



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–LA CROSSE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

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

Student Senate Agenda

Date: April 7th, 2021

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

- I. Call to Order
 - a. 6:04
- II. Roll Call
- III. Consent Agenda
 - a. Approval of Minutes
 - i. Approved unanimously
 - b. Approval of Agenda
 - i. Approved unanimously
- IV. Guest Speakers
 - a. Gretchen Reinders
 - i. Reinders: Hello thank you for having me with you tonight. I am currently the director of our counseling and testing center. I have been in this role for over 7 years now. I always enjoy talking to students, so I appreciate your time. My understanding of why I was invited was to engage in some dialogue about how particularly this group can have a dialogue around student mental health and what to do looking forward to the rest of the semester. I want to talk about how we can support students up to finals. I don't get a lot of student perspective besides closed doors and private spaces, so this is fun. I want to start by saying that I don't live under a rock I know how hard things have been. With the pandemic, racial injustice, and of course I am super aware of the events happening on our campus in the past couple weeks. I have to address that because a lot of students have a clear message being sent that students don't feel heard. I want to engage you by listening first. Tell me what you think I need to know or hear for the short and long term. I will start with an open-ended question. What do I need to know as someone in my position?

Byrne: Thanks for being here. I had an idea that I was thinking about. Is there any possibility of incorporating any in person meetings for in person counseling outside?

Reinders: Those are traditionally behind closed doors and private. Have I had sessions outside? Yes. I need to have conversation with people. That would have to be worked out. That being said, it is something to consider. We still aren't in a place in our office that we can safely be six feet apart. Still primarily remote because it is the better, safer option. I was hoping we could talk about what we could do as a group for the future. We could entertain that and see, but the biggest thing for us is confidentiality.

Ericson: One thing is that with COVID, staying safe in terms of disease came first and mental health comes second. When the people in charge are making plans I feel like they aren't relying on mental health input from students and professionals aren't listened to. I would love to see that someone like you be



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involved in the administration's decision making. Everything has to do with mental health, the calendar, academics, athletics, and I think you should really be in on those decisions.

Reindeers: I think there has been coexisting dialogue of mental and physical health. It is important to note that our staff is also struggling. I think what I'm hearing you say is that in the future, you want to see a campus-wide consideration of mental health. I might circle back to that as well.

Schweiner: I thought that I've had a lot of professors send out counseling and testing resources, but it is hard to reach out initially. Is there a survey that CTC could send out? Asking if people want more information and then they be contacted instead of them reaching out, since that can be difficult, especially for students with anxiety surrounding that sort of thing.

Reinders: For a lot of students, making initial contact is challenging. The things we will continue to do are the drop in services and let's talk. We are on pause with our online scheduling options, but I think that would potentially make it easier for students as well. To your point, could we do that, yes. We would want to think about autonomy. It is part of our ethics code. We want to respect student autonomy and avoid sending any message to students that we aren't a confidential resource. What you're asking isn't that. It is a student asking for themselves. Yes, I think we could look at that. I would like to see where our online scheduling goes. My concern goes with not reaching that student. Do we send someone for a welfare check if you don't respond to our call? That is different. We could consider that for sure. We just want to think it through a little more.

Zwettler: One of the reasons we are seeing students being outspoken about mental health is because we are experiencing a lot of burn out. Is it possible to spread out resources about how to combat academic burn out and what we can do to manage our time better?

Reinders: What I'm hearing is that you want more prevention and early intervention options. I don't know anyone who likes finals and the stress involved with that. I think you are saying maybe having less passive information. Our webpage has a lot of information and our self-help page is great, but it is a lot of information and hard to find what you need. Would an Instagram post and digital boards actually help?

Zwettler: In this weird time, it can be tough to get student's attention for a long period of time. What I was trying to say is that we need to be more proactive with preventing burnout.



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Reinders: Thank you for that. I have been noticing that you all are swimming in the water. I'm not sure if you all are burned out, but at the least, you probably are a little crispy at the edges. You are asking questions about how we can help not just me but everyone. It is completely understandable that you are looking for things to do. I understand the pressure to do, and I want to partner with you on that. I understand that. I want to pick your brains on everything. I want to know what helps you get through that my guess is what you do, other people would resonate with. If there is some way that you unplug or destress, then we could try to spread that around. It would be wonderful to have student input in planning that sort of stuff. I would love to hear what has helped you get to the point where you are now, seeing as you have gotten through finals before.

