



# WESLEYAN STUDENT ASSEMBLY

General Assembly Meeting: March 30, 2014

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## Agenda:

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

1. Fight song and role call
2. Open Forum
3. Minutes and Committee Reports
4. Future of Fraternities at Wesleyan
  - a. Nicole Updegrave: To start this conversation, let's avoid talking about the specifics of any legal case or incidence of sexual assault. We're not here to adjudicate any case. Also, as a reminder, as the WSA, the most we can do is make recommendations to the university-- we can't make anything law. Keep that in mind.
  - b. Jason Shatz: A couple words - we have a variety of opinions, and whenever we hear cases such as the one recently brought to light, we tend to resort to ad hominem attacks. I hope that our goal is to see what each side thinks without resorting to ad hominem attacks. I think fraternities and sororities are valid opportunities for people to bond, and what needs to change is the behavior of some of the people in these institutions. These institutions have mission statements and the university likewise has a justice system and we need to keep this in mind.
  - c. Nina Gurak: I wanted to raise some opposition to this discussion. Just talking about fraternities is a limited approach. I have a list of alternatives that we'll discuss with President Roth later this week. Some of them are required sexual assault training for p-safe officers, expanding resources for intimate partner violence, mandatory materials for parents with children who are sexual assault survivors, working closely with the Middletown Police Department, establishing an anonymous reporting system, like Trinity does, supporting a gender resource center.
  - d. Kate Cullen: I've been really involved working on these issues recently. There was a sociological study published recently regarding frat-culture and sexual assault which covers certain topics regarding what the administrations place in sexual assault situations on campus might be. I thought this might be a good reference for structuring this discussion - we should set goals for this discussion to keep productive.

- e. Nina Gurak: To finish that list, working more with community resources and supporting student initiatives. There are students working on these issues and they need our support. These instances are a bump in the road in the big picture; we need to take action steps throughout the year, whether it's passing resolutions or being an active bystander.
- f. Jason Shatz: I'm a little bit concerned about the way this conversation is going. Sexual assault and fraternities are not necessarily intertwined and we should consider that sexual assault occurs all over campus. We should make sure this conversation is productive.
- g. Ben Marvyn: I wanted to clarify what we're trying to get out of this discussion.
- h. Andrew Trexler: President Roth sent an email stating that the administration will soon be discussing the role that fraternities play on campus and this discussion is largely in response to that email.
- i. Ellen Paik: Do we know at all what President Roth wants to do with frats? It doesn't seem like he has much direction from his email.
- j. Andrew Trexler: Nicole and I had a brief conversation with President Roth. He wants more input on the issue before making any formal decisions. Dean Rick sent an email to president of fraternities as to p-safe access, but beyond that, not much has been done as of yet.
- k. Ellen Paik: Is that conversation whether or not frats should exist?
- l. Andrew Trexler: I think that is part of this conversation.
- m. Simon Chen: SAC met last week with Dean Rick to discuss this issue. The administration is thinking about what the university will do with frats moving forward. The article Kate mentioned details spaces that could be used by multiple genders, like is done at Trinity. I would love to hear ideas going that direction.
- n. Kate Cullen: Someone is filming. Is that okay with everyone here? With no formal objections, we're okay to proceed. Just a proposal to structure this discussion-- what is student culture? What is rape culture? What is frat culture at Wesleyan? If Greek members could discuss their fraternity's role on campus, that would be great.
- o. Coordinator: We're going to steer the direction away from the event that recently happened and instead consider campus culture with respect to institutions such as fraternities.
- p. Jason Shatz: Somebody mentioned Trinity - as many of you may know Trinity has a new President. During her speech, she said her mission as president was to honor the best of the school's traditions while pursuing meaningful change. We need to do the same here. We do not have many spaces to gather as students. Some of those spaces are not even the full property of the university. The administration also has to tread on thin ice - President Roth himself was President of Alpha-Delt. Alienating fraternities can have an impact on the school's

resources and outreach.

