



# 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: **September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

Time and Location: **6:00pm Student Senate Chambers; The U**

- I. Call to Order
  - a. 6:02
- II. Roll Call
- III. Consent Agenda
  - a. Approval of Agenda
  - b. Approval of Minutes
- IV. Guest Speakers
  - a. Joe Gow, Chancellor

Gow: It is great to me with you all! I hope everyone is doing well. In this difficult time, you need to take care of yourselves. As you know, we are in the midst of trying to get back to where we were a few weeks ago when we started class with the level of services offered. We were surprised at the level of positivity we started the year with, so hopefully we can get back to that level of involvement without the positivity we saw. To achieve this, we are working on our Eagles Return plan. As a part of that, we tested the 1500 students who were still in the res halls during the shutdown and we are working on testing the 1500 who are coming back from the break. The trend is down and that is what we want to see. If you want to see those numbers, please feel free to look at the dashboard. With this decrease, we are going to start up with limited in person classes on Monday. The future beyond is hard to know, and we know that this is hard. We are appreciative of what you guys do as student leaders. We know you are wearing masks, meeting electronically, passed that resolution for online clubs and doing what needs to be done to set a good example for what we need to do to contain this virus and get back to normal.

Mathu: I was just wondering: what is the official plan for quarantining? My roommate and I both had it. We stayed in our rooms because quarantine wasn't working, I guess, and it wasn't feasible for us to go home. Now my suitemates are sick, and they are just staying in their room too.

Gow: I'm not on the front lines and I know those res life people are working hard to get everything put together. We do have Wentz as a quarantine dorm, not at full capacity and still have some hotel rooms as well that sick students use. With my knowledge, that is what is still happening. Who gave you that information?

Mathu: I just called the COVID hotline and that is what they told me to do.

Gow: I would be happy to send you email along to people on your behalf if you would like to email me with your concerns.

Mathu: Awesome, thank you. I have another question: is anyone talking about pass/fail grading for this semester?



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Gow: It is early to be thinking about that. Last time around, we were reluctant to do that. In the long term, we think it is better for students to get actual grades. We might revisit it later depending on the situation.

Zwettler: On campus have gotten food and medical attention. There are about 7,000 off campus students. How is the administration supporting them?

Gow: We do have a lot of students off campus. Student affairs is there to help you get what you need. We wish more off campus students would get tested. We had that event last week and it wasn't that well attended. We want to do more of this and get people there to actually do it. I hear concerns a lot about off campus students- of course many off campus students are doing what you need to be doing but there are people still having parties. They need to remember that they are also citizens of La Crosse and the greater community. Not a lot of laws about this as far as off campus goes. We just want to stress that you need to set a good example for everyone. We need to show that we aren't acting in a way that spreads the virus and puts our greater community in danger.

Korfmacher: Has there been any talk, and like Grant said, this may be too soon. But was there any talk of dates changing for spring or winter break since that is approaching in the next months?

Gow: The most immediate break is Thanksgiving and this situation is challenging because this is unusual. Some people get it and they don't know they have it some people get it and die. This is unusual. So, I worry about Thanksgiving and the possibility that people could spread this virus without knowing. What is the right thing? Should people go home? We are looking at that. If students stay, will we have the food and the programming? Then you have the issue of the end of the semester and when people should come back in the spring. Madison said that they are cancelling spring break and starting a week later in the beginning. The students say that they want some sort of a break. Faculty is looking into that, but it is hard logistically. Frankly, I am challenged to plan that far ahead. Things are so unusual. We are just trying to get through this semester, but there are somethings that need to be planned this far ahead as hard as it is. We need to get a plan for spring in place so that the timetable for classes can get set up so advising and registration can begin. I know we won't have a traditional spring break, but would we have the option to put a pause, a break in there? I am not sure. I would love to hear what you want.

Fisher: From my understanding, faculty senate decided that spring break wouldn't be a thing. They motioned last week that they want to start later in the beginning and just completely have no break. That's my two cents and knowledge on that topic. Now my question. Are there concerns about Thanksgiving break? I know people won't travel very far but if the university wants to prevent movement, I was wondering thoughts about that.