Fisher: I want to bring up this up, but it probably won't help. We all know what counselors do and what helps the individual but what is really lacking is that social piece. Especially with the freshman. When I've had my lows, I've had friends so it must be hard for some students who haven't had the same opportunity to form that support network.

Reinders: Thank you for sharing. I know everyone needs their people. I want to have an answer but what I can tell you that what we have done before isn't feasible with COVID. A festival or event is something that has happened before, but I go to the idea of residence halls given our current situation. Although our occupancy is lower, we have been doing some outreach. Residence life would be a good partner. Dogs have been done before it isn't a fix all, but it helps. Someone can come into our office and I know it isn't the same as having a friend to talk to, but it can help. I might look to my colleague Kyle to have some events. I know it is passive and not exactly what you are saying. I think we need to have a conversation with that.

Webster: I know that this probably doesn't help too much but you ask how we have been getting through it, and I honestly don't know. I still turn in assignments, I have decent grades, I go to class, but I don't know how. I am stressed and all but it's like I can't say that I'm stressed because I'm not really suffering, that I'm still functioning somehow.

Reinders: I hope you realize that you have said that 'I'm still here' and there's some resilience here, I don't mean that in a sunshine way, but it is essential to be able to focus on our strengths. It is understandable, what you are feeling, even if you don't know. Hopefully just saying that you are okay. I forgot to say that our academic skills center helps with test taking, academic skills, time management, and lots of other great things. She has some drop-in meeting times as well so you don't have to schedule. She is a great resource for the academic piece and might be able to help with that stuff. You can know that I talk too much. I sense that there is a lot of energy and interest in mental health; it comes from a bad place, and I know it feels like you don't have a voice. I don't always have my voice heard either and I want to say that I welcome more collaborations. A lot of my



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work that I do is behind closed doors and private so when there is an option for doing what students want to do and making more students aware of things, I think that is great. It looks like the barge isn't moving but things can be propelled as for mental health at higher education. It doesn't look like it's moving forward but it is just moving slowly. I wanted to see if there were any questions that any of you had. I am in on some meetings at the system level and there is a lot of support there. There is some collaborative awareness at the top level saying that mental health is affecting students' abilities to be a student. COVID did turn things on its head and caused things to take a turn. There are things that aren't just for intervention, but prevention- creating campuses that are more mental illness focused. I will try to do a better job of informing students of mental health changes at the system level, because I do have that information.

Ericson: Do you serve on the safety task force for COVID-19?

Reinders: No, I am not. I'm not on that particular committee, but I am in some others.

Ericson: I feel like that is somewhere you should have been. Did the chancellor and provost use you as a resource. Do you feel that they underutilized you during this process?

Reinders: Am I in on every meeting? No, but I have worked with the provost and vice chancellor. Our office is consulted when needed, such as in response to certain campus events, and in the intervention response, I am included. With mental health, it is often thought of after the fact as part of the support team, but not the planning. Our health center director has been at every and all meetings and I feel connected with my student affairs colleagues. I'm not exactly sure how to answer that, but that I have strong relationships on campus. It is simply the case that I don't know what I am missing because I'm not there. I believe that our office is seen as a primary resource and is consulted when needed. I would say a pretty important thing is our care team meetings. We talk about students of interest, that includes diversity and inclusion, student affairs, and us. We all mean to not be intervention, but prevention. I think that is the most pertinent to the spirit of your question.

Ahnen: Seeing no other questions, please feel free to email her.

Reinders: Yes, for sure, please don't hesitate to message me. I know that this group setting isn't the most conducive for asking questions and getting results. We know there is a need for our services, but we haven't seen an increase in demand. Please don't hesitate to contact us. If you want to know more about the data or what the system presidents want to do, I can fill you in. I really hope that you all take care of yourself. Please seek out the support you need.

