General Assembly Meeting: November 18, 2012

Agenda:
Opening of the Meeting: Meeting called to order at 6:05pm

1. Fight song and role call
2. President Roth Visits
   a. Zach Malter: President Roth visits the Assembly every semester and the student body is invited to come and speak. The Board of Trustees met this weekend, and this might be a reason that some people are here.
   b. President Roth: Here’s a little overview of the Board of Trustees weekend. First, many of the Board of Trustees try to go to classes on Friday. On this Thursday, around ten trustees went to an event about skill-learning. On Friday was a budget meeting for new members of the finance committee and the trustees and some students. The committee meetings were uneventful. We had some conversations about fundraising, especially internationally. Others discussed the honor code. We’re looking at grades, but it looks like they will never be abandoned. We also had a discussion about the series of proposal that come to the finance committee. Certain proposals have to be evaluated by the trustees. One such proposal was about a power plant that would provide backup power in the event of the Vine Street sub-station and other power sources suddenly didn’t work. Some students raised questions about the necessity of the station at all, but if we ever had a disruption again, it would be the extremely important. Although, this plant would not be “clean energy” but it is what is necessary. This proposal was approved.
   There were then meeting about budget projections but I had to leave early.
   There were also two faculty being considered for tenure. The board receives the recommendation of the president and the faculty and makes a decision. There was also a meeting about need-blind. Some trustees also looked at the film archives.
   Finally, the trustees had a meeting on Saturday where we had an open discussion about whether Wesleyan should be providing more short-term skill preparation for people right out of college and finding jobs. People were unsure of the importance of these skills, but we still talked about it. What would these skills be? We want these to be part of campus learning, but not part of the Wesleyan degree.
   c. Jesse Ross-Silverman: Thank you for coming. I have two questions. First, in terms of the Budget Sustainability Task Force, recognizing that you think that the Board’s actions were transparent, why do you think students perceived their
actions to be not transparent? Knowing what you know now, what could you have done differently? And second, what are the issues with having student voting on the board?

d. President Roth: I thought we were pretty transparent. We’ve had many meetings and they were quite transparent. They were covered by the Argus and Wesleying. I guess we could’ve taken more time. If we didn’t make the decision in the end that we made, maybe people would’ve felt differently. In regards to your second question, the chair of the Board thought that the idea of student voting is quite unusual and expressed a great pride that students have plenty of opportunities to talk to members of the Board. There are nine members of the Board that are elected by the alumni (which most students will become) and many of them are from only a couple of years out, and there’s an attempt in that regard to give the kids a “vote.” Sometimes it’s symbolic to be out-voted, but people take it seriously. A student gave objections to the power plant, and I suggested he give these suggestions to the chair of the committee. This student was able to give his recommendations, which is a pretty big step. We’ve also added a time for trustees and students to have an informal time to meet and talk during lunch hour. The first couple of years were sort clunky, but now we have a lottery. It’s not power, but it is exchange.

e. Sam Ebb: Two questions. First, we had over 150 student applied for those 48 seats for the lunch. Have you ever thought about having more opportunities to have student-trustee lunches? Second, as chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, grades in classes that are not their major or interest become a concern when students don’t really like the subject but take the class to get an easy grade. Is there a way just to take classes for knowledge and general education instead of for a grade?

f. President Roth: We should absolutely continue to have more lunches. In terms of your second question, I think grades are a hoax. I don’t think they mean very much. Wesleyan’s average grade is an A-. On the other hand, departments like COL are being pressured to start having grades. I think narrative evaluations would be more helpful to graduate schools, but others do not agree. I don’t have a lot of influence in terms of grades; I’m an outlier. I forced the study of grades to be done to show that they’re meaningless, but it also showed that Wesleyan students are smart. However, narrative evaluations are not happening. However, I would be very supportive of “experiments” that would open up these possibilities for more learning with less grading. Back to the lunch question, I don’t know if more people would make the conversations not as good. We wanted “quality” conversations. I think we may do these lunches in three out of the four meetings?
g. Sam Ebb: First, one interesting thing I’ve seen is in CSS is that non-CSS classes change to pass/fail, and I don’t know where it says in the Academic Regulations that they can do that. I thought it was the best time.

h. President Roth: I think that’s interesting. For example, I think freshmen seminars should not have grades (*lots of snaps*). But it’s again all about grad school.

i. Sam Ebb: On the trustee lunch part, would it be able to host a Saturday lunch session?

j. President Roth: Unfortunately, they all leave right after the Saturday meeting. I’d be open to discussing some more meetings though.

k. Scott Elias: There’s been lots of different talks about why need-blind became an issues. I was wondering, from you, do you plan for us to eventually turn to need-blind and if not, is there some different plan in action?

