate for the students but there also are some who aren't. The problem is for those students who have those professors that aren't going easy on them. I know that going asynchronous doesn't always help, putting the pressure on the student to learn themselves isn't easier. Having some structure that we don't create is much easier. It is so much easier to go to class than to watch a video. It is more that we remove the work for that day and give students that breather. In the past, we have had classes cancelled due to the polar vortex that wasn't built into the academic calendar so that is a good example of what is possible.

Flynn: I wanted to say that from my experience, going to class itself isn't the stressor, it is more everything outside of class with extracurriculars and work. Maybe we could ask to decrease due dates or decrease the curriculum.

Zwettler: It is also important to take into account that if faculty senate were to pass this, they could give the professors a choice on a certain day to cancel, which will only decrease the workload by an hour on one day, and not the effect we are hoping for. It wouldn't be cancelling all classes on one day to have a free day.





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Baumann: if we were in a perfect world, it would strongly affect science classes with labs built in. some classes would miss that experience, while others wouldn't.

Xiong: I hear a lot of conversations centering around just taking a mental health day. It would relieve the stress for the week or day, but it will come back and then it will increase the stress later. I just want to make a general statement to think about what is the root of the problem? That is just a statement. It may or may not help us to narrow this down.

Ericson: I yield to Jake Myers

Myers: Yer makes a good point. Kelly has a good point as well. I would like professors to be more flexible, but I'm not sure how much a single day will help. I have reached out to one of my professors and I asked for an extension on an assignment because of work. The class was HPR 105, and the assignment was for stress management. I asked for a one day extension and she wouldn't give it to me. For a 105 class. I was so mad. It blew my mind that my class about wellness would do that. I think professors do need to look at what they are doing. Am I actually teaching anything? It made me feel like I didn't really matter to her.

Xiong: This past weekend was midterms, and I asked for an extension in my psych class about stress, and I asked for an extension on the midterm, and they said that all the due dates are on canvas so I should have just done it sooner, and they also said that it was disrespectful that you didn't want to do my exam because that means that my class isn't a priority for you.

Wiza: You have to keep in mind that we are setting up meetings, so we are planning on having these conversations as well. I think the flexibility route might be the better one in terms of measurable results. With the calendar and everything, we might want to come back next week. If everyone comes back next week with a new idea, that would be the best route to continue this discussion.

## XI. Discussion

### a. Mental Health

- i. Ahnen: Since we had this conversation last week, I just thought that it would be something that we would want to continue this week, is that something that we want to talk about? Senator Ericson, I believe this was your point, so you can introduce it again if you would like.

Ericson: Last week we talked about a lot of things about mental health that need to be talked about. We talked a lot about what we can do. With the approval of outdoor activities, our options are looking good. Idk if anyone has other ideas I would be happy to hear it about.

Xiong: did we talk about wellness bags? Grab one at the entrance to a building?



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Ericson: That makes sense. What would go in it?

Xiong: I would say some sort of hydration, maybe chapstick, bag of chips or cookies, and maybe a little note.

Ericson: That certainly would make me smile if I got that. Chapstick is hard to come by and expensive so I like that idea. I would be willing to look into that.

Zwettler: I like the chalking idea from last week. It would be great if we could extend that to everyone. We are looking to bring some cheer into the world.

Ericson: Would we just have a bunch of chalk out at the clock tower for people to grab and go draw?

Xiong: I think the residence halls have their own chalks. It could be a residence hall thing.

Ericson: If we could chalk all of campus, that would be great.

Burke: There already is an event like that planned for next week. The date and time is to be determined.

Wiza: We would need to just make sure everyone understands the restrictions that have to do with chalking within a certain amount of feet from the doors.

Burke: I think the Cove has some info too.

Ahnen: keep me updated on the details of that event so we can spread that around.

b. Fire station

- i. Wiza: There are conversations in the works about the fire department building a new fire house in the space next to Coate hall. We want to discuss any concerns further. Concerns include increased traffic, noise, and student behavior with potential vandalism or anything.

Burke: At a meeting earlier, it was brought up. It is that little park space west of Coate that they are looking at. The university has tried to acquire it from the city but that hasn't happened. They are moving quickly with these plans. If approved by new mayor and council, it will be breaking ground in August. There are the noise concerns, and there is a future residence hall potentially going near there. We also know that a student was killed by a car in that area and the additional traffic isn't something the university wants. We just want to be at the table with the city. If they do proceed with these plans, we want to be in the conversation to mitigate the impacts to the campus community.





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Zwettler: In your conversations with people, have they outlined any reasons why this property? Are they considering other options?

Burke: I haven't been in a meeting with the city, I was just in a meeting with the university who brought this up. They are looking at two new locations. One in the north and one in the south.

Byrne: I feel like it this isn't a good idea. It will get very congested with buildings. I worry that it would make campus more inaccessible and make it difficult for commutes onto campus.

Fitzgerald: I lived in Coate last year and it was already loud as it was. I think a fire house would be the worst thing ever. Please tell me who to email because I will help you.

Xiong: I have lived in La Crosse for 21 years and there have been, from what I've heard, there have been two fires and there are two fire stations. I just question the practicality. If it were to be there, it would be small and congested. Statistically, how many fire stations do we need? That would be interesting to note. Just asking the reason why we need more. Socially, I think as a person of color, I don't call the police and I've had a love/hate relationship with authority. If that is right by campus, it might be uncomfortable.

Ericson: I lived in Coate as well. It juts into non campus space and it is loud sometimes. Back when students were going to bars, it was loud to hear them going back. There weren't a lot of lights. That area of land has been historically concerning for safety because it is so dark. The city hasn't allowed us to put lights there. Maybe if this were to go through, it would be lighter and safer for the students. Its a matter of how to make it the most bearable if it is to happen.

Xiong: With every action, we need to think about multiple perspectives. Socially, what is being implied here? We live in an interesting time. Why is the firehouse moving? I'm sure there's a lot of politics around this decision.

Schweiner: Maybe this is looking too far into it, but the newer a fire station is, the better their rating, the lower response times, and that means that they get cheaper investments. If we try to appeal against this, having that land open for a dorm to expand enrollment to expand the university is better for the city than the other investments.

Burke: I appreciate all of the perspectives. I didn't mean to sway any one's opinions in the way I introduced it.



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Cayo: I will preface with saying I don't support this because I could see drunk people vandalizing it. The current station only has a men's changing and locker rooms so they want to build something new to make it more accessible. The sleeping pods could be increased and more kitchen facilities, since they do live there when on duty. They also want to get away from the police department, because they stop a lot of issues. I know that they don't like the police. I talked to them for my council run so that is why I have this information.

## XII. Announcements

- a. Ericson: Go follow the green fund Instagram!
- b. Cayo: Make sure y'all make a plan to vote. If you ordered a ballot and don't have it, go vote anyway. It matters that students vote because students make up a large portion of the population here
- c. Xiong: April 6<sup>th</sup>, 6pm celebration for IOPA. Women's dinner coming up as well on the 16<sup>th</sup> I believe.

## XIII. Adjournment

- a. 7:40