V. General Student Body Open Forum



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VI. Officer Reports

a. **President:** Cate Wiza

- i. I will be meeting with CAPS next week on the 16th to discuss the student case for S/U grading. If you want to provide me your experiences and stories, let me know.
- ii. SA is going to allocate \$2,000 to the OZZI because we want to reduce the price for students, hoping that more students will use it. But that still has to be processed.
- iii. Selected senators, Olivia, Faith and I had a discussion with faculty senate to talk about short- and long-term solutions with mental health to decrease stress for professors and students. We gained a lot of insight about how faculty were feeling with their workload and how some of them are struggling too. That is something to remember and be conscious of. A short-term solution would be professor-led check ins with students but asking deeper questions and really trying to connect with them, create a sort of community. We talked about flexibility with deadlines, extensions, overall workload, and how the faculty and students can support each other. It was brought up to discuss how to structure study days and if there needs to be pause breaks. I am looking forward to the future. Just ask what students and faculty need. I think we need a mental health task force. Gretchen mentioned the care team, but I think that we need something that assess students, faculty, and staff. A small discussion for now hopefully it will be bigger in the future.
- iv. Student senate forms are due soon if you are running again.

b. **Vice President:** Olivia Ahnen

- i. I have been trying to think of something we could do as an end of the year celebration. There are some of you that I have never met in person. I want to do something safe and do COVID guidelines, but still get together. If this is interesting, please let me know. It is a difficult thing to come up with, so ideas are welcome and appreciated.
- ii. Please make an appointment to get vaccinated.
- iii. There are some stoles still in the office so if you are graduating, you want one and told me that you wanted one, please get it.

c. **Director of Staff:** Faith Fisher

- i. Our women of color scholarship ended up meeting the goal. We raised \$3,700 so that's great. Also, Cate, we need to choose the recipients soon.

d. **State Affairs Director:** Grant Mathu

- i. Thanks to everyone who voted. Make sure to vote next time!
- ii. There are a lot of schools, and colleges in other states thinking about mandating a vaccine in order to return to campus in the fall. So, get vaccine and have your friends do so as well.
- iii. Legislative affairs will put a group together to testify to state about prairie springs part 2. Brad Korbinger is organizing it, so reach out to him and say you are interested.

e. **Local Affairs Director:** Amy Schweiner

- i. Thanks to all who voted.
- ii. More updates next week about housing survey



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- f. **Inclusivity Director:** Camoya Evans
 - i. I'm planning to help cate with the CAPS presentation.
 - g. **Public Relations Director:** Holly Korfmacher
 - i. I'm making different ways to post about getting vaccinated and also for SA election coming up. I need a little more brainstorming for those promotions to take place because I don't want to be posting the same thing over and over. I believe mental health awareness is incredibly important, but I want to post about things in new ways. I want students to be able to open up to other students and adults.
 - h. **Sustainability Director:** Jake Myers
 - i. Here's some OZZI news: Thank you, Cate for the \$2,000 we are looking forward to that. We have received data about how many containers are saved by the machine and we have already saved over 12,500 containers and in the fall, we will be expanding things more.
 - ii. Currently an art competition going on if you will for the reusable bag grant we passed. If you submit art to me, it will be considered to be put on the bag. It must be along the themes of sustainability and environmental justice. If you are in green fund committee, please show up on Monday to vote on those. We may be able to meet in person, but I will get back to you on that.
 - iii. Other projects in the works include an e-waste drive. SFS and other people are collaborating to do a showing of Wall-E for earth week... never mind. Andrew says that is no longer happening.
- VII. Advisor Reports
- a. Burke: We started this week with the reactivation plan. Outdoor events are going well. Hopefully the chalking earlier today went well. We will be doing outdoor games on Monday. If you look at MyOrgs and the Cove, events will pop up. If orgs want to start doing programs, please start sending those in. We may partner you with other groups but now is the time to start doing programming outdoors. We need program ideas. We also are tabling outside if you want to do that, we have spots to fill!
 - b. Patio days also started today with the food outside, so that should be fun.
 - c. Follow up to Cate's mention. Senator applications due at 5:00 on this Friday. We currently have five president/vice president tickets. Campaigning for them started this week. I understand that to be a record number of candidates. Senators can start campaigning after the meeting next week. We will confirm results of the election on the 28th of April at this meeting.
- VIII. Committee & Organizational Reports
- a. Ericson: JCES meeting Friday and need quorum to discuss the large green fund projects.
 - b. L'Ecuyer: if we don't get rid of the money in the student organizations grant fund, we could lose it for next year. So, request money!
 - c. Cayo: we added some new stuff to the campus climate survey, and we will be looking at the data soon. I will let you know more about that. The title IX advisory committee will hopefully be expanding the definition, but we will see how that



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IX. Unfinished Business

a. SA2021-047

- i. Wiza: it probably is still fresh in your mind, but this is bringing up the point about spring break getting taken away, how students feel with mental health and stuff. We got responses from students so we thought this would be a great way to express those concerns. As a refresher, there was no spring break and that week was added it onto winter break instead of dispersing those days throughout the semester. That wasn't the only reason for this resolution asking for a day off. We met with faculty in our meeting and we heard their concerns with this idea. We talked about rewording this resolution in favor of flexibility for students and I think that is where we are with this.