l. President Roth: It’s an ongoing question. But I want the discount rate to go down. I want to see if we can be more efficient and to be more on target with our mission. I’ve always said if we had money, we wouldn’t have to do this. I’m really interested in that there are worse ways to be “need-blind,” in that, there are other ways to not admit low-income students based on academic record instead of straight up financial information. But if we use the standard metrics instead of our approach of increasing diversity of the school, we’d have a much different makeup in our student body. My aim is to be able to be more generous over time by increasing the endowment for financial aid. We used to be the richest school in America per capita back in the 1970s, and we’ve squandered that. I want us to be generous in the long term. We don’t want to do some sort of “admit-deny” system where we admit you but don’t give any financial aid. It’s a slow process. I wish I could give you an exact date. But it depends on how many domestic students and international students we let in. Do we do that?

m. Zach Malter: I’ve never heard that before. Could you clarify?

n. President Roth: We’re trying to create scholarships and more financial aid opportunities. For example, instead of giving money to College of the Environment, we ask donors to give money for scholarships so students can study the earth. The most important thing right now is endowment ear-marked for financial aid.

o. Zach Malter: How much of the endowment do different students get for financial aid?

p. President Roth: We have good packages for people who need aid, but not for people who need some aid but not all.

q. Anwar Batte: The whole grades discussion is really interesting, is the reporter investigatation into grades somewhere we could look at it?

r. President Roth: I’ll have to check to see if students have access to it. I’m not sure if the faculty wanted to publish it.
s. Anwar Batte: Two questions. Would you mind repeating, what acts like practical barriers that we’d have to deal with to have student trustees with voting power? Second, on Scott’s question, you were talking about metrics for admission. I think for admissions, the school requires the ACT or an SAT and two SAT II test. We allude to that fact that some metrics mean more than others. I think SATs should not be part of the admission requirement.

t. President Roth: To your first question, I don’t know. To the second question, I put that idea on the table and others didn’t agree.

u. Andrew Trexler: Many of the trustees had watched Monday night’s diversity forum. I personally have access to some trustee emails and bios and what not. It’s difficult for other students to communicate with trustees unless they’re actually here. At forum, one trustee suggested that students come up to him when he’s on campus for other events, but many students don’t know who he is or where to find him. Is it possible for us to publish a forum where students can contact trustees or create some more extensive bios for them?

v. President Roth: I can certainly suggest your idea. People do write to trustees via an assistant. Some trustees bring up the point that there are thousands of alumni, many of whom that contact them quite a bit. So there is that mechanism. In terms of information and photographs of the trustees, I can certainly look into it. The more contact trustees have with students, the better. I do think some of them would worry about publishing their email directly because they get some many emails from alums and many of those alums have different views from current students.

w. Andrew Trexler: I have another question. In board meetings or board committee meetings, there’s no official count with votes that are written down.

x. President Roth: Those are written down in the official minutes.

y. Andrew Trexler: Okay. My point is that it’s important to register that there was opposition in the minutes.

z. President Roth: You’re right. Very rarely a trustee will vote against something. It’s a kind of consensus board, so it’s bad to have opposition. I will pass your suggestion along though. Some committee chairs do it and some don’t and their procedure isn’t the strongest suit.

aa. Benny Doctor: Need-blind was a policy against socioeconomic discrimination. You’ve brought many good points about how it doesn’t stand to hold that; it’s not a commitment. I want to hear from you what your vision is in quantitative terms, what is this administration’s commitment to discrimination now that it’s not need-blind?

bb. President Roth: We have a commitment to affirmative action. We have a commitment to find students who wouldn’t always find us and their credentials wouldn’t always come to our attention but could make a huge impact on campus.
That includes a commitment to first generation students and students from underrepresented groups. Quantitative terms are hard to come by and presents some legal challenges in the future. Our admissions process is holistic, so you can’t just go by numbers and figures and grades. I think the ethos of the admissions office is one that seeks out students who have a lot of potential that may not register on the standard metric used by other colleges and universities. That counts significantly. Our admissions staff is committed to finding students who don’t always rise to the top with the standard metrics. It takes money to do those things. I am as interested as you are in seeing how the work we’re doing now will affect the number of students in these categories. You can see the results of the people who’ve been admitted here in the past five years. And it wasn’t about need-blind. The decisions we’ve made to be proactive in seeking out students I’m committed to continue. I owe the community a description of how we manifested these results. I need to be able to show that the commitment we’ve made to these groups that our commitment has not waned.

cc. Benny Doctor: In terms of hard and fast commitments, I envision a possible scenario wherein Wesleyan chooses not to be need-blind and use that flexibility for the privileged. Can you make a commitment to us who are concerned about this? At what juncture does Wesleyan become that? At what point, do we abandon ship or radically restructure?