Gow: We are worried about that for sure. I guess I would advise people living on campus to stay on campus and not go home for that break. We can't force people to do that. It is a challenging situation. We would suggest the same for off campus students as well. I used to have a very full travel schedule: seeing alumni, conferences, etc. and I haven't left La



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Crosse since February. My mom lives in Alabama and she got hit by the hurricane. A tree fell on her house. I get it. It is hard to not go see your family, especially when bad things happen. Luckily, I had family down there to help her with that. Right now, we have a good situation with the res halls where we have low virus rates, and with the testing and such that we have been doing. Any travel will risk ruining the work we have done to get it low.

Cayo: Tomorrow, the Dane County Board of Supervisors will be voting on legislation Res-217 Urging the University of WI Madison to Discontinue in Person Classes. Is discontinuing all in-person classes permanently this semester/year something UWL would consider?

Gow: Dane county has become politicized. I haven't seen that here, where politicians are coming in and telling us what to do. Our government officials understand what we are trying to do here. We had a meeting with county health, and Gundersen and Mayo were there as well. At this point I am not sure if having all classes at a distance would really affect things the way it did back in March. The virus wasn't really present, and we were able to prevent it from coming to campus. Now it is present and there is nowhere to go to escape it, so it is a question of how to minimize the risk. Actually, the classrooms are a safer place to be because of the PPE and distancing of chairs. And if we did move to distance learning, would students then go home? There are a bunch of off campus students who do live here so it might not make a difference. If things were to become unmanageable, I am not sure if that would change much. Madison makes the case that they are doing a lot of student testing, and a lot of those students would've been living in the city already, so the best part is to keep people on schedule. I don't really agree with that council decision to go all online.

L'Ecuyer: I had a question about the testing event that occurred this weekend. I saw that the test results were supposed to come out after 2 days, but I know myself along with some others still have not received my results. When can we expect everyone to have their results by?

Gow: That is a good question. I would think that since they did several hundred tests every day, they are putting energy into contacting those who are positive first but don't quote me on that. I think the actual notification and such comes from the county.

Fisher: If you did the one from La Crosse County, they might have not gotten your email in right, so they never sent us an email. So, you are going to have to call them to get your results.

Engebretson: To the best of my knowledge, tuition hadn't been lowered. Is that a thing that is being considered since we can't access the amenities, and we can't get the same quality of education as if we were in person?

Gow: When we use "tuition", technically that is the money for the academic piece. The seg fees are separate. For tuition, the quality of the classes isn't different given the modality. Even under normal circumstances, some of your classes have 400 people, some



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with 5, you have some classes that just resonate with you and some that just won't. I found my transcript from many years ago in my undergrad years and there are some classes I remember vividly, and some I don't remember at all. I don't think that just because I don't remember some as well that they are any less quality. They're different, sure. Your money just for tuition mainly goes to paying the professors. In that case, usually, the faculty work more with the distanced approach.

On the fee side, this is complicated. The fees aren't a user fee, it is more of a tax. We built the union and we have to spread the cost over 30 years, we don't want any one group to pay high fees. Things like the U and the rec, it isn't actually to use it, it is the fee to get it built and running, pay the people who work around there. The one that is near and dear to my heart is the childcare fee. Not many students use it, but faculty do. We need the childcare because it makes us stronger. You won't get outstanding education at university without the childcare because the professors who have children don't want to work somewhere without that option. So, with this amenity we do get more quality educators, and it makes your degree more valuable. Similar to how I don't have kids but I pay taxes for the public schools because I think that it is important to have that system.

Engebretson: I would like to mention that it isn't the same quality. A lot of students learn differently and feel that way too. I would say that there is a decrease in quality between actually being taught and teaching yourself most of the content. Secondly, I understand that those things need to be paid for. I don't think that it is justifiable to pay for we are not able to use. It isn't mandatory to pay like taxes.

Gow: I respect what you are saying, and I think that we will have to agree to disagree.

Engebretson: There will be no change, just to clarify?

Gow: No, thank you.

Schaumberger: Several of my constituents have seen parties in and around the dorms, you are hearing people being loud, presumably intoxicated. What will set the criteria for a lock down again?