- q. Izzy Linzer: In general, people make a big deal out of frat culture at Wesleyan. When I'm out at a party, I would feel safer at a frat than I would at a woodframe house. I know who lives there. Frats are certainly a part of Wesleyan's culture, but we need to talk about the bigger picture. Sexual assault is the topic here. It shouldn't be limited to just one section of our culture.
- r. TJ: Chair of inter-greek council. We're looking into policies to open up our spaces to make them safer and changing practices to make people feel more safe and enjoyable in these spaces.
- s. Lily Donahue: In the interest of moving this conversation forward, yes - fraternities are a central focus of social life on campus. A lot of people feel these parties get out of control and maybe that less people having disproportionate amount of responsibility in keeping these parties under control is an issue. Individuals commit sexual assault not fraternities.
- t. Nicole Updegrave: Just to push back on certain things that have been said - it isn't we who are limiting this conversation to fraternities. We have an obligation to focus on the role of fraternities at Wesleyan because of the recent spotlight on them and the administrative focus upon changing these institutions - the WSA needs to make recommendations. Some ideas that are circulating around within the administration include making fraternities co-ed or eliminating all fraternity housing. We should focus on forming an opinion of these and other options, because the administration will be looking to us for answers.
- u. Scott Elias: I think the administration is framing this conversation this way. Getting rid of fraternities this way is ineffective even if it acts as a band-aid for the administration. We might need to look at policies within these institutions that counter issues such of sexual assault and move things in the right direction.
- v. Lizzie Shackney: I wanted to bring up the role of alcohol in sexual assault cases. Part of Kate's article mentioned how alcohol can be a resource in its scarcity-- which organization has it can control the social scene. Another thing to bring into the conversation are sexual and drug issues.
- w. Lexie Malico: I come from the College of William and Mary, where 2000 students are involved in greek life. Only one sexual assault occurred last year on campus, whereas at Wesleyan 8 occurred. It is incredibly limiting to say this is just a greek-problem.
- x. Nicole Brenner: This is not problem with fraternities. It has to do with the party culture at Wesleyan in general-- the frats are the three biggest places where people can congregate, more so than houses on Fountain. The problem is that it's a large place-- it's not necessary a Greek problem.
- y. Ben Marvyn: Yield time.

- z. Gabe: I'm a junior in Chi Psi. The administration is making greek life the center of the issue of sexual assault on campus. The response should be from us that that is the wrong approach. I think education is a big issue here - but proper education doesn't go out to all students on campus with respect to sexual assault. More needs to be done in regards to sexual assault on campus and educating students on the issue.
- aa. Jenna Starr: Personally, I have a hard time participating in this discussion because I don't know many of the policies concerning p-safe and the fraternities.
- bb. TJ: It's dependent upon the houses. DKE only allows p-safe into the main room and that's because the national organization owns the house.
- cc. Scott Elias: PSAFE technically needs a decent amount of permission with respect to accessing these houses. Contracts are sort of individual to each fraternity.
- dd. Jason Shatz: In many cases, I don't think that just one person or group controls the alcohol supply. People just flock to it like a watering hole. Putting sexual assault training in orientation may not necessarily work because it may not stick in their minds. Another interesting thing: here at Wesleyan, we have a more sex-positive viewpoint compared to other schools. The administration would have to walk a fine line if they made all houses co-ed.
- ee. Zach: I would like to push back with the idea that it is a negative if we break this down into smaller sections of the community. If there needs to be a discussion about sexual assault about sexual assault across campus we can have that conversation but it may be more productive to focus on these smaller sections for now. What is the impact of students having outside influences within these institutions ?
- ff. Andrew Trexler: I think more than a dozen people have said that they dislike this conversation because it focuses only on fraternities. I encourage others to speak up with ideas about sexual assault prevention instead of suggesting that we talk more about it-- we need to talk about solutions.
- gg. Will: Since this news has broken out I haven't seen productive discussions like this one. From the fraternity side, we're willing to work with administration and the survivors here. A fraternity brother here is less distinct from a non-fraternity brother at Wesleyan than at other schools.
- hh. Lily: There is a lot of talk about how we can make changes. I have a question for TJ: what ideas have you brainstormed about making this a safer campus?
- ii. TJ: All societies but Eclectic voted to implement bystander intervention training among new pledges.
- jj. Chloe: Nobody has said it's very prejudice to talk about fraternity brothers this way. Statistics show that once people live in these situations those people are 3x more likely to commit sexual assault. Obviously sexual assault happens everywhere on campus, but right now we're looking at small pockets of culture

on this campus and we can't say these fraternity spaces are the same as my hi-rise. Frats now are very reactionary - not taking a role of leadership.