dd. President Roth: I don’t know what line to draw. I think the school might look quite different in ten years, but I don’t think it’s going to look like the way you’re describing. I’ve said in print that it’s become a perpetuation of privilege. I don’t want to be at the helm of an institution that does that. I want Wesleyan to be an institution that never does that. I think though that as of Monday, I underestimated the impact of wealth on campus culture. Now I’m increasingly aware that the experience of wealthy Wesleyan students and poor Wesleyan students is extremely different. It’s an issue I want to learn how to address. I was not aware of as a teacher nor as a student. There were always a disparity of wealth, but never to the destructive manner that it’s at today. We want Wesleyan to be a place where people no matter where they come from.

e. Mansoor Alam: First, what is your opinion on the state of disability services here? Second, to what extent should the university offer certain resources? For example, students with learning disabilities need neuropsych testing. It’d be really nice if we had a psychologist on campus who was trained to do testing like that.

ff. President Roth: I think Wesleyan has obligations to meet the needs of the students who learn differently and have disabilities or documented need for accommodations. I don’t know our capacity is to be a backup for a kind of medical testing on campus. I haven’t thought a lot about it, but I’m sure it’s a interesting area and also a huge business in America. Where the university
should be in the spectrum, I’m not sure. But we should meet the needs of students with documented learning disabilities and help them feel like a full part of the community. If there are student groups that are thinking about this issue, I’d be interested to hear their suggestions. I’ve talked to students as a teacher, but I’d love to hear from such a group.

gg. Mansoor Alam: It’s hard to publicly come out and say something as a student of disability. Do you have any recommendation as to what would be the best medium for student so that they can feel comfortable talking about their problems?

hh. President Roth: I don’t want to make a recommendation off the cuff, but I can touch base with people who are better suited. I think we can ask them for their recommendations and see what student think of it.

ii. Sam Usdan: I understand that participation for alumni donations is lower here than at peer institutions. Why is that and what is being done to rectify that?

jj. President Roth: We’re just under 50% participation, but we’re bigger than those schools and it adds up. People who went to school here back in the day have very different opinions of how the university is today. But many alumni have given. But why are alumni so confused about whether or not they’ve donated? Most of the time Wesleyan alumni prefer to give to a cause or institution. We’ve started to think about how financial aid is our cause. We’ve started asking alumni groups for their support at different times and how to use technological forms of communication to make it easier to give. It’s a question of how many time and money people should spent on us. Some people are angry and don’t want to give because we’re getting rid of need-blind, and others see the importance of giving to need-blind. We want people to feel like they are supporting a student of a future generation.

kk. Adam ?: In the context of the people on financial aid, I’m curious to see how your administration would be towards raising for things other than need-blind? What would make you more or less receptive to that idea?

ll. President Roth: Interesting question. You don’t want the school’s future to be dictated by who can give lots of money. For example, we’re redoing the track behind Freeman, and people want to do artificial turf in the middle of the track. In our current situation, I didn’t want to spend the money. Then it came out that several donors decided to give to financial aid instead of this turf(?). These are people committed to doing something for students and they’re going to help fund scholarships. The first thing I tell people when they ask what we need and I say money for financial aid. There are plenty of Wesleyan causes to give to.

mm. Christian Hosam: I want to shift gears and talk about the forum on Monday. What was your takeaway from that personally?
President Roth: I was blown away. I thought it was astonishing. At time, I learned a lot and at time I felt like it was pernicious. The emotions at times kind of dictated the content. I found it extremely upsetting, because the stories were so upsetting to hear that they on my watch. It seemed to me as this deep gap racialized but also between certain groups on campus. I was not as sensitive to that as I should’ve been and will be in the future. On one hand, I was glad we did it. It’s easy to say things people want me to say, but I think there’s a lot of stuff we need to do around Public Safety and we’ll need a lot of input moving forward. I was appalled by what seemed to be racial profiling. At first I was confused by what they meant. However, they clarified that they said that racial profiling on campus was damaging. I wrote to everyone the next day and sent a list of drafts for what we want to do. I’ve been in contact with specific people individually as well. This list seems general, but we’ll get some feedback and try to make progress. We want to show that we’re doing things. We need to see that we’re making progress as a community.

Christian Hosam: I think something we need to work on is the disparities between the privileged and others. I need we need to work on the disparities between us and Middletown. Other schools are working on hiring in certain areas to help their diversity. In terms of Middletown, a lot of these issues are reflected on campus. A lot of these things are born out of a lack of communication. For example, the Center for African American Studies used to have a great connection with Middletown. That connection has crumbled. I think people from Middletown should be more welcome.