Gow: We feel for the students who, like you, are watching this happen. We wish we could do more. I don't think a lockdown would change that because even if we do end up doing that, there is still the matter of off campus issues. I got a video of someone downtown, you could see people dancing close without masks, as if things were normal. It is troubling, and I wish we could do something. Lockdown wouldn't change that. We met with the county and medical staff recently and the medical people told county to shut the bars down. They talked to the attorneys, seeing if they could do that legally and the answer was essentially no. We know that these actions are being challenged. The mask mandate is being challenged and we saw that the safer at home order wasn't able to be extended in the spring, as Governor Evers wanted to do. I was at the supermarket last night and a man my age was not wearing a mask, and I thought that was disturbing. There just will always be people not wanting to do this.



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Schaumberger: I know we are threatening suspension for those who break the campus regulations and such but I was wondering if that was actually happening.

Gow: When you move to implement that, people say: “due process!” and they do that that legal right to do that. We have started a few things but haven’t concluded anything. When you think about it, if someone is over 21 and they want to have a group of people over to their house or apartment and not wear masks and drink, there’s not a lot you can do about that. It isn’t limited to college students. Earlier this summer when that Sturgis motorcycle, thing happened people were not wearing masks or following the rules and a lot of cases ensued. As a society we don’t have the ability to control behavior.

Schaumberger: I take this from the perspective of another university. I used to go to University of Iowa. I know that Ames was #1 on the list for COVID cases before we were. They started to just kick the people out who weren’t following the guidelines and that seemed to work.

Gow: We do have some people in a disciplinary process, I tend to not be involved on the frontline, because if there is an appeal, it can come up to the chancellor, so I need to maintain impartiality. The reports we get of big off campus parties are often days later and by then it is too late. The damage has already been done. In the dorms, we are having reports of alcohol and marijuana and we are working on kicking them out for going against the housing rules.

Myers: I want to preface this by saying that it isn’t related to COVID. Do you think it is ethical for an university or system to profit off of fossil fuels?

Gow: It is tricky because the UW system foundation manages our funds. The UWL foundation controls some of our stuff but we don’t have much of a say over that. I would hope that they can make investments away from it because the environment and climate change is a big issue. I personally eat a plant-based diet and I want more people to do that because we need to make sure that we will have a good future. The investments are very important, you just have to get to the people who actually make those decisions. Our foundation has an endowment of 25 million and in Madison, it is over 1 billion. Other places will have more.

Myers: As the chancellor, you represent our school. If you look at the portfolios on the website, there are companies like Dupont, Exxon, and Chevron on there. There is a direct quote on the website that says that we value sustainability. This is a contradiction of values if you ask me. As a chancellor, I feel like it is a yes or no question of your thoughts, but that is a hot position to take, and I understand that.

Gow: Don’t get me wrong, I mentioned how I feel about it personally, but I don’t have the ability to tell the foundation what to do. That is something controversial. The foundation is independent from the university. That being said, they invest for the max. return on investment. We want to get as much money as we can for scholarships. If students were willing to give those up as a trade of for other investments, they would be



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receptive to that.

Myers: It is conflicting to say one thing and do another. Ultimately it does come down to the board of regents, but I also think that as a chancellor, you should have some sort of influence. Thank you though, for your answer.

Cayo: Are there going to be any press releases or social media campaigns regarding the election, who is on the ballot, how to request an absentee ballot, how to register in your new WI location, etc? (and if not, who can I talk to about starting one?)

Gow: I believe there are because I think Larry Ringgenberg has a good start on all that so I will turn it over to him to answer that one.

Ringgenberg: We have 3 student interns who are working on this. They will be posting online, telling people how to register to vote. Once we get more people registered, we will get them educated about those in every seat on the ballot. I would expect that to start in the middle of October. They are dedicated to this cause. Courtney is one of them and she is part of our team, I am not sure if she wants to say anything. I think I am embarrassing her a little bit.

Courtney: Our Instagram account is [uwl\\_votes](#). We are trying to update that daily. Important info will be here about all those items you discussed. It is run by myself and 2 SEED fellows, dm us if you want to get more stuff or have ideas to contribute.

Ringgenberg: We signed the “all in” democracy pledge saying that we will get as many students ready to vote as possible so that is part of our efforts.

Evans: I was wondering if there is a plan to re-promote the COVID cares act. I was just wondering because it was everywhere in the spring but now people have forgotten it.

