



Emerson College Student Government Association

SGA President: Nandan Nair

SGA Vice President: Kayla Armbruster

SGA Treasurer: Oliver Katz

Secretary: Olivia DeCesare

Chief Justice: Georgia Winn

Director of Communications: Josue Velazquez

NOTICE OF MEETING:

THIS AGENDA will be utilized during the Friday, Oct. 4 Student Government Association General Assembly meeting beginning at 12 p.m. in Walker building, room 417.

NOTICE OF AGENDA:

THE SGA SHALL ENGAGE in the following matters once the meeting is called to order:

- I. Call to Order.
 - A. 12:07
- II. Approval of minutes from last week.
 - A. The minutes are a
- III. Conversation about the Board of Trustees.
 - A. Context
 1. This is the first meeting with the Board of Trustees
 2. There has always been an SGA representative to the Board of Trustees
 3. Does not need to be a specific SGA position or someone in SGA either
 - B. Questions/Concerns
 1. More engagement with the student body - we don't currently recognize or know any of them
 - a) Will invite some of the members to General Assembly
 2. One on one connection each one has their own interest and memories of their times at Emerson
 - a) Could be powerful to connect the board to student orgs that could be meaningful / related to them
 - b) Set up the infrastructure to connect the board of trustees to connect to the students
 3. Student engagement
 - a) Emerson is a school run by events and the BOT should come to those. If they represent student interest, they should know what the student interests are.
 - b) We need some face time to build trust
 - (1) We need to put a face on who they are.
 - c) We are diverse in our academics and ethnic backgrounds
 - d) We need to be specific in how we engage with them - if we don't set terms or tangible environments, nothing will happen

- (1) Introduction of Presidential Advisory Group
- e) There is a hesitation to talk about what happened last year and we need to remove that type of hesitation
 - (1) Rip the bandaid off on having more productive conversations
 - (2) We need to be able to set systems in place to make sure this never happens again, and ensure that we learn from this.
 - (3) Making sure avenues for open dialogue are available, instead of needing to protest for it.
 - (4) A promise was made that concerns would be heard, but then there was no follow up email to this.
- f) Members of the administration have only facilitated conversations they're comfortable having. They have been hesitant to accept scrutiny on matters like the arrests and thus facilitate these conversations that are uncomfortable.
- 4. The voice of the students is being reflected in the students in the facility but not by the people that have the power to create change
- 5. Their main involvement lately has been the Institutional Neutrality policy - that needs to be brought up because it is something they had a direct stake in and thus would warrant more meaningful and effective conversation.
 - a) Directly involved in the policy
- 6. Many of the conversations have felt performative, and nothing so far has felt like a genuine attempt at engagement and learning.
- 7. It is scary for certain people to want to engage it can be easy to say that we will come and have a respectful conversation without actually having conversation that are respectful and productive
 - a) How can we engage in a huge conversation when it's hard for the respective communities to have this open dialog
 - b) We need to establish a middle ground
 - c) Its okay to be uncomfortable but its not okay to be made to feel unsafe
 - d) Sometimes you have to take yourself out of the equation and not insert yourself into a conversation that you don't have a personal stake in
 - (1) Almost putting your ego aside and understanding that people are just that people at the end of the day
- 8. As a student lesson it's hard to cater to other people's feelings but that is what we need to do in order to facilitate a good working relationship

- a) Sure the campus climate isn't their concern but the budget deficit because of the campus is your concern.
- b) We don't want to agree on everything if you don't move forward that way.

IV. Introduction of [SB1](#)

- A. This is a bill about the attendance policy and making it more accessible
- B. The current policy is very rigid
 - 1. Has not changed in the last 5 years
 - 2. It doesn't entirely ensure the safety of our students
- C. A lot of the ideas in this bill were already out in the community, and can be seen in the Access Advocacy Initiatives in the last few years.
 - 1. This is a conversation that has been ongoing for at least 3 years.
- D. The current attendance policy sets itself up as numeric
 - 1. Two absences = letter grade drop
 - 2. Mostly set by professor
- E. Certain aspects make sense (i.e. discussions)
- F. But when some classes are mostly exam based or non-discussion based, losing a letter grade for 3 absences does not properly account for student health issues
- G. The policy should be based on the student's effort, comprehension and progress in the course.
- H. Students may come to class sick because they do not want to trigger the policy, or they do not have the necessary illness/symptoms to warrant a doctor's note.
- I. Reporting requirements - these policies differ by department, and so the chairs should convey these policies to students each year
 - 1. Probably a one page email?
 - 2. This lets us compare and contrast departments and see what's working, what's not etc.
- J. Some students with disabilities will not be given accommodations because the policy is very rigid - and rightfully so because it must be concrete
 - 1. At the same time, this shouldn't mean students with a disability that isn't enough to have a formal accommodation won't get certain exemptions or understanding from their professors
 - 2. It is currently dependent on medical documentation, and healthcare often comes into play here - thus many college students may not get documentation.
- K. Students should not go to class sick or unwell just because they are scared of academic repercussions