Ericson: I think that given the conversation we had, the current wording is maybe not the message we want to put out. I'm not sure if it completely aligns with what we are trying to get out of it. It may need some remodeling to make it fit.

Byrne: I agree with Andrew. Based on the conversation yesterday, this may not be as constructive as we wanted it to be. I would suggest tabling it or modifying it.

Wiza: I would be in support of modifying it. I don't think we should kill it just yet. It is a sign that we heard students concerns and are trying to fix something. A good start is encouraging flexibility, possibly with looking to finals week, where there is a lot of stress.

Ericson: I think there are a few thing to consider. First, the title, not asking for the day off in the therefore be it resolved, and there are a lot of the whereas talking about spring break. We could keep or get rid of them. If we don't include, that might come across as more a teammate with the faculty but if we remove it, students might be mad that we aren't listening to them.

Byrne: I would like to get faculty members to sign off and look at this but besides that we are stumped.

Wiza: You can amend this document or table indefinitely and bring it back next week. This has to be voted on or tabled tonight with the 2-week rule.

Ericson: Could we table it and bring a very similar document next week?

Wiza: Think of the timing of everything. Faculty senate meets tomorrow and then not again until 2 weeks. Time is dwindling on this.

Zwettler: I would agree with Cate, that we should try to get this out before faculty senate meets, but y'all were the ones in the meeting so you all have more insight into things. From your perspective, what are the things that you need to change? Were there any themes that you would rather change?



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Wiza: We need to say that they need mental health flexibility and support rather than a break.

Zwettler: I like support. I think that is a good way of putting it.

Ericson: Take the first couple whereas that are talking about spring break. We aren't asking for that any ore. Just delete those first three.

Fisher: I honestly don't know if you have to get rid of those. That is the reason we are talking about it. Like Cate said, just try to change some language. I think that the messaging is important and thinking about that is one of the reasons why we are having such a hard time.

Ericson: What if we just change the title and the therefore be it resolved.

Zwettler: I think there was one whereas in there that needs to be changed and put something like what Andrea said with the "Advocate for student mental health with flexibility in class scheduling and homework assignments".

Byrne: We need to change the whereas with the dates as well.

Ahnen: our first objective should be to decide what we want to get from it. Change the end of it first.

Wiza: From yesterday, I think what we want is some academic flexibility and support. It really wasn't about that day anymore it is about being flexible.

Ericson: What about "Therefore be it resolved that the student senate urges Faculty to be flexible with academic expectations".

Byrne: Should we acknowledge that a lot of them have already made changes and such?

Ericson: can we add at the end to 'with academic expectations for the remainder of the semester.'

Zwettler: I like what Sophie put in the chat: "Whereas student senate understands that many faculty have previously altered their course schedules to be flexible as per direction from administration".

Ericson: I have some reservations about the semester with no break part not fitting where it is. We can move it to the top, where we are talking about that. Maybe up by the 1st or 2nd one.

Byrne: I agree with that.



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Julson: I would replace the second one with that statement.

Cayo: I think we could potentially combine both of those into one whereas.

Byrne: Now I'm wondering If maybe we shouldn't mention spring break at all.

Wiza: Then we should just write a whole new resolution.

Ericson: If we get rid of the first five whereas, it would be salvageable.

Zwettler: I agree. I think the sixth one could still need some tweaking.

Byrne: Can we make that drastic of a change and still vote on it tonight?

Wiza: Yes. I really don't think taking it out or including it makes that much of a difference anymore. If you make this big of a change, you need to vote on it.

Ahnen: Do we want to remove these first five?

- ii. Ericson: I move to remove those first 5 whereas
 - 1. Pass unanimously

Ericson: I move to remove the first whereas

Zwettler: what if we change the first whereas to "Whereas UWL students have struggled with mental health throughout the semester and have expressed the need for leniency and increased academic support for the remainder of the semester." It may be harshly worded but feel free to change it. It is just a first draft.

