



Semester in Review Fall 2018

Summary

The Fall 2018 semester has truly been one full of change for the Student Government Association. Our main goal is to advocate for students and represent their wants and needs. We act as the liaison between students and staff, faculty, administration, and the Board of Trustees. Over the past few months, we have tried many new things and in some cases, changed the way we operate in order to better meet those goals. While we know that our work is never done, this document serves to summarize some of what SGA has accomplished or worked on since this past August.

This semester, we held countless meetings with staff, faculty, and administrators. We ran the fall elections, implemented some new process and procedures, and created new positions. Students were appointed to open positions that haven't been filled within SGA for a few years, and we appointed representatives to multiple boards and committees throughout the college. Our governing body, Joint Session, voted on new criteria for an SGA scholarship and worked on ongoing initiatives.

Below you can find a more specific list of some of the projects we've been working on and a more expanded description of what each item means. Although this definitely doesn't include everything we've met about or had a hand in, hopefully this will provide a general review of the past semester.

If you would like to receive more information on any given subject, please remember that all of our meetings have been live-streamed on our [Facebook page](#), and our [approved minutes](#) are available to the public at any time. We also have [monthly updates](#) posted to our website.

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to talk about what you would like to see from SGA in the future, please feel free to contact sga_president@emerson.edu.

Best,

Jess Guida
SGA Executive President

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Academic Initiative

This fall semester, the SGA Department Senators, and the Executive Vice President wrote the 2018-2019 Academic Initiative. The Academic Initiative encompasses what students wish to see installed, changed, or added to our academic experiences. Senators met with department chairs on a regular basis and created physical/interactive boards where students were be able to place a sticker next to items they agreed with. This was done throughout the entire month of November to gather feedback about items to be written into the initiative. This was followed by the Faculty & Student Town Hall on November 27th.

SGA Joint Session voted to approved the Academic Initiative in December. Following its approval, the document was sent to Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Whelan, the Deans of the academic schools, and each department chair. The [2018-2019 Academic Initiative](#) can be found through our website.

Appeal Requests

One of the many functions of SGA is to manage the portion of the student activities fee that goes towards student organization funds. Recognized student organizations can submit an Appeal Request to SGA once per semester. Appeal Requests are a last-resort option for organizations to obtain funding for events or trips outside of their yearly budget allocation. Appeal requests are heard by the Financial Advisory Board (FAB). This semester, SGA Joint Session voted to allow FAB to grant requests that were under the amount of \$5,000 without needing approval from Joint Session.

This semester, FAB granted a total of 15 appeal requests through recognized and unrecognized appeal processes. Of the \$63,907.75 that was requested, a total of \$55,130.43 was granted. To see more information about granted requests, please refer to [our records](#).

ASGA Regional Conference

At the beginning of August, SGA hosted the American Student Government Association (ASGA) Boston Conference at Emerson for the first time. Over 100

participants from 20 different institutions gathered at Emerson on August 4th to attend workshops with professional presenters, share insight, and network with other student governments.

Board of Trustees Representative

Each year, SGA appoints a student to serve as the undergraduate student representative to the college's Board of Trustees. This year, Executive President Jess Guida chose to fill this role. This student representative gives remarks concerning the student body at Emerson to the Board of Trustees three times per academic year.

The remarks that were given at the October 2018 meeting can be viewed [here](#).

Bon Appetit Advisory Group

With the introduction of Bon Appetit, the SGA Executive Board created the Bon Appetit Advisory Group in order to provide feedback on the dining facilities and services with this new company. This group was able to come together three times over the past few months.

We have met with with Dawn Sajdyk, Resident District Manager for Bon Appetit; Erik Muurisepp, Associate Dean for Campus Life; and Karen Dickinson, Director of Business Services to discuss any comments, questions, or concerns that have come up.

Discussions from our meetings with Bon Appetit at the beginning of the semester can be viewed in our post [here](#).

By-Law Review

SGA Joint Session unanimously approved to update the By-laws to our Constitution, as we do at the beginning of each academic year. You can find our up-to-date By-laws on our website at emersonsga.org/by-laws.

Constitution Review

Each year, SGA reviews the SGA Constitution and proposes amendments to be put on the ballot during elections. Amendments are compiled and reviewed by the Chief Justice before they are presented to Joint Session. Joint Session votes on all proposed amendments before they are put on the ballot!

The Constitutional amendments were approved during the Fall 2018 election. 234 students voted on this ballot measure. With 93% of students voting to approve the amendments, they passed! The updated SGA Constitution can be found at www.emersonsga.org/constitution/.