Gow: Right now, in Washington, the federal government is debating what’s next. We hope they do another one. Technically, the money we are getting will run out at the end of the calendar year. We are relying on that money right now for testing and we expect to continue that into next year because the situation just won’t go away. Tomorrow, we have a call with Ron Kind and Tommy Thompson, we are going to tell him how much it means to us and hopefully he will represent us in those discussions. It means a lot to the university and society. I also worry about unemployment benefits that ended and lots of people still out of work, that isn’t good. Hopefully, they will come through again to help us.

Byrne: My question is regarding COVID violations on campus. Res life is saying that they are cracking down on those who are having parties and that violations would be put on your student record. I have friends who were stupid and had a party and then talked to a hall director, but nothing happened. Is anything going to happen or is this a scare tactic?





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Gow: We can't control everything. I don't know that I would call it a scare tactic but you run the risk of the consequences if you do these things and that's what we want to make sure our students understand. We all have the same goals. We want to keep our education going in the safest possible manner. I often say that It is hard because we aren't a correctional facility- we can't control everything. We are trying to do the best that we can, but I admit that it is hard.

Mathu: I know that voting was mentioned a little bit ago and it was mentioned that UWL signed on to that voting pledge. Since you have a lot of pull, could you personally ask or send someone to city clerk to see if they could get a ballot drop box on campus?

Ringgenberg: We made a request earlier. They are worried about ballots being contested, and if we had one, some people might say that the votes are invalid. Our contact has been talking to the Wisconsin Election Commission and maybe getting early voting happening in the U. Our emphasis right now is more on the students registered to vote.

Gow: Thanks for everything. I would be happy to come back anytime.

V. General Student Body Open Forum

VI. Officer Reports

a. **President:** Cate Wiza

- i. October 5<sup>th</sup>, there is another drive-in testing site at the county health and human services building. It is free- no insurance needed. Just show up. It is helpful if you register. You will get your results in 3-5 days. I would highly recommend it. It doesn't sound like you need strong symptoms. If you are just curious, I would highly recommend getting tested.
- ii. I met with Thomas Harris and the Waking Up White Collaborative. They are providing books to those interested. There is an event tomorrow, from 6:00-8:00 and it is an anti-racism roundtable. Local leaders will be reacting to the current state of racism in La Crosse. I would highly recommend attending. They are also looking for a representative to plan the symposium. It is moved to next year on December 3 and 4. They are expecting to meet once a month. They are looking for help with the organizing piece of that event. If you have any questions or interest in these things, email me.

b. **Vice President:** Olivia Ahnen

- i. If you are a new senator, fill out that office hours sheet I sent out a while ago. Once that is filled out, I will get that forwarded off to the website that is an important outlet for your constituents to talk to you. I know we had a bunch of new senators last week. If you don't have a committee yet, email me so we can get it sorted out.

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

- i. Faculty senate decided that spring break would be cancelled. They want to do an extra week at the end of the winter break and then no break where it normally would be. We want to try to see if we can get any days off because just for the sake of our mental health, having a break is important. A lot of them agreed to the mental health thing but there were no motions to make a break into the agenda.