President Roth: We’ve been trying to build a better “pipeline” for students that we really want to find ways to help students go on to graduate school. In the future it’ll be extremely important.

Chloe Murtagh: Do you think that there is 1) intellectual diversity represented in the Board of Trustees and 2) do you think there’s an environment amongst the board members that there is a place to dissent?

President Roth: This board works where the work gets done in committees. The issue is that people who spend large amounts of the time are questioned by people who oppose the resolution without knowing anything about the subject. I think the committees really do think about things. That’s the place where students have a vote. We need to work on what is confidential and what is not. We should be able to judge what is confidential and what is not. The system is quite democratic as well. What we have to do is work when opposition arises.

Jason Shatz: Unfortunately, the last month has seen a wave of thefts that have jeopardized many students’ notion of campus safety and security. I also am aware that the bookstore might move to Washington Street. Was there anything discussed by trustees to talk about furthering campus security and safety?
tt. President Roth: We have discussed and are trying to address issues of campus crime and how to address it. I think it’s the subject of another meeting. I think that we are always monitoring the frequency of occurrences and mechanisms for students to stay as safe as possible and that people know about them. If there are suggestions from students, I’d be happy to hear them.

3. Open Forum
   
a. Mansoor Alam: This is on the whole economic development relocation. A few things. I went to the P&Z meeting. There would be 30 jobs and $6 million added to the town. They have not taken into account other businesses in Middletown and whether or not they’ll lost business or go out of business. Here are the problems I have with this project. First, this project would not necessary be built by Middletown construction workers, which would take jobs away from the unskilled labor force; they’re giving the job to the cheapest bidder. Second, there was concern over whether these jobs in the new center would be for Middletown residents or to Wesleyan students. Next, the developers are trying to get as much out of this as they can, they’re not pursuing a storefront on Main Street. It would be nice to show visitors another side of Wesleyan by putting our new storefront on Main Street. Next, in talking with Middletown residents, they like that they’re independent and not answering to a greater corporation. They like that they’re unique. Residents feel like this project is inevitable and are quite sad about it. We’re in an opportune place to help these businesses out and not support the developers on this project. Wesleyan will not support this project if there’s enough opposition and resistance.

b. Jesse Ross-Silverman: I think it’s necessary for the Executive Committee to re-evaluate its relationship with the Board and its relationships with the representatives of the student body. People need to know what the Board does for students and it needs to be spelled out in the by-laws. Also I think we need equal voting power. Talk to me if you have ideas.

c. Zachary Malter: Point of information, I asked President Roth’s assistant before the Board’s meeting, and everything was confidential by default.

d. Arya Alizadeh: I think there’s a greater campus problem that we the students expect that information will be spoon-fed to us. It’s been very clearly what the rule of the Board is and its relationship with students and the WSA. I thought it was really remarkable that in the meeting with the Board on financial aid many students did not know what the Board does. I think that conversation could’ve been more productive. Second, is it possible to get some WSA opinion or debrief on the forum on Monday? Is there some debate about what was said?

e. Sam Ebb: Arya, to your point, there is an imperfect transcript of important points on Wesleying. Back to Mansoor’s point, I highly recommend you read the comments online about the development in Middletown. It’s interesting
to see what members of the Middletown community say. Also, please talk to Middletown community members and students. Get people to come to our forum on the 27th.

f. Christian Hosam: To Mansoor’s point, I’m very much in agreement. There needs to be more clarification on the point of the development.

g. Anwar Batte: Last semester every now, things were brought to the WSA and were recorded for public viewing.

h. Andrew Trexler: I would be opposed to videotaping our meetings even though they’re open. There’s some initiative for the student body to come here and talk to us. What I would really hate to see is people nit-pick at things we say and take our arguments out of context. However, if everyone else thinks we should do that, I won’t protest.

i. Anwar Batte: Minutes are insufficient (*awk*).

j. Benny Doctor: I feel like we are the representatives and I think we should be held accountable to everything we say.

k. Arya Alizadeh: That would be a really good job of reporting for the Argus. The Argus is a lot more credible than students who come to these meetings.

l. Syed Ali: In peer institutions like Vassar, students liveblog their meetings.

