General Assembly Meeting: September 23, 2012

**Agenda:**
Opening of the Meeting: Meeting called to order at 7:04pm

1. Fight song and role call
2. Open Forum
3. Introduction of the new Chief Information Officer, David Baird
   a. Student representation on ATAC
   b. Anyone want to jam?
   c. Meeting to discuss IT issues with Mr. Baird
   d. His office: Exley 519
4. Need Blind Discussion - What's the WSA's role?
   a. Background powerpoint by Andrew Trexler '14 and Zach Malter '13
      i. Endowment: ~600M, $200,000 per student, 5% per year, endowment = 30 M a year
      ii. Since 2008-2009, Wes cut 30M
      iii. 2012 Operating Expenses 234M *(What is the Auxiliaries section)*
      iv. Need has increased every 5 years
         1. 2013: 49M / 29%
      v. Subtract all the tuition and financial aid and you have the Undergraduate Discount Rate
         1. For families making under 40K a year, all loans are now grants
   vi. Student Charges and Inflation
      1. Inflation for universities and colleges (smaller line graph)
      2. Student Charges (72% of the operating Budget)
      3. Tuition has gone up significantly (much higher than inflation)
         a. Roth: The reason why the middle class has been squeezed out
         b. Zachary Malter: Still the question of whether or not people will apply depending the sticker price.
   vii. Peer Schools
      1. Much larger endowment/fewer students
         a. Endowment/student figures is $300,000-$800,000
         b. Less dependent on tuition
   viii. Financial Aid Policy
      1. In the past, it was only for domestic first year applicants
      2. Therefore, this does not apply for international students (or transfers)
      3. However, they sought to be
   ix. Current Need blind policy
1. Class of 2017
2. Dry run where they do not look at financial information
3. 10% of decisions will then change depending on the ratio of demonstrated need to the financial aid cap
4. 32% financial aid cap of the 2012-2013 unrestricted budget
5. *Most of this is not true for ED applicants*
6. International/Transfer students still not need-blind
7. Ben Doerenberg: Will the admissions department be guessing applicants financial situation by race/ethnicity
   a. Andrew Trexler: Good question, we don't know
8. Sam Ebb: Will they publicize the fact that the ED policy will remain the same? Is it an official policy?
   a. Andrew Trexler: Not a policy, so no
9. Jesse Ross Silverman: Can you clarify the 10%?
   a. Andrew Trexler: They got a consulting group to do some modelling, using that data to figure out if they change 10% of the decisions how will that work out for those who matriculate and for meeting this cap. Modelling includes how this affects campus diversity: geographically, racially, socio-economically etc...

x. Admissions (Future)
   1. Next year, capped at 31% (2013-2014)
   2. Then 30%
   3. Then 29%
   4. For 2016-2017 onward, will rise in sync according to inflation

xi. Administration:
   1. Need blind will be considered sustainable if we can generate 5$ million per year in increased revenue of increase the endowment by $100M
   2. Administration recognizes that it is a “legitimate concern” that this policy could discourage middle and low income applicants

xii. Need Blind Activism So far
   1. Zachary Malter: Last semester, I got word of these discussions and then it became apparent that they were going to vote on it.
      a. Roth seemed to see this as a broader topic. When the news broke in May, there was some student activism and some summer organization. Earlier this month, the activism was more apparent.
      b. Three committees formed: Outreach and Direct Action, WSA proposed Task Force to look at other solutions (tax cuts, revenue streams, etc.)
      c. Articles in Argus and Wesleying criticizing Roths plan
      d. Sit-in at the Board of Trustees meeting - now decided to meet with the students
e. Campaign regarding the color red - some questions that remain unanswered and there is still room for discussion (Valuable discussion)

xiii. Questions for Discussion

1. PAC 002 @ 8:00 - Open Forum by Weselying
2. What is the role of the WSA on the need-blind issue?
   a. Christian Hosam: How much do academic departments (like admissions) know about this issue?
      i. Andrew Trexler: General plan, but have hired a general consulting group to nail down the details of how they will implement this.
      ii. General consulting group is well-regarded and has helped peer institution
   b. Adam: Will these results be made public to the students?
      i. Andrew Trexler: Will ask
      ii. Zachary Malter: Not so much one study, but they have created models over time.
   c. Martin Malabanan: Will the financial aid money that will be put into the endowment go down?
      i. Trex: No, it will actually increase.
      ii. Nicole Updegrove: I would assume that the fact that the percentage of the total budget taken by financial aid is targeted to decrease each year is due to capping aid for each successive class year - aka, in 2017 it’ll be just one class capped, and in the fourth year, all four classes will have been admitted need-aware, so financial aid will need less money.
   d. Jesse RS: Are there targets for the endowment?
      i. AT: Do not know
   e. Anware Batte: Should I assume that there isn’t a date when the plan will be reconsidered?
      i. AT: Assume that as the endowment goes up, the plan will be reconsidered
      ii. ZM: No intention for a plan to bring back need-blind
      iii. AT: This is a temporary plan
   f. How much do we raise a year?
      i. AT: 35M (goes to endowment, annual fund)
      ii. AT: There are some projections about how much will be raised in the next years. However, it is unlikely that they will base financial decisions on them.
   g. Groups cutting into their budgets, but fundraising should be done by alumni. More fundraising by alumni could
change the school to be less interesting. Another idea is to have a certain amount of money pledged to Wes if need-blind is reinstated.

