

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

30th Student Government Association

12th Meeting of the Thirtieth Undergraduate Student Government Association

To be held in Zoom Meeting Room, Meeting ID: 552 439 624

6:00 p.m. – May 5th, 2020

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of the Minutes
- III. Public Comments
 - a. Anne Ogilvie came in from **SWEET Squad** to speak to Senate. SWEET stands for Supporting WPI through Effective and Equitable Teamwork. This group is led by staff members across campus. Through their work they have discovered that all teams struggle to differing degrees, faculty are having trouble advising teams, and students want a resource where they can seek help outside of their team advisor. This led them to create the SWEET Center, which ensures that that every WPI student has at least one highly effective team experience before they graduate. Their goal is for this center to be a physical place with office hours. They want to collect and disseminate practices to help teams start right and provide tools for effective collaboration. Ogilvie then asked Senate for their thoughts and input on their proposal for this idea.

Questions/Comments:

- i. This would be a great resource for students on campus. Employers rank this as a highly desirable skill. As SGA we could promote this center through our social media platforms.
 - ii. This seems great! Do you have a space in mind where you would set this up?
Answer: That is a great question! We are unsure, but we are open to moving around. Ideally, it would be a great to have a private, central location on campus. There is a possibility to do this in the Campus Center or Foise. Also, we are confident that we can do this remotely. We are excited that this work could serve teams in the field (such as off-campus projects), so when students are off and around the world, they could be of greater service.
- b. **The SGA Financial Data Visualization MQP Team** came in to share with Senate their work. They created a website to display financials at WPI. There is information on the Student Life Fee and how it has changed over the years and where the money goes. The website consists of budget visualizations. They have data on WPI clubs, so that you can see how many students each club has and the size of their budget, and you can also compare the budgets of different clubs. They are in the process of having the website hosted by WPI (i.e. making it live), and they believe that this will happen soon. Regarding the future of this project, there are other teams which have come to them and expressed interest in

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continuing and updating this project. It is also open for faculty and staff to update as well.

Questions/ Comments

- i. This looks really cool, and it is great to see how this turned out! It looks very professional. I believe that undergrads will love this!
 - ii. How difficult is it to update the numbers?
Answer: The website updates automatically as the SGA database updates.
 - iii. What are your majors, and what were your challenges in creating this?
Answer: We are all CS Majors. After taking a data visualization course, this seemed like something that students would find to be useful. Some of the biggest challenges were how the data was formatted. A lot of the membership data is not up to date or valid. They seem like randomly thrown down numbers. I would love to see a more accurate way for clubs to represent their numbers.
 - iv. Thank you for creating this! You guys did a really good job!
- c. **Divest WPI** came into Senate. They explained how WPI's endowment (which is about \$520 million dollars) is an amount of money WPI can invest to make more money. WPI uses a certain sum of this to invest in fossil fuels. They are asking WPI to pull out their fossil fuel investments. Their reason for this is that fossil fuels contribute to climate change. When people talk about climate change, they are talking about human lives. Climate change is affecting people's homes, ability to make a living, access to food and clean water; This has caused the extinction of cultures around the world. Additionally, this is a matter of social justice. It disproportionately affects the poor, minority races, and women. It deepens the cultural and social divide that already exists.

WPI says that it is in favor of social justice, and this is true, but we seem to draw the line at where we invest our money. Big fossil fuel industries have put a lot of money into lobbying politicians. WPI's mission is to help better society, so Divest WPI is asking our school to put its money where its mouth is.

Why divest? Divestment makes a statement. We are starting to see divestment from all over the world in the name of fighting climate change. New generations are beginning to take up positions of power and pushing for this change. There are tons of universities in the U.S. and Europe that have committed to divesting. In addition to universities, for profit and non-profit organizations, entire cities, states, and even countries have committed to divesting. New York City for example is divesting 5 billion dollars. The group has recently sent an open letter

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to WPI and President Leshin, and they have gained a growing community support.

How does SGA play a role in this? Senators can sign as individuals and spread awareness. SGA is the voice of the WPI undergraduate student body and has the ability to serve as a bridge between students and the board of trustees. SGA has the power to act on it, by putting pressure on the school.

Questions/Comments:

- i. Having WPI divest from fossil fuels is a complicated issue, and there would be a lot of work that would need to be done. What type of work are you doing to help WPI transition out of these investments?