4. Greek Life Resolution

a. Alex Pack: For some context, this year was one of the first years where program housing spots have opened up. Any student or student group can apply to the URLC consisting of students, faculty, ResLife, and administrators. Melody and I have been talking with several administrative officials about whether we could apply, and Roth decided that we would not be able to apply. We think this is a violation of procedures and discriminatory to certain group organizations. This resolution is not an endorsement of AEPi or Rho Ep or any Greek organization. It is merely endorsing our right to apply like everyone else.

b. Melody Oliphant: Roth said that even if we applied, we would not get the same treatment in the application process.

c. Andrew Trexler: I don’t think in the resolution that there is any stipulation that all student groups are in fact allowed to apply for program housing. I think a more direct statement would be appropriate.

d. Melody Oliphant: That is a friendly amendment.

e. Arya Alizadeh: A lot of other NESCAC schools have been harsh to Greek life are slowly accepting new forms of Greek life that are much more school-specific. I would definitely peer institutions as an example. You should link the two Greek organizations to stand out from other chapters.

f. Melody Oliphant: I’m hoping that at a school like Wesleyan we would be able to look past Greek life stereotypes.
g. Jason Shatz: This is a very progressive, economical model. I’m sure that there are some people who fear that Greek life would “breed like rabbits.” Are there national organizations of Rho Ep or AEpi?

h. Alex Pack: AEpi is actually an international organization.

i. Melody Oliphant: We have been considering all the controversy linked with sexual assault connected to Greek organization. I don’t see those as problems limited to Greek life. I think we get into a sort of problematic train of thought if we combine those issues.

j. Jason Shatz: In terms of progressivity, Alpha Delt has done a great job of letting women into their institution.

k. Jesse Ross-Silverman: I’m worried about the issue of coeducation. I don’t want gender discrimination to become an issue. The resolution should affirm that you support coeducational housing. It should be more explicit that you understand that exclusion could be an issue of a program house where members are a large part of the house’s makeup. I think the gender discrimination thing is something to address.

l. Alex Pack: I think that would be a friendly amendment.

m. Jake Blumenthal: This is an objection to AEpi that needs to be considered. AEpi is a national organization and an incorporated one. The idea that an outside group using those resources is a little weird to me.

n. Alex Pack: I’m not sure how that would apply in practice. I think we should look at that in the opposite way: we’re Wesleyan students who have formed from the bottom up.

o. Jake Blumenthal: The organization recruited Wesleyan, not the other way around.

p. Alex Pack: Amongst us, our international relationship results in one or two campus meetings. I see what you’re saying theoretically, but this is not an operational relationship but a symbolic relationship.

q. Nicole Updegrove: I added a new section to the resolution to reflect what was suggested.

r. Benny Doctor: I am expressing an objection to this topic. I think that Wesleyan’s objection to these varieties of Greek life and goes straight to the exclusionary rule of these organizations. I would be concerned with conflating the policy of Greek life and the stereotype of Greek life.

s. Nicole Updegrove: My response to Benny is that many groups here are centered around identity. It’s problematic when people only cluster around one identity. Many program houses have this issue - yet they all reach out to the community to offer something in a broader light. Additionally, almost every Greek opens up to applications from outside members if beds are open.

t. Andrew Trexler: I would also note that this resolution is not really talking about any particular Greek organization. It’s simply asking the administration not to
immediately discriminate on the basis that it’s coming from a Greek organization. I hope that the administrations would make judgements as to whether or not it fits with Wesleyan values.

u. Melody: Other identity houses include Asian American House and Open House. We are not the first program house to want to have an identity.

v. Kara Linn: There are a lot of program houses that only have on gender. This would be a great grouping of two institutions on campus.

w. Benny Doctor: I just don’t like how there’s membership contingent on identity is something different than Women of Color House or other houses.

x. Jake Blumenthal: I just wanted to back up Benny’s point. All these other houses have “cultures” as opposed to other Greek organizations. I feel that Greek houses don’t have a culture and they are exclusive.

y. Sam Ebb: To Jake’s point, the coeducational component is important.

z. Alex Pack: Side

aa. note, we have petitions going around to supplement this resolution if anyone cares to sign.

bb. **Vote to pass the resolution: 29 Y, 0 N, 4 A**

5. Resume Open Forum

a. Jake Blumenthal: I feel like all resolutions have been proposed by the Executive Committee. I would like to know how other representatives can create resolutions. It feels like only the Executive Committee decides on resolutions.

b. Andrew Trexler: Resolutions should be presented at least a week ahead of time. I wanted to talk specifically about what cosponsorship is. In order for the resolution to be voted on, at least one member of the Assembly must co-sponsor the resolution. The more names are on the resolution, the stronger the resolution is. I urge you all to look at past resolutions to see how they are written and sponsored.

c. Syed Ali: I want to encourage you all to speak and feel that this is a safe space, irrelevant of class year.

d. Arya Alizadeh: The way resolutions work is that resolution rules were in parliamentary procedure. This is a part of the constitution that we should expand. We need to create standing regulations for our assembly. This applied to how the WSA was run.

e. Mari Jarris: Any member can propose agenda items. That’s just something to remember. Feel free to tell your committee chairs or any member of the Executive Committee.

f. Andrew Trexler: I urge you all to bring your ideas with the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee needs to work on sending out agenda items a week in advance.

  g. Arya Alizadeh: Feel free to email the listserv about anything.

