General Assembly Meeting: March 31, 2013

Agenda:
Opening of the Meeting: Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm

1. Fight song and role call
   - Chloe: Let’s take a minute to mourn our friend Noah
   - Zach: The elections are coming up. Rules need to be put in place to govern those processes. We need to approve the members that I have appointed to the Elections Committee. The people that I have chosen are Syed Ali ‘13 (Chair), Nicole Brenner ‘15, Wayne Ng ‘16.
   - Andrew: Move to close meeting
   - Meeting closed
   - Meeting re-opened at 7:11 PM
   - Jason: I move to approve the minutes
   - Glenn: Seconded
   - Minutes Approved

2. Open Forum
   - Glenn: What’s the rationale to the placement of spring break? It can impinge on people’s religious values and times
   - Sam: It is because the timing of spring break splits the semester in half so if it wasn’t, there would be only a week of the fourth semester.
   - Christian: Zach got accepted into the Teach for America Corps. Glenn planned the national Model UN Conference. Yay!
   - Scott: Look at the Argus article for insight on the chalking moratorium
   - Ellen: Based on an incident that happened at BC, how do we work with other schools?
   - Christian: There’s nothing to stop it from happening. I think you’re right on
   - Andrew: There’s no precedent but nothing in the by-laws to prohibit it.
   - Jason: Maybe we should use our school as a frame of reference in terms of the Oberlin resolution that was sent by Christian earlier this afternoon

3. Committee Reports
   - President’s Report:
   - COCo
     - Jacob: There’s a Middletown remix event in May that is working towards a better relationship with town. It’s going to be on the North End.
Zach: Please share some of the aggregate data of the survey
Syed: Pulling it up now
Christian: Race was not completely taken out of the descriptors. It was only if that was all that was given. If there was a good description it would still be included
Scott: President Roth probably did more harm than good with his e-mail because it doesn’t say what we put in only what we took out
Syed: Some talked about who to contact for the P-Safe Review Committee. Some talked about top-down change. There was even a mention of class
Nicole: If I could describe Scott as a relatively short male with short hair, would race be included? It would narrow down the pool of perpetrators...
Christian: Essentially, race was ineffective as it was used. If you could get a good chance of finding out who the person was, then you could
Scott: I think that it’s now very hard to include race but in can be included

AAC
Mari: During the transition period, will they still have us fill out both forms because they use it for promotion and tenure
Sam: It will be discussed at a future EPC meeting

SAC:
Lily: Woodframe houses does not mean Senior Fauver.
Jesse: One of the grounds for appealing is excessive sanction and there was actually a hosting ban that was overturned four years ago and it should be acknowledged. I would push for anyone affected by the policy should be able to appeal the decision as well
Zach: President Roth, to be fair, did say that in a small fraction of cases he lightened the sanctions but he is usually looking only for procedural errors
Trexler: Out of 17 appeals, President Roth changed one (2010-2011 academic year).
Jason: Have we gotten any progress on the Neon Deli?
Nicole: The campus vote didn’t pass so I’m “deleting” the resolution.

FiFac
Nicole B.: I yield my future time to Trex
Sam: Why has the mirror in the theatre room been brought up the past couple of years? I have a recollection that they said that they would do this last year. Also, with the 190 High space, there’s a student group looking to make the Green Street recording studio more accessible to students.
Andrew: There was a funding problem last year but I was told that, barring no funding problems or problems from the Theatre Department, it should be a go
Syed: We’ve talked about this before and it is something that we will continue to work on

OEAC:
- Sam: Are you doing all the things that AAC is trying to do with Wesmaps? Also, there should be an interactive “This is Why?” tour for people who can’t make it to Wesleyan
- Grant/Jesse: It is on the worklist of ITS

SBC
- Trex: I applaud the return of the Request of the Week

4. Stress on Campus
- Andrew: Stress is acute on campus. Why and what can we do about it?
- Nicole: In other words, the stress we feel at Wesleyan is often amplified beyond the reality of tests and social life. What do you see as the causes of that amplification, and how do we fix that?
- Mari: I think that a lot of the stress is self-imposed but in addition, there is often not a real break when you are still getting a lot of academic work over the break. Perhaps we should try to get that written into the academic regulations.
- Sam E.: The “week of death” seems to be so bad and there should be a way to fix the sense that everything is crammed into one time period.
- Bruno: In terms of reducing stress, it is important to let students know that students have ten free sessions at CAPS.
- Jason: A major factor about stress is that the dynamic on campus is very different. Stress starts immediately when you are living away from home. People can be prone to putting themselves in stressful positions.
- Adam: Apparently, at MIT the entire first year is pass/fail in order to see where you are. Sometimes I hear from professors that they tend to admire that idea.
- Sam: It’s definitely something that you can bring to EPC.
- Wayne: I think that might be a bad approach because some students will only do the minimum amount of work. Maybe, in addition to that, we could try to incorporate comprehensive evaluations that can help ease the typical high school student’s transition to college and show them where they need to improve in the classroom.
- Chase: I think Brown has their pass/fail system but also has a distinction system to indicate your level of effort.
- Mansoor: I think it might be worth looking into forced medical leave. They can potentially cause more danger than benefit.
- Syed: I do more Peer Mental Health Advisory Training. One thing that we talk about is the fact that people are completely independent for the first time. On COCo we talk about with all the student groups and other activities, there are a
number of things that can pile up really easily. We need to be more intentional about being more conscious about how we interact with each other.