Answer: We have not done any work to support WPI in making this transition. It is not our job to control the endowment. It is our job as students to hold the school accountable.

- ii. How large is your group?

Answer: We have a couple of really dedicated sophomores, freshman and juniors, which make up a core team of 8-13 people. There are also over 130 people on our mailing list for updates, and there are alumni who are also involved.

- d. **Lauren Ketschke and Matt Dunster, WPI SGA Alumni**, came into Senate to share what they are up to and answer some questions. Lauren Ketschke first introduced herself. She graduated in 2012 with a degree in mechanical engineering. She was the President of the 21st Senate. After graduating, she went to work in a rotational program for Pratt & Whitney, and now she is currently working with jet engines. Matt Dunster graduated in 2016. He was the treasurer of the 26th Senate. Right after graduating, he built an entrepreneurial business that he continues to grow and build today.

Questions:

- i. What was the process like of starting your own business?

Answer: I revived a business. It had died in 2013, and I talked to the guys who use to work there and learned more about it. So far, it has been fun! You must know what you are doing and what you want. It is a really cool venture, but it is a lot of work. It is not a 9-5. It is also cool to be your boss! You have the responsibilities and freedom to do what you want. Additionally, WPI has a good entrepreneurship program.

- ii. How has WPI and SGA helped you to progress your careers?

Answer: KETSCHKE: WPI has helped me to improve my ability to problem solve, to really drive down and get to the root cause of an issue.

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SGA allowed me to interact with all sorts of different groups. As senators, you are getting a higher level of exposure to administration and faculty. It has also taught to tailor my communication style to a way in which it is impactful.

DUNSTER: Being immersed and figuring out the problems when it comes to projects was a useful skill learned from WPI. The school also taught me how to take high level learning and apply it to anything. As treasurer I worked with lots of different people and resolved lots of conflict. I got more angry emails rather than thank you emails. It proves that you can work through a lot of problems.

- iii. Rotational programs are pretty common, what are your take aways from your experience?

Answer: I personally really enjoyed it. In my opinion, it was a good transition from WPI. At WPI, you go from constant change for every 7 weeks to a consistent job. From a career perspective, I would recommend looking at rotational programs. However, it is important to keep in mind that it comes down to the people. I have been able to network, maintain friendships, and professional relationships from my work.

- iv. How exactly did you get the idea to revive a business as soon as you graduated, and how did you make it happen?

Answer: Around March 2016, I realized that I had nowhere to go after graduation. I had received a job offer for a position I was not interested in. My family was involved with this business way back when, and he asked them what it would take to revive this business. It took a lot of tough love and glue to bring it all together. Also, I need to rotate between the role of an engineer, salesperson, a marketer, etc., but I enjoy it!

- v. I am a rising senior and I do not know exactly what I want to do in the future. What advice would you give?

Answer: KETSCHKE: First things first, that is okay. I hate to admit it, but I am 30 years old and I still don't know what I want to do in the end. During my time at WPI, I talked to a lot of alumni to see what their work experience was like. You want to start with the big questions like what size company do you want, and then narrow it down from there. Definitely reach out to alumni. Also, going into interviews, look at what the people are like: Are they happy? Are they engaged? Do they work well in teams? Personally, I looked more for the culture rather than what I specifically wanted to do.

DUNSTER: Don't feel like you're going to be stuck in your first job forever. I have many friends who have switched jobs. From your experiences you will learn and adapt. Remember, you can move laterally in the company: Talk to your employers about what you want to do, and

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they should put in the effort to make you happy. They invest a lot of money in you!

- vi. Do you have any ideas for students who want to take on jobs outside of the WPI area?

Answer: DUNSTER: If you are not afraid of travelling, bigger companies usually have positions in other areas.

KETSCHKE: A lot of companies are looking for folks who are willing to be mobile; It can only be helpful for you in the long run.

- vii. Is there anything that SGA has now that you wish it had before?

Answer: DUNSTER: You define your roles differently than we had before. It is impressive that you guys are not afraid of adapting to the needs of WPI. From the minutes it seems like you guys are not afraid to fail. During my time, we would not bring something to the table unless we knew it would pass.

KETSCHKE: Your technological resources are great tools. Make sure that you are using them. They help to make your job more impactful.

IV. Special Orders

V. President's Report

- a. Congratulations to Lauryn Hubbard for being awarded Chair of the Term!