Events

This semester, SGA sponsored a few different events. “What’s the Scoop?” was put on by the department senators from the School of Communications to hear students’ wants, needs, and concerns about their academic departments.

SGA also co-sponsored a “New Security Meet & Greet” with Student Affairs and the Emerson College Police Department to introduce students to the employees of Emerson’s new security companies: Northeast Security and WesCon Protective Services. In addition, we hosted [Press Night](#) for candidates running in the Fall 2018 elections and the Faculty & Student Town Hall.

Faculty & Student Town Hall

On Tuesday, November 27th, SGA (in collaboration with the Faculty Assembly and Academic Affairs) presented the Faculty & Student Town Hall. The purpose of the Town Hall was to improve the relationship and dynamics between faculty and students. It provided a space for everyone to learn more about each other's experiences through dialogue and open communication.

Students and faculty sat at tables together, grouped by academic department or areas of interest, and spent the time engaging in open conversations with each other. Students who were unable to attend can view notes from each of the discussion in [this document](#). The SGA Senators will be using the information and feedback from both the Town Hall and the academic boards (which were set up across campus throughout the

month of November) in the 2018-2019 Academic Initiative. The initiative will be available for the community to view in the month of December via the SGA website at www.emersonsga.org/initiatives/.

Fall 2018 Election

On November 14th and 15th, SGA held voting for the Fall 2018 elections. Elections are held towards the end of each semester, but the fall elections are intended to fill any vacant elected positions as well as the class council positions for the freshman class. There were also a number of constitutional amendments put on the ballot for a vote.

This election cycle, 234 students voted on the constitutional amendments (the one ballot that was available to all undergraduate students, regardless of year or major). This is compared to 45 students that voted on the constitutional amendments in Fall 2017. SGA would like to thank everyone who voted and participated in elections. The official results can be found on our website's [executive blog](#).

Financial Accountability Initiative

The SGA Executive Board met a few times over the course of the semester with administrators including, Rob Butler, Assistant Vice President (AVP) for Administration and Finance; Anne Shaughnessy, AVP for the President's Office; Art Mombourquette, AVP for Real Estate; Jim Hoppe, VP and Dean of Campus Life; Michael Whelan, Provost and VP for Academic Affairs; and Ruthanne Madsen, VP for Enrollment.

These meetings provided a space for detailed conversations about each piece of the Financial Accountability Initiative. In addition to committee meetings, members of the SGA Executive Board have met one-on-one with a number of VPs, AVPs, and other relevant staff to discuss elements of the initiative.

Conversations have continued to be on-going, but we plan to continue our meetings in the Spring semester. The initiative can be found at emersonsga.org/executive-blog/sga-fai.

Guest Speakers in Joint Session

SGA Joint Session meets weekly on Tuesdays, 2-3:45pm. This semester, we met with numerous staff members and administrators to discuss different projects and areas of interest. We met and advised on the following:

- 172 Tremont/LB Construction: Met with [Jim Hoppe](#) (Vice President & Dean, Campus Life) to discuss ongoing construction projects, including the building at 172 Tremont St and the renovations on the Little Building. Students can view [plans for 172 Tremont St](#) as well as [plans for the Little Building basement](#).
- Bon Appetit: Met with [Dawn Sajdyk](#) (General Manager, Bon Appetit) and [Erik Muurisepp](#) (Associate Dean, Campus Life) to address questions and concerns from those in Joint Session and those who submitted online via our Facebook page.
- Emerson Today: Met with [Sofiya Cabalquinto](#) (Associate Vice President of Communications) and [Erin Clossey](#) (Associate Director of News) to discuss the new [Emerson Today](#), a website to host news, announcements, and more for the Emerson community. While the site is still in its beta version, SGA wanted the opportunity to provide input and feedback for how it may best be utilized for the community.
- Information Technology: Met with [Brian Basgen](#) (Associate Vice President, Information Technology) to discuss some updates from IT and to gather questions/feedback from students.
- JED Campus/Healthy Minds: Met with [Jane Powers](#) (Director, Center for Health & Wellness) and [Elise Harrison](#) (Director, Emerson Counseling and Psychological Services) to follow up about the JED Campus Work Group and Healthy Minds Survey that took place during the Spring 2018 Semester.
- NSSE Survey: Met with [Michaele Whelan](#) (Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs) and [Mike Duggan](#) (Associate Vice President, Institutional Research) to discuss Emerson's results from the [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE) which are supposed to provide "an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college."
- Student Engagement & Leadership (SEAL): Met with [Jason Meier](#) (Director, SEAL) and [Andy Donahue](#) (Assistant Director, SEAL) to discuss information and

statistics that had been gathered from [EmConnect](#) over the past year as well as some general updates.