- kk. Justin Gitlin: One of the studies you mentioned is debatable regarding the psychology of fraternities on new pledges.
- ll. Izzy Linzer: One thing I think we could do is to be more careful about whose at frat parties - perhaps checking WesIDs. I would like to have a different option than to call PSAFE in the event of sexual assault.
- mm. Nina: In response to a few things that were said. Jason brought up the orientation-- this year, all students were given a booklet on sexual assault resources. Izzy brought up phone numbers, like the crisis resource center in town. I also want to point out that in the WSA, there was a position on SAC last year designed to tackle sexual assault on campus-- I'd like to see that re-implemented. The advisory committee for Title IX affairs has only one student on it; I'd like to see far more students take charge.
- nn. Ben Marvyn: I think the University needs to be more active - booklets are not sufficient. How many will actually read it? I wanted to push back on these studies brought up - I think we can work through the existing structure of fraternities to make progress rather than to just bring them down. We're going to have to address the issue that they have to address before we can move on to anything else.
- oo. Ellen Paik: This was inspired by what Ben just said. I would like to propose a straw poll: Do you know what you would do if you or a friend were involved in sexual assault in some way? **31 YES 23 NO**. Just to comment on that-- that's a bit scary. I honestly don't know the exact steps I would take if my friend was sexual assaulted and apparently lots of people don't either.
- pp. Jackie: President of Rho-Ep. I'm very happy to see this discussion, but I think that this is a very small proportion of our community and not exactly an accurate representation of our community. One fraternity policy I think might be useful is for individuals to introduce themselves to individuals in their spaces.
- qq. Jared: I'm the social justice chair for alpha epsilon pi. What we have discussed is for members to have regular training in bystander intervention.
- rr. Chloe: So, currently do societies have training?
- ss. Several guests: No.
- tt. TJ: We have just voted to start implementing the training starting next semester.
- uu. Gabe: POI on studies referenced earlier - one study mentioned that when bystander-intervention strategies were introduced numbers on sexual-assault were reduced. So I think that some intervention strategies do work.
- vv. Scott Elias: These ideas are great and I would like to see more concrete implementation discussed.

- ww. Justin Gitlin: Just in addressing some of these studies - the causalities are unclear.
- xx. Chloe: I posted this on Wesleying. I'm not making this up. Everyone can take this opportunity to throw fire at me. I need people to show me that frats are doing a good job at preventing sexual assault. It's easy to talk about how it happens everywhere and that it's not our problem. And sure, it feels good to talk about doing something now, but where were the Greek societies after the last Beta incident.
- yy. Scott: Right of reply. We were doing a great deal before these events happened (at Beta) - we hired guards for our doors for every event, we instituted bystander-intervention training, etc. It's not productive to just say if we dismantle all male organizations on campus problems will just go away - that's not how we should be approaching this.
- zz. Lexie: There are lot of resources on this campus that students aren't aware of. Perhaps the WSA could help get the information out about. Aleysha Warren would be a great resource to come to the WSA in order to determine how to end sexual assault on campus. This conversation doesn't need to talk about the preservation of Greek life on campus. If that was the answer to stopping sexual assault on campus, it would have happened by now.
- aaa. Jason: A lot of sexual assault cases are underreported and we cannot tell how frequently these incidences occur anywhere on campus. Sadly, they may still happen as we try to introduce a new paradigm. I'm sure that people will be more than willing to work with us - especially the new PSafe chief.
- bbb. Kate Cullen: Nina brought up the Title IX advisory board. The board of trustees under the campus affairs committee, there is a Title IX working group. The school is required to provide equal opportunities and that reporting procedures are in place. The board for the Title IX working group was created to determine if we're doing the right thing currently in terms of our policies. The administration has done a great job policy-wise to address concerns of sexual assault. If anyone has questions, please come talk to me.
- ccc. Sadasia: Personally, I've stayed quiet to get everyone's feedback. It has been known that is not an issue that happens only at fraternities. The most important thing we can do at this point is to determine the initiatives that frats can take at this point to make this less of an issue.
- ddd. Simon Chen: We need to talk more about what frats can do. There are certain environments in which activities are hyper-sexualized, but not necessarily that sexual assault is more likely. We need to address how we can changes those environments.
- eee. Martin Malaban: I agree with Simon - to enforce those community guidelines SALD has student staff which patrol parties and it has been very

positive. They're not PSAFE - they're fellow students that are really able to keep parties much safer.

fff. Ben Marvyn: Two suggestions-- during orientation, my orientation leader read what the university had prepared off a sheet of paper. I would like to see a staff member do the training with us as they have more at stake. I also have a question for the IHTC-- would there be a way to create a security system for all frats in which a brother at another frat could be called to help with a situation?

ggg. Jenna Starr: In response to Simon, there was a party at Earth house that was "bra and panties" and nothing happened. In reslife we have an activity called "behind closed doors", where we're faced with an event that we have to deal with and I found the training to feel very real and effective. Maybe frats/sororities/societies can implement some type of similar activity ?