VI. Vice President's Report

- a. Congratulations to Mia Buccowich and Elia Petros for being awarded Senators of the Term!

Interim Vice President Bradley thanked everyone for the chance to be their interim during this term. It has been very rewarding, especially considering the virtual challenge!

VII. Secretary's Report

- a. No Report

VIII. Treasurer's Report

- a. No Report

IX. Parliamentarian's Report

- a. Congratulations to Senator Buccowich for winning Kahoot for the term!

X. Cluster Reports

- a. Student Services Cluster

- i. Super Fan Slogan: Whatever Floats Your Goat!

- b. Internal Services Cluster

- i. Chair Sanchez reminded Senate that her team runs the SGA Instagram, and they want info about what senators are doing this summer. She told senators that if you wear your Superfan during the summer to send pictures. Finally, she asked everyone to please fill out the Summer Senators form.

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- ii. President Candy asked that we make a quick Welcome the Class of 2024 video.
 - c. Financials Cluster
 - i. No Report
- XI. Faculty, Institute, and Special Committees
- XII. Old Business
 - a. **S.7 Bylaw Revision:** This revision was tabled from last week. Senate entered a discussion to approve these bylaw revisions.
 - i. **Discussion**
 - 1. Chair Puhalski is in favor for these revisions. He agreed with them last week and he still agrees with them this week.
 - ii. **Outcome: Motion Passes**
- XIII. New Business
 - a. Project Updates (see attached):
 - i. Student Services
 - 1. Academic Improvements: Project Print is currently working on planning where the money will come from and other logistics. Project Tutor was difficult to continue this term due to the online platform. Weekly Events Email is looking for a senator to pick up the project for this coming A term.
 - 2. Student Life Improvements: Go Green is working on making a new student orientation that is paper less, and they have also been having communication with Divest WPI. They are also encouraging everyone to fill out the Campus Feedback Form to survey the student life satisfaction.
 - 3. Community Outreach: They announced the new Superfan Slogan, and they are continuing to share the Campus Feedback survey.
 - ii. Internal Services
 - 1. Continual Improvements: They shared the results of CI Chit Chats Project, where they interviewed several club's executives. Two common themes they found were that people want more transparency and clubs do not really know what SGA does. To address these themes, they made suggestions on how SGA can improve itself as an organization. For the Internal Audit, Senate met their virtual D term goals.
 - 2. Communications: The goal was to showcase the diversity of our Senate and to showcase events and clubs on campus through social media. They accomplished this by utilizing Instagram to the fullest, as well as starting to use Tik Tok. We have also taken on the SGA website this term.
 - 3. Internal Affairs: They created an SGA newsletter that highlights our projects. Interim Chair Ourdyl also thanked everyone for giving him the chance to be an interim Chair.
 - iii. Financials

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1. Appropriations: They have been continually working on the Financial Canvas to educate clubs on budgeting. Additionally, they are creating a PowerPoint Template for when clubs and organizations come to Appeals Board and Financial Board to create consistency across club presentations.
 2. Fiscal Responsibility and Assistance: The Financial Transparency project has been obtaining and organizing data on FRs, number of people in clubs, and putting it all into a table that looks nice. They will put this information on the website. They are also working on Fiscal Trends, where they are breaking down the larger FRs and seeing where exactly the funds are going.
- XIV. Questions, Comments, and Ideas
- a. None
- XV. Announcements
- a. Trivia Tuesday!
 - b. Family Feud!
 - c. Cinco de Mayo!
- XVI. Advisor's Remarks
- a. Advisor Sharry posed a question to Senate: The SAO website wants to change TechSync to Campus Labs; what are your thoughts on this? Senate had mixed feelings on the change. She asked those who have strong feelings on the subject to email her with any thoughts and/or opinions. Additionally, she congratulated all of the clusters on the work they have done over this term. She wishes everyone good luck on finals, she and hopes that everyone stays safe and healthy over the summer. Finally, she reminded Senate that she is still here, and that anyone can send her an email at any time.
- XVII. President's Remarks
- a. President Candy thanked everyone for another successful Senate! It has been an exciting term, and he is proud of the work that we have been able to do. He is excited and optimistic for A term, and whether it is on and off campus he is confident that we will be able to continue as an organization. If you have any questions, comments, and concerns feel free to reach out to himself and/or Exec.
- XVIII. Adjournment

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