

# WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

## 30<sup>th</sup> Student Government Association

7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Thirtieth Undergraduate Student Government Association

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

6:00 p.m. – March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of the Minutes
- III. Public Comments
  - a. Emily Perlow, the Assistant Dean of Students, came in to discuss how WPI is handling the current situation due to COVID-19. She told Senate that a committee was formed approximately 2 months ago to prepare for the potential consequences of the Corona Virus outbreak, and they meet at least twice a week. They made decisions based off what was happening in other parts of the world. This committee also adds FAQs onto the WPI Coronavirus webpage daily, usually addressing questions that come directly from students. Perlow then mentioned how she has been answering questions that come in via [coronavirusquestions@wpi.edu](mailto:coronavirusquestions@wpi.edu), and that she responds within a couple of days. She continued explaining how the committee is currently in the process of better organizing these FAQs by moving them onto different WPI webpages. For example, FAQs related to how Disability Services is still able to be of assistance virtual are on WPI's Disability Services page.
  - b. On that note, Perlow made it clear that all WPI's services are still virtually available. Additionally, a new service can be found on [virtual.wpi.edu](http://virtual.wpi.edu), which is a new website to help students adjust to online learning.
  - c. Another update from WPI is that they will be administering an Emergency Assistance Fund this week. This fund is meant to help students who are struggling financially due to the situation at hand. One example of many would be if a student needs a laptop that they are unable to afford. If there is someone in this financial situation, they should out to her, Emily Perlow. Each case will be handled individually.
  - d. The last point Perlow made before opening it up to questions is that SAO is still finding ways to maintain programming and that if you have any ideas, please share them with Christine Sharry.
  - e. Questions:
    - i. Is there a chance that students will have to leave their belongings in their residences over the summer? There are some students who will not be able to return to campus before the start of next year due to distance.
      1. *Answer:* The hope is that students will not have to leave their things there over the summer. If that is the case, there is the possibility of shipping things to students.
    - ii. Will the Emergency Assistance Fund continue after the Corona Virus pandemic has passed?

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1. *Answer:* The Emergency fund was created due to the immediate situation, but hopefully it will be continued to help any students in need financial assistance outside of the current situation.
- iii. Some Professors are making their lectures longer than usual class time. What should students do about this?
  1. *Answer:* Share those specific courses with herself, Emily Perlow, and then she will share them with Dean Art Heinricher.
- iv. Will there be additional courses available to take online during the summer?
  1. *Answer:* This is currently unknown; It depends on the timeline of the E terms, which may be adjusted. It also needs to be determined if classes will be in person or not.
- v. MIT is producing ventilators that are under \$100 to help the situation, is WPI doing anything of the sort?
  1. *Answer:* Several faculty members found equipment in their labs that were donated to MEMA. Additionally, they have been doing research to aid the cause.
- vi. Some students feel upset about the quality of the education that they are receiving. Will there be any refund to compensate for this?
  1. *Answer:* The answer is no because students are still receiving the same credit. It is important to keep in mind that faculty were asked to switch to online learning in a very short period of time before the start of D term. Administration is asking for grace this term considering the circumstances, and WPI is continually improving their resources for their faculty as time goes on. Additionally, Dean Art Hichricher can address particular courses or professors.
- vii. Can you explain how Pass/Fail will work?
  1. *Answer:* Students will receive the same number of credit hours. Something to keep in mind is that Pass/ Fail course does not usually transfer the same way to other schools, so it is probably better to get an A/B rather than a pass (Howeverm Perlow believes that other schools will be understanding of the Spring 2020 situation). The Pass/Fail option may be the better option if there are sick household members, internet troubles at home, etc.
- viii. What is happening with commencement?
  1. *Answer:* There will be a commencement for seniors at some point. It might just have a different timeline, location, etc.
- ix. Perlow then posed a question for Senate from President Laurie Leshin. The President did a Zoom call for the employees and was wondering if students would be interested in something similar to this, like a Town Hall via Zoom?
  1. *Answer (from Senators):* Yes this would be beneficial to students. The sooner the better.