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- ii. I sent our college senators a survey. Please take that so I can get an idea of where everyone is at. If instead of you all meeting with your dean, I can bring your questions to your deans. I know with the workload and stress right now, adding this can seem daunting. I don't want you all to burn out but I want to get that contact made so I would be willing to get your opinions, and talk to the deans for you but you have to fill out that survey by 10/4.
  - d. **State Affairs Director:** Grant Mathu
    - i. Nothing much. I was going to reach out to the clerk, but it sounds like Larry is already on that. I asked at PSPAA to see if anyone would be interested in working with other clubs to get people registered to vote by just popping into their meetings and offering help. There were people who were interested in doing that so we will see how that goes.
    - ii. My committee will be meeting soon.
    - iii. Few blood drives in the next few weeks. Consider that if you are healthy and able. If you have recovered COVID, you may have the antibodies and that is helpful for many reasons.
  - e. **Local Affairs Director:** Amy Schweiner
    - i. Off campus housing fair will be on 10/12. It will work similarly to involvement fest. If you are interested, I can get you a graphic to share with your people.
    - ii. I would like to hold a virtual voter registration thing. Type your name if you want to join and I will send out more information about it.
    - iii. Make sure that you follow Uwl\_votes and text eaglesvote to 56525
  - f. **Inclusivity Director:** Camoya Evans
    - i. The main thing is continuing to promote the Students of Color Processing Group that meets Tuesdays 4-5 pm. there is a link on the UWL website to get into that. So please tell your constituents.
    - ii. I am going to do a takeover for the diversity and inclusion office so that is coming up as well.
  - g. **Public Relations Director:** Holly Korfmacher
    - i. (Ahnen, reading from a report): She will be posting a lot about voting especially with the closeness to the election. If you have ideas or want to help her with that, she will want the ideas so shoot her an email.
  - h. **Sustainability Director:** Jake Myers
    - i. Larry, when I will have access to the buildings? I probably need to get the Trex plastic bags since they are probably overflowing by now. Last year we had a goal of collecting 500 pounds of plastic. I don't know personally if it is worth it to you guys to that. If we want a goal like that or if we want to just kinda have it as a service since people use plastic bags a lot.
      - 1. Ringgenberg: Buildings are open, and they are overflowing by now so please go grab them.
- VII. Advisor Reports
- a. On Friday morning, the Laux tent will be moved to Wentz. That tent will be for those who have tested positive. Coate will still have the tent. I am concerned about the lines just in general. I am not sure about how many people are actually in Wentz. It seems like there are people in other locations who are positive like Grant was saying but we will see how this turns out.





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- b. Sono and Cellar opening soon so that is another dining option to bring the lines down at the tents.
- c. Boost mobile app is available. I just got it and if you want to order to go, you can do that, it is super easy.
- d. For Thanksgiving, we are really trying to figure out what we are going to do for activities. We have opened conversation with the Rec. I am working with my staff to plan activities. Union will be open Wednesday through Sunday. Our services including the play in the Union area will be open. I would love to hear ideas of what to do to keep things fun.
- e. Poll workers. If interested, let us know. One of the issues is that there aren't a lot of people who want to work on campus. They are freaked out by our numbers. If we can find people ourselves, that would be great so please consider doing it. I know you get paid but I am not sure how much.
  - i. Schaumberger: \$8/hour plus training
- f. Should we move to Zoom at some point? I had a Zoom meeting last week and that platform took care of the tech issues we have been having. I think it has a clean polling system for voting. Olivia and Cate- we should talk about that

Nelson: how long do you anticipate the Coate tent being out? When will we return to Whitney, Badger Street and Char's?

Ringgenberg: If numbers continue to be low, 10/17 is when we would like to re-open. They are good right now, if they continue to stay at this level, we would like to get them back inside.

Fitz: Will the Wentz hall tent be open to other residents? Or only the people quarantined there?

Ringgenberg: It will be available for other students. We have complaints from parents of regarding the mixing of positive and negative people in the current dining set up so we want to try to separate that as much as possible.

Byrne: Oktoberfest was last weekend, if cases rise aget that, what is the plan? Another lockdown?

Ringgenberg: I would say that there will be a lot of resistance to being totally online. I don't anticipate another lockdown. I have confidence in our students. I know that in all these decisions, there are a lot of complex things. Everyone has had a wakeup call with these numers and the previous lockdown so I think things will go well.

Mathu: They will be moving the tent from Laux to Wentz, but could they just set up a third tent? Everyone going thru the Eagle tent will cause problems. More people means that it will spread quicker

Ringgenberg L We looked into that cost. That is why we are also opening Sono and the Cellar. I am hoping that people from Laux can use the U so that they don't go to the tent.



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## VIII. Committee Reports

- a. Cayo: (indistinguishable through technology issues)
- b. Myers: In our bylaws, we need a staff rep on the Green Fund committee. I emailed the faculty staff chair and I haven't heard back. If, Larry, you know someone to get in there, that would be great so that we can operate under the correct bylaws.
- c. Zwettler: The free speech committee is finalizing contracts with people for virtual events. Do we know if ADAC has started meeting yet?
- d. Ringgenberg: We just had a meeting with the budget ppl and the meeting will happen within the next two weeks.