hhh. Nina: I wanted to respond about the resource on campus. The Students for Communication and Consent is soon hosting an open event for resources and reporting. Last semester, our group put on two dinner for women and fraternities. One thing I would recommend is that WSA members go to fraternities and actually talk to members.

iii. Yiyang: We should avoid conflating the issue of drinking and sexual assault as some programs in the past have done. I think its really important to think about the power dynamics of the space - Freshmen are already at a disadvantage when they enter these spaces. Maybe opening up the space for booking like regular space booking would help with making these spaces feel more inviting.

jjj. Sam: Two comments-- the most recent event in the news happened almost a year and the only recent it's in the news is because there is a lawsuit in place. I also want to respond to the idea that if the frats are already doing prevention, that it's not really drinking. Perhaps because now that it's a big deal, more fraternities will take action because it feels more real.

kkk. Scott: Sam brought up a good point. We're all culpable for not responding adequately to the event that was in the news only recently as the actual event happened over a year ago.

lll. Zach: I really like the idea that having another brother from a different fraternity come. It would also be good if a member of the society wore a bright shirt at a party, had to introduce him or herself, and was actively taking action to prevent malicious activities from occurring.

mmm. Nicole Updegrave: As referenced in the study that Kate sent around to General Assembly, there are policies at the University that aren't technically genedered but end up being so. The options for underclassmen nightlife are limited due to alcohol policies, so students end up at fraternities. Of the best party spaces, three of them are fraternities - we have to consider that the big party spaces are controlled by men, which creates a situation when girls are asking

alcohol from men and these spaces are patrolled by men and so on.

nnn. Nat: I yield my time.

ooo. Izzy Linzer: First, a thought about how we can change rape culture on campus is how we go about reporting the issue. Amherst or Trinity had a day in which classes were cancelled and there were a lot of discussions about how to prevent sexual assault from happening.

ppp. Andrew Trexler: The WSA pushed for that last year but the faculty killed it. It's not a possibility for another 5 years or so now. No *single* measure taken by any person on this campus will solve the issue of sexual assault.

qqq. Tim: I'm on the ITC and also a member of Psi U. We have been brainstorming a lot of ways to solve these problems and make our houses safe places. I have some notes from our meetings that show we want to make changes and be at the forefront of those changes. We've talked about having more sober events, being more program houses, having sexual assault workshops at fraternities, opening up spaces, having security guards at party, having party police-- someone discussed having people wear neon shirts and that's a great idea. That's what we've been talking about.

rrr. Ellen Paik: When I talk about night life to visiting students, I mention that Fountain is a very safe space. But having p-safe write people up prevent that from being a safe space. Perhaps the positions of party police could be paid in order to incentivize people to remain sober.

sss. Nicole Brenner: It would be great if one day, we could have everyone on the campus be trained and be aware of the issues that exist. We need more response of it.

ttt. Zach: A lot of fraternity members have said that you have been talking about ideas and perhaps you could open up those meetings, like the WSA does, and have the outside community come in to discuss issues.

uuu. Jackie: I wanted to address Nicole's policy about safe spaces. The alcohol policy in the 5C California colleges. part of the problem is that we're forcing underage drinking to occur behind closed doors. So discussing the alcohol policy is a clear part of the policy. There are a lot of workshops going on during the year, the problem is that a lot of people don't attend.

vvv. Zack: I'm a member of AEPi fraternity. Addressing the spaces and drug and alcohol policies. At Stanford, underage drinking is condoned. I think that our policy for alcohol encourages dangerous behavior. A policy of openness would encourage a lot more discussion. Frats are a great space where students can have a good time.

www. Ben Marvyn: POI: I was at Claremont University where there was a keg party thrown by the university.