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- f. Before leaving, Emily Perlow started that if anyone has any other questions, to please send them to [coronavirusquestions@wpi.edu](mailto:coronavirusquestions@wpi.edu).
- IV. Special Orders
  - a. Executive Swearing In
    - i. Ryan Candy was sworn in as President at 6:25 P.M.
    - ii. Johann Bradley was sworn in as Interim Vice President at 6:27 P.M.
    - iii. Allison Silvia was sworn in as Parliamentarian at 6:28 P.M.
  - b. Cabinet Appointments
    - i. President Candy appointed the following cabinet members at 6:28 P.M.:
      - 1. Ariana Cruz-Riveria as Academic Improvement Chair
      - 2. Robert Hager as Interim Community Outreach Chair
      - 3. Marisol Sanchez as Communications Chair
      - 4. Tarik Ourdyl as Interim Internal Affairs Chair
  - c. Senator Appointments
    - i. President Candy appointed the following senators at 6:29 P.M.:
      - 1. Ralph Perry
      - 2. Tyler Lizotte
- V. President's Report
  - a. President Candy introduced himself to Senate. He thanked former Interim President Tocci and former President Wilson for their help and work during his absence. He addressed that challenges could arise due to virtual D term but is excited for the project work that can also arise to help the student body. If senators have any cool ideas for projects or ways to make Senate more interactive, please let him know. Additionally, regarding the SAS weekly email, if anyone has any content that you believe could benefit the Student body, please share it with Ryan and he will be happy to pass it along.
- VI. Vice President's Report (See PowerPoint attached)
  - a. Interim Vice President Bradley introduced himself and presented on projects and COVID-19. He stated that he is always available to talk, just reach out to him and he will respond within 24 hours. In terms of projects, if the project is feasible to continue remotely then go for it, if not then it will be picked up again in A term. Additionally, this is an opportunity for us to solve problems and make a situation better utilizing our engineering minds!
  - b. He made resources available on how to best take care of our health during this time and where COVID-19 is most prevalent across the US.
  - c. He also talked about both world and WPI news around COVID-19: He summarized the stimulus package as being if you sent in your 2018 taxes and fall under a certain income, you will be compensated. Also, Johnson and Johnson scored a 1 billion deal to increase production.
  - d. Specifically, at WPI there is now the Pass/Fail option. Remember to keep in mind that one must make the decision within 2 days of each professor releasing grades.
- VII. Secretary's Report
  - a. Secretary Gruner-Mitchell welcomed everyone back! She then spoke on how it is still important to contact her if you are unable to attend Senate. Additionally she

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reminded Mentors and Mentees the importance of reaching out to one another during this time, and if anyone who did not sign up to be a mentor/mentee would like one now, please reach out to her.

- VIII. Treasurer's Report
  - a. The budgeting process has been moved back a week to line up with the new D-Term schedule, and are as follows:
    - i. Budget Proposals Returned to Clubs: 3/27
    - ii. Appeals Due: 4/5
    - iii. Appeals Board: 4/10 – 4/11
  - b. Financial board is still being held, but less frequently. It will be held through Slack for the most part since most of the requests this term are fairly simple. Any that are more complicated will be done over Zoom.
  - c. Finally, there will be a partial refund of the Student Life Fee (\$79.00)
- IX. Parliamentarian's Report
  - a. Parliamentarian Silvia introduced herself and thanked Marisol Sanchez for holding down the fort during C Term. She looks forward for getting to know everyone and do Kahoot!
- X. Cluster Reports
  - a. Student Services Cluster
    - i. Student Feedback – Chair Puhalski
      - 1. He explained how the Campus Feedback Project will adjusted to fit the Virtual D-Term. He wants to make sure that Senate is doing everything we can to address the new needs of students due to the current circumstances.
  - b. Internal Services Cluster
    - i. Help Needed for Projects – Chair Sanchez
      - 1. Instagram will be very important during this time to stay connected with the community, so there will be more projects. She asks for those interested to reach out to her.
    - ii. SGA Goals for D Term – Chair Moreira (See PowerPoint attached)
      - 1. Chair Moreira and Senator Maynard went over how the goals of Senate for D term have adjusted.
  - c. Financials Cluster
    - i. No Report
- XI. Faculty, Institute, and Special Committees
  - a. Chair Ourdyl shared that the Committee in Academic Projects passed the motion for the option between Pass/Fail and A/B/C/NR for undergraduate students. If you have any questions on this you can reach out to your academic advisor. It is important to note that Pass does not affect your GPA, but you still receive credit. However, if you plan on pursuing post-undergraduate education it may be best to stick with A/B/C/NR. Additionally, there has not yet been a decision for a Pass/Fail option for projects.
    - i. A thought on the project situation from a senator was that it should be a decision made by students like the other undergraduate courses.

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- XII. Old Business
- XIII. New Business
- XIV. Questions, Comments and Ideas
  - a. Virtual background competition for next Senate!
- XV. Announcements
  - a. Trivia Tuesday!!!
- XVI. Advisor's Remarks
  - a. Advisor Sharry has been and will continue to be sending out the Virtual Activities Newsletters! On the newsletter there are different activities to bring students together on campus.
  - b. She also reminded senators that offices are still open, so staff is still here for you!
  - c. Finally, campus is still closed, but, when it reopens, faculty will be allowed back before students. So, if you need anything from her do not hesitate to reach out!
- XVII. President's Remarks
  - a. President Candy was glad that SGA's first ever virtual Senate was a success. He is looking forward to a great term and cannot wait to see what we are able to accomplish!
- XVIII. Adjournment

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