## IX. Organizational Reports

## X. Unfinished Business

### a. SA2021-014

- i. Ahnen: This is the new and improved fossil fuel divestment proposal. Ericson, would you like to explain?
- ii. Ericson: It is very similar to what we brought up two weeks ago. Thank you to all who helped shorten it. The stats were taken out. It is still asking the regents to divest. The proposal includes information about how to divest and lists profitable alternatives to fossil fuel companies.
- iii. Passes unanimously

### b. SA2021-003

- i. Wiza: Because of the increase of positive cases, we recommend student orgs continue to meet virtually through 10/19. After that date, group under 10 people can meet in the U.
- ii. Passes unanimously

## XI. New Business

### a. SA2021-015

- i. Mathu: This is asking to add some sort of a break in the spring semester as a consideration for mental health. We are saying that since people will travel over winter break regardless, they should reconsider some sort of break.
- ii. Wiza: faculty senate did take our notes from last week's meeting and Faith was our voice at that meeting. No one made a motion to amend the rule to add in this break. This says that we want a break if we can get one. Faculty senate meets again on the 8<sup>th</sup>. If we have this done soon, they can prepare for their meeting with our thoughts.
- iii. Suspend the 2-week rule passes unanimously
- iv. Discussion:  
Zwettler: make the language more specific. Make two, 2-3 day breaks instead of just 1 day. It would be about the same amount as spring break but still be enough to discourage travel.

Wiza: I did ask for that but I got a lot of negative responses. The most that I could get was one. I went to Provost and faculty senate with that. That is why it is only the one.



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Zwettler: Has there been consideration that no winter break delay and just doing these multiple breaks?

Wiza: We are 100% starting on February 1 and having no spring break. We can push for addition of a break, it isn't that they aren't listening. There are also complications with J-term.

Rain: Do you think they would make the 3-day weekend in April on Monday the 5th for traveling back to school from easter?

Wiza: We could email them with your interest for that.

Cayo: We could put in a hard ask for one three-day weekend. It wouldn't be off the table. The only concern is that they don't like it when we tell them what to do but that is an option.

Wiza: Would that be received poorly?

Ringgenberg: I think this is a longshot no matter what you are doing.

Ericson: I like KC's idea. If this is something that we want, we need to be clear about that.

Mathu: I know that asking for 3 days is ideal, but do we want to keep it open? Keeping it open is good so that if we can get anything, it would be better than nothing. We don't want to face rejection.

Zwettler: I think we need to be firm that this important to us. Leaving it open is easier to get brushed off. I think the hard ask is very important.

Cayo: Motion to amend the document to allow for further discussion.

Cayo in chat: "Therefore be is resolved that the Student Senate recommend to the Faculty Senate....to consider a three-day weekend...."

Zwettler: I like what Cayo wrote in the chat, but I think that we should put the specific date in there so they now exactly what they want.

Mathu in chat: "THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Student Senate recommend to the Faculty Senate and the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse Administration to consider solutions outside of a complete cancellation of spring break for the 2021 Spring Semester in the form of a three-day weekend coinciding with Easter break on the dates of \_\_\_\_\_." Would that work?

Ericson: What if we added a word like "demand"? But I also don't want to start a war by asking too harshly.



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Mathu: I get that I just won't want to miss the forest thru the trees.

Cayo: We should move away from the religious language and just put the dates in there since that is what they would do.

Zwettler: Take out easter and put the specific dates: April 2-5.

In favor of amending: pass unanimously

Vote to pass the new resolution: unanimously passed

**b. SA2021-016**

i. Wiza: This suspends the signature rule for this election and allows returning senator to sit on the committee for their numbers to be met.

ii. Two-week rule suspended

iii. Vote: pass unanimously

**c. SA2021-017**

i. Wiza: resolution to appoint the fall 2020 election commission.

ii. Two-week rule suspended

iii. Vote: pass unanimously

**d. SA2021-018**

i. Zwettler: create a committee to get the views of the student body with COVID19, how we can help out with administration, how we can do that. I would like to get this under way as soon as possible so if the two-week rule could be suspended, that would be great

ii. Two-week rule suspended

iii. Vote passes unanimously

XII. Discussion

XIII. Announcements

a. Cayo: there is a group of organizers looking to register to vote out of a car. Voter registration caravan. I am not 100% sure what this would look like but email me if you are interested.

XIV. Adjournment