i. Andrew Trexler: There are pledges and there is cash

ii. Nicole Brenner: Argus offered to cut their budget and give it to Financial Aid, but both parties decided that this would not be a good idea, because that would be re-directed tuition. The SBC also decided to financially subsidize other publications was not its place.

h. Mansoor Alam: Role should be (because we have more access/contact to admin) to give them the information that people have been asking for. The role should be the medium for the student body.

i. Jesse RS (Sustainability TF): There is a limited amount of aspects that can be effectively changed by WSA policy changes. The WSA’s role is to speak for the general student’s interests. There is a possibility that other alternatives could harm the Wesleyan community. Looking at the big picture of financial aid is very important. Also important to lay out what conditions the policy would be acceptable in. There are still a lot of unknowns, but these conditions would include implementation. Another role is to say what the universities role is in need-blind admissions.

j. Jason Shatz: Continue on Jesse’s point. Educating the student body is a responsibility of the WSA, Wesleying, Argus, and others. The WSA could also serve as a liaison between the student body and the administration on policy. There are many outside ideas, so it is important for the WSA to reach out to the student body in order to get more ideas. WSA should improve on their outreach and actively engage the student body and allow them to be informed enough to engage in decisions.

k. Chloe M: What are some tangible the WSA can do? It would be great to have a list to go and actually work on.

l. Arya Alizadeh: The WSA has two roles: represent the students and maintain a good student-administration liaison. If this topic is made the most important focus of the WSA, then the goals of the WSA will be shifted. Important to represent the well being of students currently here.

m. Adam: If this is made a huge priority, it is important to know that the administration is doing what they think is best. The point is to make sure we are in agreement for the future.
n. Ellen Paik: What exactly is “financial aid”? (specifically that which the Argus proposed to donate)
   i. Andrew Trexler: The money that is used in the annual budget.
   ii. Ellen: If a student group decided to donate 100$, how would they do that?
   iii. Andrew Trexler: This is only for the Large Student Budget Allocations (Argus, WIRA conference, Second Stage, etc). so these smaller group donations would not fit into the budget system.
   iv. Ellen Paik: Is there a way to set up a fund for student groups to donate?

o. Christian Hosam: Does not think that the WSA has been doing good job at reaching out to each and every single student on need-blind. The WSA’s job is to really find out what all the students want. The main thing that we should be doing is being an organizing force. First step is to know what we are organizing. Ellen’s idea shows that the students are willing to be self-sacrificing.

p. Chase Knowles: Is there a possibility to do something along the lines of the Green Fund fee?
   i. Zachary Malter: It would not go that far, because it is only 80,000$

q. Chloe Murtagh: This is not a social decision as much as it is a financial decision. We ran out of money and this was a possible solution. However, there are many alternatives to fundraise, raise money, raise hype.

r. Arya Alizadeh: Peer schools have much more alumni involvement.

s. Anwar Batte: A big problem with the decision being made: lack of transparency and student involvement. Therefore, one thing the WSA could do is talk about the fact that this was not a decision made lightly. Also, they should talk about alternatives. WSA should present these plans. There should be a push to increase student representation in institutional decision making bodies. There should be students there and there should be no surprises. I’m aware of the task force, but I would like to know about specific actions/goals.
   i. Zachary Malter: Divided the work up into different categories (different departments where more transparency should be should, and research on financial aid, peer schools). Also doing research and coming up with questions. The ultimate goal
is to propose a recommendation (hopefully an alternative) that can be compared to what is happening (goal to get the recommendation by the November board meeting).

ii. Andrew Trexler: The task for is the Student Budget Sustainability Task Force (a group of students trying to make Wesleyan sustainable).

t. Kehan Zhou: One thing WSA should do is mobilize the student body (not necessarily protesting). For example, mobilizing the student body to press administration, inviting more students to participate and care about this issue. I work at Red&Black, and the donation rate from alumni is low compared to peer schools and this is something we should work on.

u. Ben: Language is very important. (ie. “Need sensitive”). From a financial perspective, it will always make sense to not give people a discount when paying. This is more of a moral battle.

v. Kara Linn: Is it possible to make donations for financial aid?
   i. Andrew Trexler: It is possible to create a trust fund of sorts that will be available to the administration once need-blind came back. (Speak to Benny Docter about this issue.)