- xxx. Danny Blinderman: It's unfortunate that a lot of good party spaces on this campus are Greek. There is a really great article on Wesleying that discusses a study about the cultural change that pledges undergo during the initiation process.
- yyy. Jenna Starr: Motion to close stack.
- zzz. Andrew Trexler: It's worthwhile to review your pledging activities and to consider sanctioning members within the organization for using rape-culture promoting language. I was shocked and dismayed to hear that one of the staff that runs consent training had such a terrible time conducting consent training for one of the frats that she refuses to conduct another training for that frat
- aaaa. Simon Chen: I think we need to bring it back to the issue at hand. University of Michigan have banned fraternities from serving alcohol if they're having large parties, which we should consider. It would decrease the likelihood of underclassmen going to these parties to obtain alcohol. This is the type of campus where we have naked parties and sexualized events. We need to discuss how those environments can contribute to the occurrence of rape and sexual assault and how community guidelines can change that structure.
- bbbb. TJ: In terms of alcohol, a lot of the organizations don't serve alcohol. Most times, it's brought in. We can't search people who come to our parties. We don't have that power.
- cccc. Jason Shatz: There has been precedent where groups of all genders have been able to use those spaces.
- dddd. Jackie: Rho Ep doesn't want to have to rely on others for our space. That's why we have our formal off campus.
- eeee. Nicole Updegrave: As part of a cultural shift, I would encourage all members of fraternities to introduce themselves before grinding on someone. Fraternities could be at the forefront of this change and it could easily spread elsewhere and cause a big cultural shift for Wesleyan's nightlife. Please take that back to your members.
- ffff. Ben Marvyn: Yield.
- gggg. Lexie: I think that something we can learn from other colleges is that colleges like William and Mary put an emphasis on responsibility for each other and community and family. Wesleyan needs to start acting as a community and the more we look out for each other and responsible for each other the less these issues occur.
- hhhh. Nina: I just wanted to mention a few of the resources. Tanya Purdy and Aleshya Warren will regularly come to events in order to help spread awareness about prevention of sexual assault. We've been working with AEPi most recently to help train a member to facilitate a training.
- iiii. Kate: I would love to make a really long list of the administrative policies that perpetuate this culture. We can use this as sort of a step one towards identifying

policies we should change. Adding to comments on the Claremont model, we've been trying really hard to get something similar at Wesleyan but we've been facing a lot of pushback.

jjjj. Gabe: I yield my time.

kkkk. Jackie: We were talking about naked parties and how certain events create a hyper-sexualized environment. Figuring out how to make events more sex-positive and promote a space where people appreciative of all body parts and sizes.

llll. Michael: This has been one of the most productive conversations on the subject I've heard in a while. We are sick of what has been happening. We generate these ideas and the WSA will likely take these ideas to the administration but there are also student groups and other student resources that can help to enact change on campus. I want to change our campus climate and this conversation is definitely something that should continue.

mmmm. Kate Cullen: I think it's great that you guys are doing a push for social change and I would like to see it continue with more conversations with the WSA.

### **3 minute recess**

#### 5. Resolution on Faculty Diversity Training

#### 6. New Business and Announcements

- a. Jenna Starr: There will be a food drive called 'Food Fight' and you can help donate to the homeless shelter!
- b. Nicole Updegrave: We haven't yet started to meet with specific committees for constitutional review. We've talked about the specific elimination of OEAC, except its chair, as well as having the president lead the meeting itself.
- c. Chris Caines: I wanted to emphasize how the change in capacity for wood frame houses will seriously change the dynamic of parties at Wesleyan and that we should talk about this issue and brainstorm possible alternative spaces.
- d. Jason Shatz: The issue of taking the party scene away from Fountain Ave has been debated before. The Fountain Ave Task Force is taking action, I'm sure.
- e. Nicole Updegrave: I'm interested to know why the capacity is so low.
- f. Kate Cullen: The houses on Fountain Ave. are relatively small compared to other houses in Middletown. It's not going to be so strictly enforced from what I know. What is more likely to happen is that capacity will be enforced only for party and not for team dinners.
- g. Jason Shatz: I have been working on some language on the resolution for the frat issue. I want to encourage the IGC to explore new avenues for treating sexual assault. If you want to help me work on that, let me know.
- h. Nicole Updegrave: I'm still on IGC and I'm pushing a lot of policy changes, and we might have more power than expected. Let me know if you have suggestions.  
Kate Cullen: Mika is also designing signs for the library's quiet spaces. We also

need people to help designate maps for room selection. If anyone else here has great design abilities, please let me know.

- i. Glenn Contave: The Hartford Marathon foundation is holding a race on Main Street. The proceeds will go to the Amazing Grace food pantry-- tell all your friends.
- j. Ellen Paik: The Climate Justice Conference of solution is coming up soon on April 13th. Please attend.
- k. Jacob Musinsky: Thanks everyone for being here today. Please stay and put things back together. I'm sorry there was no committee of the week this week. Next week is AAC.
- l. Lizzie Shackney: Shoulder to Shoulder homelessness awareness month is taking place soon. We need help to hang them up. Tomorrow we're hanging them up. Please help us out.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:11 pm

Respectfully Submitted,  
Fred Ayres '17 and Mansoor Alam '15