6. WesFest Resolution
a. Andrew Trexler: WesFest has been rescheduled to Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. It used to be on a Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. This change is not helping the issues with financial aid and need-blind and the fact that matriculation may be completely different this year.

b. Christian Hosam: WesFest in general and the Student of Color event predates WesFest. We should hold off on this and figure out why they’re rescheduling.

c. Grant Tanenbaum: I’m curious as to what the timeline is on this.

d. Christian Hosam: This would be send out when they send out acceptance. The problem is that Saturday falls on an unofficial school holiday.

e. Sam Ebb: I think Wednesday, Thursday, Friday is still problematic because students do not want to miss school or cut time. Saturday for WesFest is absolutely imperative. Students want to be good hosts. They struggle greatly with getting hosts as it is.

f. Christian Hosam: This is a new thing. This is an experiment. We’re trying things out. They did consult students on this, too.

g. Nicole Updegrove: I would like to note that Wednesday, Thursday, Friday are far worse than Sunday, Monday, Tuesday because students from lower-income areas cannot afford to miss three days to visit one of their prospective schools, especially if they’re not from the immediate area. At least Sunday would be one day of weekend.

h. Mansoor Alam: It is irresponsible by the university because many religious holidays take place on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Plus, they should know what goes on here on the weekends. Kids want to know if other alternatives exist.

i. Zach Malter: I want to condemn the admissions office for not consulting the WSA. There may be some distortions if WesFest conflicts with 4/20. They should’ve come to the WSA with ways to address that. We have every right to support this resolution.

j. Arya Alizadeh: The Admissions’ Office said that students were having a very poor academic experience. Students’ WesFest experiences has been really bad. I like the autonomy of the admissions office. I also really like how they have autonomy from us. That’s their job. A lot of students may not want to come to Wesleyan because it has changed.

k. Jason Shatz: I would like to be a sponsor on this resolution. Next, in terms of 4/20, if somebody wanted to avoid that particular date, why not move it back a date?

l. Arya Alizadeh: Because of spring break, everything had to be moved and the WesFest date got pushed to 4/20.

m. Jason Shatz: Students won’t have the same academic experiences depending on the days they come.
n. Christian Hosam: I agree with Arya. Maybe this is more about the relations between the WSA and the admissions office, and we should look at those connections. I would like to support everything Arya says.

o. Jake Blumenthal: Arya’s points have made me realize that WesFest is not for us, but for prospective students. The old system was not beneficial to those students. Also, just because students don’t come to WesFest doesn’t mean they won’t come to Wesleyan.

p. **Motion to close stack: Closed**

q. Sam Usdan: There are a lot of other schools that have far more heinous things going on during the weekends than we do. How do those schools handle their admitted students’ weekend?

r. Arya Alizadeh: I know that our social scene is much better than our peer institutions. What’s great about WesFest is that it illustrates Wesleyan students enjoying themselves in many different legal, responsible, and healthy ways.

s. Sam Ebb: I have two friendly amendments about student-led discussions during WesFest.

t. Jesse Ross-Silverman: I want to address the part about them being concerned students were not having a good academic experience when WesFest is later in the week. I had a great academic experience sitting in on a class on Friday. The ability to go out and experience the social life after going to classes was great and had a huge impact on convincing me to come to Wesleyan. It’s also ridiculous that the university bends over backwards to pretend that people don’t smoke weed here.

u. Mari Jarris: I want to talk about the third clause about hospitalization. It is indeed a concern for students. We need to stress substance-free events.

v. Syed Ali: While there are several opportunities to come to Wesleyan, WesFest is a huge event. We did recently form the Admissions Committee and they should look into these matters.

w. Nicole Brenner: A lot of student groups plan to have events during WesFest, and I think attendance will be brought down if the days of WesFest are changed.

x. Alton Wang: I agree that the timing of WesFest is vital. My concern wasn’t the academics because I wouldn’t apply to a school if I didn’t think the academics were good already. For me at least, visits were about culture and the social scene at the school.

y. Jake Blumenthal: Back to the point of hospitalizations, I think it’s our problem as their hosts as well. We need to watch out for them.

z. Arya Alizadeh: We do need to make sure that there is access to these academic fora. I was told about how learning happened a lot outside the classroom.
aa. Zach Malter: First, I think more information would be good, but I do like this resolution. I wish we knew more about this. I think the admissions office needs more diverse opinions on this issue.

bb. Andrew Trexler: On the point about WesFest being here for perspective students versus current students, I think it’s dependent on current Wesleyan students to ensure all participants have a great time. We want them to take the time to help their prefrosh.