w. Kate Cullen: What else is being cut from the student budget? How much will cutting need-blind save the school?
   i. AT: Guessing that not much has been cut (all of the things that are worth cutting have been cut).
   ii. AT: This year it will not save anything.

x. Arya Alizadeh: Responding to Benny Docter. It becomes a financial issue when the problem is the future. For example, 50 years down the line, Wesleyan will have strong financial difficult. Wesleyan alumni do not see giving to Wesleyan as a “charitable” donation (would rather give to NGOs, etc.) Other peer-schools see giving donations as pride, school spirit, etc.

y. Alexa Manchug (‘12): A lot of alumni are saying that they will not donate back to the school if they are not need-blind. Is the task force suggestion just for current students at Wesleyan?
   i. Zachary Malter: Working with administration, but alumni engagement is one of the concentrations
ii. Alexa Manchug: Talking to the consulting firm and have them consult on alternate plans.

iii. Zachary Malter: They are an enrollment consulting firm, but they could be viable.

z. Benny Docter: All of the people who care about this issue deeply are already being heard. However, for the other people to get a seat at the table, they will need a direct push. If the WSA acts only as a research organization, it is discounting the other half that is not as vocal about their opinions.

i. Chloe Murtagh: What are some ways that the WSA can increase this “sides” representation?

ii. Benny Docter: It is possible to present viable alternatives via the task force and facilitate conversation.

aa. Alton Wang: The other half that does not agree with administration is disorganized. The reason why there has not been much change is because this half is not as organized as it should be.

bb. Lily Herman: Agrees with Alton. The role should be streamlining student opinion. There are a lot of people who do not know how to get their voice out there. The WSA should definitely be a means of organizing the efforts of the students on these issues.

c. Adam: We not really know who “need-blind” the university has been in the past. Are we more interested by financial difficulties or socio-economic diversity?

dd. Ellen Paik: Students should contact alumni and talk to them about the need-blind issue. Therefore, the alumnus will be more likely to donate money.

e. Lily Donahue: There is a huge misconception that a lot of current alumni will not donate to Wesleyan if not need-blind. Not have alumni donating lowers our ability to receive grants and could potentially lead back to need-blind.

ff. Sam Usdan: Is there any quantifiable reason why the Williams/Amherst alumni give more?

i. Andrew Trexler: Different cultures, Wesleyan students have a different relationship with the university than the Amherst/Williams students do. They are more suspicious of themselves, while Amherst/Williams are more suspicious of others who did not go to Williams/Amherst.
gg. Nicole Updegrove: One thing we learned here is the ability to speak for themselves. She believes that they are actually interested in Wesleyan. We should give them a reminder of Wesleyan and give them a reason to donate. See if you can contact alumni in distant cities.

hh. Ben D: See Wesleying poll on opinion: 97% do not like it and people have not seen enough budget statistics to make complete decisions.
   i. Anwar Batte: There may be more support than just the 54% would said they did not support need-blind at all.
   ii. Ben D: Half and half not really accurate.
   iii. Andrew Trexler: Not the most scientific poll.

ii. Anwar Batte: Any way that the task force statistics can be given to the students. Also, something that could be really powerful is a sincere capital campaign asking for more donations (regarding need blind) The WSA should be looking at the role that the WSA had in 1992/1993.
   i. The past WSA supported a group of students against need-aware. Students interacting directly with the board.

jj. Female Guest: Why has tuition been increasing above inflation. What is going on?

kk. Aaron: Responding to Alton - There have been many groups due to the fact that many groups do not communicate, do not want to antagonize administration. There should be more transparency in the future. It is hard to discuss the financial issues without talking about the moral standpoints. There are other alternatives and people should understand the implications of the alternatives. WSA and administration need to work together. However, WSA should put pressure on administration. WSA should demonstrate that students do want need blind.

ll. Arya Alizadeh: The students who have attended forums have voiced problems about being treated unfairly at these forums. Do not go looking to pick fights at the forums.

mm. Andrew Trexler: Send in questions to Wesleying for the upcoming forum. Shift the conversation to Benny’s point about the WSA recognizing certain areas where the university can make cuts. As a student, he is comfortable coming up with decisions about the budget, but he is not comfortable doing it as a student representative.

nn. Scott Elias: On Thursday, the national organizer of the Democratic-Socialist Organization is coming. Student
loans are the larges form of debts. The WSA could write a resolution condemning the policy if that is what people want. In this resolution, more nuanced details can be given. It is better to reach out to alumni, etc. than to have student groups give small sums of money.

oo. Ben D: It is hard to cut budgets, but need-blind is something that should not be cut. Voices support of Ellen’s student groups idea because it makes people feel involved.