L. Restructuring how we look at disabilities and illnesses in how we accommodate students.

M. Questions on the Bill

1. Do you believe the wording of finding no. 3 benefits or hurts the bill?
 - a) With regards to the word “career”, their current career is technically studying at Emerson College, so shouldn’t they need to attend class?
 - b) Many students will have auditions or conferences etc that they must miss class to attend - as such, they then have to decide when to use their absences.
 - (1) This should result in losing participation points, but not a letter grade.
2. How does this bill’s amendments differ from other college policies?
 - a) It would be a progressive policy as compared to others.
 - b) The current policy is very attendance strict because of the nature of our programs, but it should not
3. Empirical evidence says attendance is paramount to academic success and future success, so how do we make sure that people do not just abuse this policy and skip class without reason?
 - a) The policy can be discussed but we need to remember that currently, there are also people that have been hurt by the current policy and so we need to find a balance between the two.
 - b) Should also be mindful of professors who do the opposite and just make attendance/participation very difficult to follow because it is bound by very specific/limited items.
 - c) Important to note that this policy does distinguish between excused and unexcused. We shouldn’t decide we can’t do something just because there’s potential for some people to abuse it.
4. Would religious exemptions be addressed in this bill?
 - a) There’s nothing in the bill intended to change it, but it does acknowledge that it exists.
5. Does this bill address menstrual-related absences?
 - a) PCOS and some other conditions fall under medical circumstances that warrant accommodations.
 - b) We will continue to discuss this.
 - c) Everyone has comment access to the doc, so anyone can add comments over the next week and it will be reviewed by Karli and Angus.

- V. Student Experience Senate Positions Bylaw.
 - A. This sets the list of student experience senators to take over
 - B. Makes it easier for us to change and update positions through the Bylaws, rather than through the Constitution.
 - C. Passed unanimously via roll call vote.
- VI. Workshopping in separate Senates.
 - A. Academic Senate.
 - 1. Liane (CSD)
 - a) buddy system connecting freshman and seniors in the program, helping to introduce various programs
 - b) Day in my Life with Seniors - video showing observation hours, advice on internships, etc.
 - c) Flyers with QR Code and survey if people are interested in this.
 - d) Faculty and Staff are interested in doing this.
 - e) Will put it on the template.
 - f) Georgia does the same for honors, so connect with her.
 - 2. Saskia (Comedic Arts)
 - a) An event with a speaker.
 - b) Maybe some event with all the troupes
 - c) All troupe party
 - 3. Max B. (PR)
 - a) Going abroad next semester, wants to do an event before end of semester
 - b) Event where people from all departments come together to show how important PR is in various industries and in the world.
 - c) Pastel, light pink type of vibe
 - d) Only issue is the timeframe to get it done.
 - 4. Carlson (VMA)
 - a) Talked to Shaun Clarke - VMA head
 - b) Going to talk to Alex too
 - c) Screening or showcase where people can submit films
 - (1) Hard to get into screenings
 - (2) Would be fun to showcase work
 - d) With Bright Lights cut, the Bright Family Screening room is still open, so maybe start a similar program to show student films

B. Student Experience Senate.

1. Hazel

- a) Bracelet making event for children in an elementary school with kind notes with
- b) Focusing on small acts of community service
- c) Wants to work with different groups at emerson but the first group wants to be everyone
- d) Working with emerson communication creating a logo

2. Christian MacKenzie

- a) Lack of unity 8 orgs that really operate independently
- b) Want to make an event where every FSL is invited
- c) Want to make sure this event is not a party and not overlooked by the higher up
- d) Looking for something that is off campus
- e) Will connect with angus to talk more about the cost

3. Christian Sullivan

- a) Works for Veterans affairs at this school
- b) Most schools have a VSO
 - (1) Survives as a nucleus to form a community
 - (2) But emerson is too small to have one
- c) Trying to get a staff member to fulfill this role

4. Karli Wallace

- a) Has a lot to work with
- b) Still looking for ideas

5. Henry Jones

- a) It's an election year so wants to do something around civic engagement
- b) Wants to figure out a way to work with other members of BIG about this
- c) Has really good concepts of a plan

VII. Open Forum.

VIII. Adjournment.