7. Day of Dialogue Resolution
   a. Sam Ebb: We’re bringing this resolution because the faculty will be voting on the five-year calendar on December 4th. It is imperative that we bring this to them.
   b. Nicole Updegrove: Before anyone speaks further on this, we on EC apologize for sending out these resolutions late. A lot of them arose at the last minute. We do apologize that they haven’t gotten to you sooner. I’d like to follow up on Syed’s comment - I don’t want this to be a conversation about diversity. We made a point in the Resolution to reference other campus issues. The point of this is to build in a day is that anything important can be talked about as a campus. Keep in mind that we don’t have a specific agenda to discuss during that day.
   c. Jesse Ross-Silverman: I asked for input from students at Smith College which has a similar type of day. The problem that Smith has is that many students do not attend the dialogue because it is not mandatory and that students do not feel like their voices are heard.
   d. Andrew Trexler: This resolution allows Sam to take this issue up with the Education Policy Committee with more strength before they present the calendar to the faculty.
   e. Sam Ebb: Presenting to the faculty is somewhat tentative. There’s a chance this could get delayed. This resolution comes from student interest.
   f. Arya Alizadeh: It’s cool how this day would fit in to the calendar. My only concern is that we’re calling is a “day of dialogue.” The issue is if we have a day dedicated to sports or community service later on. We don’t want to shut anything out. Perhaps we should change the main focus of this resolution to a day of alternative programming.
   g. Syed Ali: This is in fact a community building day more than anything. We could in fact change the day to “Community Building Day.”
   h. Sam Ebb: We just wanted this is to be a day of reflection, but we can absolutely change the name of it.
   i. Jason Shatz: I don’t think we should move Fall Break to an extra day on Monday. That day off is not a good idea. Students will not participate in the activity, but spend it packing or doing other activities. We should talk these numbers into account.
j. Sam Ebb: We moved class off of Labor Day because it is difficult for faculty and staff, which makes it difficult to teach.

k. Mansoor Alam: The name is not something to take likely; ‘dialogue’ makes people feel weary and irritated.

l. Nicole Brenn: I think this could be a really good thing to build into the schedule, but having the one Monday is not enough to make people feel inclined to stay. I do think that a day in general should be blocked into the schedule for whatever else that happens.

m. Jake Blumenthal: I agree with using this is an extra blocked day in case of emergencies, but I don’t think a day of dialogue would be productive. It would stop being meaningful.

n. Mari Jarris: Rob Rosenthal did chat about the idea of a flex day with us. It was something very seriously considered.

o. Zach Malter: I think “Day of Community Building” is a good idea. Our education is not about building things enough; it is about being critical. I think it’s broad enough to fit under many umbrellas. I do worry about the politics of a “flex day” though. The ambiguity might not be useful.

p. Kate Cullen: I think a dialogue day is unique because the fora we have right now are mostly attended by just students interested as opposed to the whole community at large. Plus a “day of dialogue” is a very distinct type of day as opposed to a community service day.

q. Alton Wang: I like the idea of a “day of dialogue” because there’s a lack of education to some extent. We need education outside the classroom and we need to be able to hear what our peers think.

r. Ellen Paik: I think a day of dialogue is a good thing because even if it is not as productive as we want, it’s a wonderful symbolic gesture. Plus other schools have been experimenting with and institutionally these types of events. This would also enable everyone to go because of timing.

s. Arya Alizadeh: The reason I’m not in favor of this idea is because I feel like it’s going to be an opportunity for people to essentially complain about why their issue is something every student to be passionate. That’s the message I got from this past week’s diversity forum. I have the right to choose what my priorities are. I do like the idea of a flex day. This would give a lot of flexibility but I do think that day would be difficult.

t. Sam Ebb: I am fine with not calling it a day of dialogue. I’d be fine calling it “Wesleyan Day” or whatever you want it to be. I also want us to have a day about Middletown community engagement. Everyone should see this day as valuable.

u. Jake Blumenthal: I have several problems with an open day.

v. Kate Cullen: I disagree with the point Arya made earlier. I think our most interesting discussions come from these interesting groups. This day of dialogue
would bring these issues closer to center because many students wouldn’t even know what is going on.

-w. Arya Alizadah: My concern is comments that we’ve see in other fora we’ve had on both financial aid and diversity.

-x. Benny Doctor: I am not concerned with anyone’s right not to hear about other’s issues. I see Arya’s argument but I disagree. We’ve had people come of their own accord but it doesn’t work ideally for other groups. We need to make every effort to let groups come forward and have their voices heard.