Ericson: I think we should get rid of the first one instead of working with wordsmithing what you suggested in the interest of time. Should remove the 2nd to last whereas, since it is mentioning a break?

Ahnen: changing the title is probably the next thing. What do we think about resolution in support of academic flexibility for students?

Ericson: sounds good.

- iii. Passes unanimously

X. Discussion

a. Prairie Springs II Solar Arrays

- i. Ericson: I got an email from Bob Hetzel and he brought up an interesting project for the green fund that is untraditional given that green fund normally doesn't affect buildings with GPR funding. But what he suggested is that the green fund supply funds for a solar array on the new prairie springs science center assuming it gets approved and built. You can work around the rules by getting a



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chancellor's consent. I would be happy to get your ideas and consent before diving in and making it happen.

Mathu: I think it might be putting the cart before the horse. Who's to say if it will be authorized at all? We also need to think about if using student fees have a negative effect. Maybe it seems like the type of thing that the administration should be shelling out money for. It doesn't make sense that we would pay for something like that.

Ericson: Bob said that there is potential for some sharing of the cost, but it is so early in the process that we don't know that much. But that is a good point.

Myers: As someone with experience in the green fund, the goal of the green fund is to initiate sustainable stuff. Like Grant said, there are some reservations about that. The state's money isn't valuing this. When I see this request from administration, it is a slap in the face. I don't think that it should fall on the student. If the administration and the state think that it is cool, they should use their money for that. There was a letter to the editor in the Racquet mentioning a similar thing. We don't have anything, but they come to us for the funding. The maintenance people write green fund grants. But at the end of the day, the money is to make campus more sustainable. Just have to ask if it is worth it to argue about funding or to get the sustainable projects to pass. Then you have to ask about when it will stop.

Ericson: I think that you summed that up perfectly. Earlier this year we had asked for sustainability into the strategic plan and Joe Gow just announced that it wouldn't be included. It shows that they don't value it until it is favorable with the state.

Cayo: I don't like this. It reminds me a lot of the green energy surcharge with the green fund. We keep being asked for paying for things like LED lights and it isn't fiscally responsible to use student fees for state funded buildings. Theoretically, you could ask SUFAC and green fund, but I don't like that they keep asking us to do that. Green fund is for things that are more visible. I would love to have solar arrays. It will cause chaos if they try to make us pay for it.

Myers: K.C. just reminded me that we can do solar panels and arrays but it is the situation. We have been looking at doing a solar array for a lot of other things this year. We have shown interest, and we keep getting put off. Now the state shows interest and they come to us saying that we can do it. Are they going to show initiative ever? This is our money as students, and it seems like we aren't being listened to. I think that's something they should fund.

Ericson: It's hard. Given that there is such a want for solar panels, I think it would not be sending the right message to not even look into it. My plan is to meet with Bob and Scott and see where those things are at. I will keep you all



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involved and all that, but I feel like for someone like me, it is hard to say no to adding solar panels because it is part of the solution that we want.

Myers: Like Andrew said, as someone who is passionate about it, this is good. And at the end of the day, our account tis full and we need to spend but going forward we can't keep doing that. Administration has terrible commitment issues. We need somewhere to start, and we can't keep bailing them out. The administration gets the benefits of saying we are a sustainable campus on tours and stuff, when really, they aren't paying for that.

Zwettler: I agree with K.C. 100%, we can't be funding these projects with student fees. It falls on the state and administration for sure. I guess from your perspectives, what can we do to encourage admin to be more proactive going forward if we do this project?

Cayo: I'm not sure how this would look but depending on how bylaw changes work, we could narrow the definition on what the funds can be spent on.

Ericson: Although it is annoying, the progress grants make and using the funds are important. I don't want to upset facilities because they are a great partner. I'm curious if we can bargain solar panels now and a sustainability coordinator later.

Myers: I feel that there is some bartering that for sure could be done. It is so frustrating, and we shouldn't move forward with this without contracts and guarantees. We have power to bargain here. It can be a solution.

Cayo (in chat): Andrew if you need a SUFAC rep to talk about how it is not fiscally responsible to use student fees on green energy solutions for BUILDINGS vs individual projects, let me know. We could also leave recommendations for future GF & SUFAC teams in regard to how they consider grants about state funded buildings an end of the year report if you will.

- XI. Announcements
 - a. Byrne: On the Saturday after earth day, Robert Frost is hosting the marsh pick up!
- XII. Adjournment
 - a. 7:58