pp. Benny Docter: In response to Andrew Trexler’s point, it is difficult to deal with being a student and a representative. The answer is not to give up. Supports outreach to the student body. It is the WSA job to figure out what we can and cannot cut.

qq. Leo: One of the biggest services that the WSA can offer is to relay information to the administration from the student body. They should also better gauge the student polls.

rr. Kara Linn: We really need to be more well informed before there are more administrative decisions. Ellen’s idea is great, but getting the media involved is very important. The alumni connection is very important.

ss. Nicky: A productive way of getting student groups involved is by encouraging student groups to create a message/video that is relative to what they do and reach out to alumni associated with their student group.

tt. Ellen Paik: The importance of the student group idea is not the money, but it is about showing the administration that the students care. This could lead to a lot of donations from alumni because they see that the students care.

uu. Lily Herman: It is important to reach out to alumni that are located in major Wesleyan cities (ie. the South or west coast).

vv. Kehan Zhou: Alumni have a huge lack of confidence in the universities use of money. The university has a fixed revenue and looks to the future. However, without need-blind admissions, people will donate less. This issue can actually be used to re-engage the alumni.

ww. Jason Shatz: The same circumstances that have caused our financial difficulties for Wesleyan have also hit the alumni. There are definitely alumni that would donate, but can’t.

xx. Jesse Ross-Silverman: The WSA role on bridging the financial and moral aspects of the issue: We can pass a resolution that says we support need-blind and a resolution
that shows what the priorities are. The reason why the need-aware decision was made was because the Board thinks that they are making Wesleyan more fiscally responsible. Also, the alumni should be asked what kind of conditions they would like to see with their donations.

yy. Ben D: The primary responsibility is to represent the students. However, it is important to note that this issue is being watched by the general public of the country. Wesleyan is setting an example for the rest of the community. Typically, Wesleyan is seen as a paragon of fairness, but moving away from need-blind would shatter this impression.

zz. Zachary Malter: Encourages people to write resolutions

aaa. Andrew Trexler: Thank you for coming and if you have any questions for Roth, email them to staff@wesleying.org. The forum will be tomorrow in PAC002. Feel free to email wsa@wesleyan.edu or atrexler@wesleyan.edu.

bbb. Chole Murtagh: Check the WSA page for the ideas list.

5. Quick Explanation of ITC & OEAC’s Archiving System
   a. Working on increasing our institutional memory
   b. Every WSA member now has access to the WSA library (with all the minutes, etc.)
   c. All legislation, all reports, makes things a lot easier
   d. More access

6. Committee Reports
   a. AAC
      i. Minors
         1. Will contact every department that has not strictly said they did not want a minor
      ii. Student forums (Rachlin)
      iii. Pre-major advising (email from Sam)
   b. COCo
      i. We met for the first time, anyone is welcome to come
      ii. We have been approving groups on Friday meetings
      iii. Meeting for Student Groups
      iv. Student Group handbook has been made and is being distributed
      v. WSA tools and Apps
      vi. Middletown relations (applications due thursday for the middletown relations committee)
      vii. Creating a homecoming event (Sam Ebb)
      viii. Make individualized appointments if they cannot make it.
   c. FiFAC
i. Congrats to FiFaC members
ii. Contacted by Chase Sacket on looking to partner on the need-blind issue (offering organizational support, etc)
iii. Major maintenance - full list of what they plan to do
iv. Hired a group for free to analyze the sustainability at Wes and a Fund for green projects
v. Mailbox flier opt-out program ran into IT issues, but is being

  d. OEAC
   i. Everyone assigned - Wayne twitter, Chloe Facebook, Martin will be blogging
   ii. If you need publicizing, contact us.
   iii. Chloe started a WSA directory

  e. ITC
   i. David Baird meeting
   ii. Karen Warren - project is to get all the internet connectivity figured out, putting printers in all the dorm lounges.
   iii. Upgrading all the printers
   iv. Upgrading WSA Tools and Apps.

  f. SAC
   i. SJPC met and will be working on the changes to the student judicial policy and process advisor training.
   ii. Facilities Appeals Board met and is almost finished with Spring 2012.
   iii. SHAC meets next week and will discuss the new insurance program under Gallagher-Koster.
   iv. SBC giving funding to groups who put on alcohol-free events.

  g. SBC
     i. We funded groups shown on the Committee reports
     ii. Funded $26,000 (not including the Large Budget Allocations)

7. Confirmation of Committee Chairs (Closed Meeting): All confirmed
8. CIR Elections (Closed Meeting): Kate Cullen ’16 appointed
9. Read Sam’s Advising Resolution for next time - Check email.
10. Minutes
11. New Business and Announcements
    a. Email your agenda items and announcements to Zach

Meeting Adjourned: 10:04pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Grant Tanenbaum ’15 and Bruno Machiavelo ‘16