-y. Andrew Trexler: The title of this resolution should be have the correct parliamentary numbering.

-z. Nicole Updegrove: Don’t worry about what the day would be about - what we’re discussing is whether or not we should add a flexible day into the calendar.

-aa. Ted Shabecoff: I think this day is superfluous unless we can get every single student to come to this. We pride ourselves on being very involved in the community, but many people will choose to skip out. We can’t just make people come to the event.

-bb. Sam Ebb: These are discussions that wouldn’t happen on a large scale otherwise. I share a lot of frustrations with the dialogue per se. I think there productive dialogue at some of the past fora. I think there is value for having the opportunity to let people express their feelings about issues. I think we will get a good amount of turnout because people care. Time is also not the most important issue, as even if there are parts that not everyone finds productive, the most productive point of the whole discussion might be made in the last 5 minutes of a 4 hour discussion.

-cc. Syed Ali: To Jake’s earlier point about the looseness of this, we are on a deadline right now. We also want there to be some sort of flexibility. Faculty don’t like to have their classes canceled for anything, and this is a great solution.

-dd. **Straw poll of specifying a name of day**

-ee. **Voting on resolution: 28 Y, 3 N, 1 A**

8. Spring Fling Resolution

-a. Sam Ebb: Keep the tradition spring fling schedule this in the upcoming 5-year academic calendar.

-b. **Straw poll of the resolution**

-c. **Straw poll on voting on the resolution**

-d. **Voting on resolution: 32 Y, 0 N, 0 A**

9. Bylaws Resolution

-a. Andrew Trexler: It is the protocol of the assembly to vote on resolutions at least one week before they are voted on. Essentially, the Assembly needs to introduce resolutions at least one week before voting. It is my personal feeling that things should be debated twice.
b. Jake Blumenthal: I disagree with the resolution because many issues need to be voted on the week the problem arises. We should leave it as tradition.

c. Arya Alizadeh: I agree with Jake...kind of. I think it should stay under part of parliamentary procedure. I like the coordinator having greater responsibility.

d. Andrew Trexler: I disagree. The coordinator position is invariably filled with someone who has a bias, though they may try very hard to ignore it. I think this needs to be more practical. Second, there is a section of the bylaws that states that parliamentary procedure can be changed at the discretion of the coordinator or two-thirds majority.

e. Zach Malter: Executive Committee does not always agree. I do not agree with this resolution. I don’t like the idea that one member gets to hijack the Assembly. If one person says we can’t vote, we have to wait almost two weeks to vote. That hinders our ability to help students. I don’t want the Assembly blocked because of parliamentary restrictions.

f. Andrew Trexler: I disagree. If an assembly member does not feel like they have had adequate time to think about a particular resolution, they should have time to think about it and vote on it the following week.

g. Arya Alizadeh: I agree with a lot of what Trexler said, but I also do agree with Zach that there are time when we have to just respond. People’s interests change quickly. I think it should fall under the parliamentary procedure.

h. Mansoor Alam: My point is that a lot of resolutions we are given ahead of time. Counter point: not really. Also, our WSA library is awesome but it is not always efficient. It’s also kind of weird that we’re talking about the resolution but by looking at the room- our attendance just bothers me.

i. Grant Tanenbaum: I’m in favor of this resolution. We’ve had a lot of resolutions come through in the past 48 hours, and I wish we could learn more about our resolutions and form an opinion on it.

j. Benny Doctor: I think that giving one person power is too much. A lot of people on the assembly sort of “walked on” and they should not have the power to freeze any kind of resolution regardless of how much of an emergency it is.

k. Nicole Updegrove: Would you really vote for some of these resolutions (like the WesFest resolution) without thinking about them? We need to formalize voting and the number of people it takes to allow the assembly to vote or not vote on a resolution the week it is proposed.

l. Jake Blumenthal: I think that it’s completely normal for a legislative body to dictate by tradition.

m. Sam Ebb: Any of this requires that people actually read the resolutions.

n. Andrew Trexler: It also requires that if you have questions, you contact the sponsors of the resolutions. This resolution was understood to be in the bylaws originally. There may be a bit of hubris in this conversation, ignoring the
precedent extending many years back. I also just want to point out that this policy
does not prevent us from taking swift action when it is absolutely necessary.
When things are of such importance, we can absolutely have an emergency
meeting.

o. Mansoor Alam: As far as I know, we were under the impression that this was
under the bylaws. Why haven’t people complained until now (except Benny)? I
think everyone should take more time to breathe.

p. Discussion tabled

10. Board Reports
11. Committee Reports
12. New Business and Announcements

Meeting Adjourned: 11:08pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Lily Herman ‘16 and Grant Tanenbaum `15