○ Arya: It might be useful to generate a list of components of stress. In terms of university deadlines, if they weren’t so binary, maybe it wouldn’t be so stressful. Maybe if you missed the deadline, there was a penalty instead of what happens now. Perhaps (and I proposed this on AAC when I was a freshman) we could extend the deadline of when you could choose your grading mode.

○ Lily D.: At boarding school, they shut off the internet in the freshman dorms. Maybe we should have an unplugged space on campus where other students are doing work that isn’t technological. It could potentially foster more productive study habits.

○ Zach: I feel there should be more emphasis placed on the transition in/out of Wesleyan. There haven’t been many dialogues about the implications of your senior year and leaving Wesleyan. I was thinking about how often I get asked about how I was doing. How do we create systems with adults being connected to students? We should also de-mystify the stigma around CAPS.

○ Alton: People have very different stress levels and how do we analyze and represent that? Some people have to work, on top of academics and extracurriculars. That’s a big example of different stress levels.

○ Lily H.: An issue that I’ve seen is the under-utilization of Peer Advisors. It is daunting to see your grades go from perfect in high school to not perfect in college. Maybe we should look into the creation of smaller groups on campus.

○ Adam: The fact that different individuals react to stress in different ways. Mental illness and the stigma associated with them because would you tell your friends that you went to a CAPS session?

○ Nicole: Based on this conversation, Dr. DeAndrea holds extra office hours in Downey House. Something that I’m looking into asking her about is having “stress counselors” so instead of going over to CAPS you could see a counselor. Alpha Delt also has chaplains for emotional support. Perhaps that could be more campus-wide.

○ Sam E.: If we could find a way to have CAPS to work with departments because bringing together different people is a de-stresser, particularly when you see commonalities with other people.

○ Arya: Another thing is that two years ago when we were discussing faculty engagement, a question raised was the role of advisors outside of strictly academics. Should your discussion with your advisor include your extra-curricular activities.

○ Syed: I think that it’s interesting because I talk to my advisor about everything. Maybe if it’s not a top-down program we should all be working to get faculty to do this more informally. Advising groups are also a good thing.
○ Andrew: Look into ScavHunt at Chicago.
○ Mari: We should have 24 hour study spaces outside of major lounges
○ Jason: I think that we should revitalize our sense of community using the resources that we already have
○ Jesse: We have a number of opportunities to fill “mentor” roles. Maybe we should expand this in majors and in the Peer Advisor Program. I think that it should be a normal thing that everyone should be a mentor/mentee at some point during their time here.
○ Chloe: In terms of thinking about RAs, if every RA was as open as my freshman, then everyone would be covered.
○ Ellen: I used the faculty lunch program once and it was awesome. Is there a way to incentivize the program and also is there a way to make it less formal (intimidating)?
○ Sam: We should have faculty talk about the stress that they face by being in academia?
○ Christian: The spark for CID came from Gina Ulysse.
○ Andrew: How do we reduce the vitriolic language that is used on campus?
○ Adam: One of the hallmarks of Wesleyan is how we work from outside the system and revolution happens here.
○ Alton: I think that people forget to assume good intentions. People should understand that we’re all here to make the campus better.
○ Nicki: I think that it’s a conflicting question. However, sometimes we should just be involved in silly things as well as things that are for the “good” of the campus.
○ Kate: In response to your question, one thing that I’ve noticed here is less collaboration within my coursework
○ Syed: Kate, that notion is mentioned in the Campus Climate Survey. Perhaps we should have less but higher quality events
○ Nicole: Maybe we should be more open to getting controversial views
○ Lily H.: A part of Wesleyan is anonymous. I think that there needs to more space for open confrontation
○ Alton: People who are very opposed to each other really does provide a lot of stress
○ Chloe: I think that sometimes we forget in the midst of being excited about our work is understanding that if we are going to disagree with people then we must be ready to give constructive alternatives
○ Jacob: I think that because people are so passionate, sometimes it’s better to wait a second before you respond to things that you believe are hurtful
○ Mansoor: I think that the tear down is applicable to the SBC. Particularly when you are asked to change your affairs by administrators, it is exceedingly stressful
Zach: I think that while we are on the end of a lot of vitriol, we should recognize that we are in a space that forces us to respond to criticism at higher levels
Andrew: I think that we all have the right to be wrong. Just because I may disagree with all of you on something, I respect you all as people

5. What is the role of the WSA?
   6. Small discussion groups

6. New Business and Announcements
   - Trexler: If anyone has dining suggestions, please send them to me ASAP

Meeting Adjourned: XX:XXam/pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Grant Tanenbaum ’15, Christian Hosam ‘15