- Voice Your Choice: Met with [Jill Naimo](#) (Associate Director, Student & Young Alumni Engagement) to discuss [Voice Your Choice](#) prior to the initial found of voting in November.
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Lead365 National Conference

In November, SGA Executive President Jess Guida, Executive Vice President Raz Moayed, Executive Treasurer Ian Mandt, Class of 2020 President Carole King, and Advisor Sharon Duffy attended the annual Lead365 National Conference. We sent delegates to this conference to network with students and staff from other institutions, hear from recognized speakers and presenters, and develop their leadership and professional skills. In addition, Emerson presented as one of the student talks at the conference.

Midterm Course Evaluation Survey

The SGA Executive Board partnered with Michael Whelan to send out a survey to ask undergraduate students and faculty members about the usage of midterm course evaluations. We in SGA urged students to ask their professors about using this important evaluation tool.

695 students participated in the one-question survey with 59% of those students reporting they received an evaluation in *some* of their courses, 33% in *none* of their courses, and 8% in *all* of their courses. Of the 153 faculty members that participated, 69% stated that they give midterm course evaluations while 31% said they didn't.

Non-Recognized Organization Appeals

Because of the re-evaluation of the student organization recognition process (also known as the Organization Recognition & Review process), the process did not take place in the Fall semester, as has happened in previous years. This led to the

implementation of a temporary non-recognized appeal request process at the end of October. This process serves as an interim funding opportunity for organizations whose plans were altered. Organizations had the opportunity to request project-based funding through an Appeal Request process. This process funds individual projects, trips, or events and does not provide full budgets.

Non-recognized organizations were given the opportunity to declare their intent to appeal for funds from SGA from October 31-November 18. Organizations that declared their intent by November 18th were given the opportunity to complete a budget for their appeal request by a November 25th deadline. A total of four non-recognized organizations completed all of the necessary steps to be considered for funds.

The Organization Recognition & Review Board reviewed the organizations for eligibility, and then the Financial Advisory Board reviewed the appeal requests. FAB granted appeal requests to: [Bee Enthusiasts at Emerson](#) (\$1,151.00), [Ultimate Frisbee](#) (\$2,200.00), [Full Fathom Productions](#) (\$218.00), and [Hidden Lanterns](#) (\$680).

Open Position Appointments

The SGA filled a number of open appointed positions this semester September. A number of students were appointed to Executive Board support positions, including

- Rachel Levin (Vice Treasurer)
- Julia Stanton (Executive Secretary)
- Brilee Carey (Deputy Chief Justice)
- Cassie Shelley (Executive Assistant).

Additionally, the following were appointed to open commissioner and chair positions:

- Brae Lamontagne (Athletics Commissioner)
- Nola Elliffe (Health & Wellness Commissioner)
- Tatiana Melendez (Fraternity & Sorority Life Commissioner)
- Daniella Baltazar (Honors Program Commissioner)
- Jay Liu (International Student Commissioner)
- Madi Doelling (Off-Campus Commissioner)
- Lex Fernander (POWER Commissioner)
- Liza Xiao (Service Learning Commissioner)
- Ann Zhang (Spiritual Life Commissioner)
- Rita Johnson (Student Accessibility Commissioner)
- Melissa Bordelon (Transfer Student Commissioner)

- Chris Henderson-West (Elections Chair)
 - Lili Schmalenberger (Public Relations Chair)
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Organization Recognition Process

Over the past nine months, SGA has been working to re-evaluate the student organization recognition process (also known as the Organization Recognition & Review process) to determine how we can better serve students with more efficiency and effectiveness. In reviewing this process, we have been working closely with the Student Engagement and Leadership team to ensure we are providing the support and resources that organizations truly need.

Because of this, the recognition process did not take place in the Fall semester, as has happened in previous years. We communicated this to student organizations that had contacted us regarding the recognition process.

The recognition process has undergone some changes, and it will be taking place in the Spring semester. Although specific dates and criteria have not yet been finalized, SGA Joint Session voted to approve the process itself at the end of December. SGA and SEAL will release more information at the beginning of the Spring semester for organizations interested in going through the process.

Outreach Efforts

Part of SGA's work this semester was reevaluating our outreach and how we interact with the Emerson student body. We implemented a lot of new practices and changes that we hope have somewhat improved our communication with the community.

This semester, we began live-streaming our Joint Session meetings on our [Facebook page](#) to make our discussions more accessible. We also started to create [monthly update documents](#) to summarize some of our larger projects and bigger conversations that we have in SGA. To add to our social media pages on Facebook and [Twitter](#), we created an [Instagram](#) to send out updates, information, and other SGA-related content. We tried our hand at creating some video content, had SGA members appear on Good Morning Emerson, and changed the location of events like Press Night to increase visibility. In addition, we implemented the use of more targeted email

communication and in-person tabling to solicit applications for open positions and engage students in our elections.

SGA Scholarship

Over the summer, the SGA Executive Board met with administrators in the Financial Aid and Institutional Advancement offices to establish an SGA funded Student Scholarship. Through this meeting we learned that SGA is already the manager of a scholarship with a balance that would enable us to provide students with a scholarship. We gave Financial Aid permission to release \$3,000 of available funding to contribute to a current senior's Financial Aid award.

We recently established new criteria to revive the scholarship. That criteria includes that the fund's spendable balance will be awarded annually to a student entering their senior year with a GPA of 2.0 or above who maintains satisfactory academic progress, demonstrates financial need, and is a good citizen of the College. No student shall receive this award more than once. International and transfer students are eligible. The recipient will be chosen by a Decision Board comprised of the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and the Director of Financial Aid.

SGA Joint Session voted to allocate (of the \$25,000 set aside at the end of the Spring 2018 semester) that \$20,000 be given to the SGA Scholarship and \$5,000 be given to the [Lions for Lions Scholarship Fund](#).

The SGA Scholarship scholarship will be awarded alongside Financial Aid packages starting in the Fall 2019 semester. The Lions for Lions fund is growing, but has not reached an "endowable" level, and for that reason cannot be awarded yet.

Student Government Leadership Program

The Student Government Leadership Program (SGLP) is a semester-long program for students in their 1st semester that's designed to build, develop, and enhance leadership skills to prepare students for representative leadership in student government, class councils, and beyond.

This semester, 10 students participated in and completed the SGLP program. The program was run by SGA Executive President Jess Guida and Executive Treasurer Ian

Mandt (co-facilitators), Executive Secretary Julia Stanton (assistant facilitator), and Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs Sharon Duffy (advisor).

Treasury Process

The SGA Executive Treasurer Ian Mandt and Vice Treasurer Rachel Levin, spent the summer reviewing and restructuring treasury operations, policies, and workflows. The most significant changes include but are not limited to:

- **Appeal Requests:** Appeal Requests had more direct guidance from the SGA treasury team. Submission started by submitting an Appeal Request intent form at emersonsga.org/appealrequest. This request was received by the treasury team who reached out with information about the next steps. Click to see more regarding [appeal requests](#).
- **Form Revisions:** Historically, student organizations had four different forms to complete depending on the type of transaction to be completed. These four forms were condensed into one single Payment Request Form. Related documents such as the Treasury Handbook, Quick Start Guide, and others were updated to reflect this change.
- **Treasury Resources:** As a part of summer revisions, they created numerous additional resources for students to refer to when completing paperwork. These resources can be found at the brand new emersonsga.org/treasury website.
 - [Quick Start Guide](#): a condensed version of the treasury handbook with the most important and relevant information.
 - [EmConnect Guide](#): a guide for student org leaders about how to access their organizations budget via EmConnect.
 - [Paperwork Guide](#): a portion of the treasury handbook specifically focused on how to process paperwork.
 - **Form Status:** an online tool that allows you to check the status of your form online at any time of day. This tool can be found at emersonsga.org/formstatus.
 - **Office Hours:** the treasury team will host office hours each business day, with the exception of Friday. To see the office hours schedule, please visit emersonsga.org/treasury.
- **Treasury Workflow:** A number of changes were made to treasury processing workflows in order to speed up the process for student organizations and to provide more regular paperwork processing and delivery.

In addition, a survey was sent to organization leaders for the opportunity to provide feedback and input on the changes that were made.

Treasury Summary

The SGA Executive Treasurer Ian Mandt and Vice Treasurer Rachel Levin formed a new treasury team this semester including two first-year students, Amogh Matthews and Richelle Melad, and a second-year student, Joseph Davidi.

Over the course of the Fall 2018 semester, the treasury team approved 536 forms for a total of \$241,554.35 in spent funds. Of the 536 forms, 316 were reimbursements, 31 were payments to one-time vendors, 51 were purchase orders to College vendors, and 138 were payments by college credit card.

In addition to keeping detailed records of approved forms and their current stage in treasury processes, the treasury team kept records of errors found in forms. In total, 73 forms had errors that required resubmission. On average, 89% of paperwork submitted by organizations required no edits or corrections.
