



Student Senate

3rd Quarter Report of the 2021-2022 Academic Year

To the Valparaiso University Community,

One of the constitutional duties of the Student Body Vice President of Valparaiso University is to have the Student Senators of the Student Senate draft and submit constituency reports each quarter of the academic year. This not only serves as a meaningful line of communication between Student Senators and their constituents, but it also serves as a way for the greater campus community to know the concerns of the Student Body. This report compiles the reports from the Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Commuter, Transfer, College of Arts & Sciences, College of Business, Christ College, College of Nursing and Health Professions, and the Campus At-Large constituencies. **The College of Engineering seat was vacant at the time of submission.

In these reports, there were specific issues to each constituency, but I will be addressing the common themes. The most talked about issues in each constituency report is, like every semester, parking and campus safety. Student Senate has been working diligently to try to address these issues by passing Senate Resolutions (SRs) and speaking with campus administrators, but little to nothing seems to be done, or at least communicated, about it. On the issue of parking, almost every constituency has deemed this a problem, especially First Years and Commuters. For First Years, it is an issue of safety, as well, with having to walk from Lot 37 or wait long periods of time for the bus (which has its own concerns of not always running or taking longer than it should). The First Year students have also expressed their concern about not having a blue emergency pole in or near Lot 37 when there is an overwhelming feeling for more safety protocols there. Students from nearly every constituency have called for the need of an immediate overhaul of parking spaces on campus to create more availability for students, especially for commuter and First Year students.

Campus safety takes on multiple heads throughout the constituency reports, from lighting to winter safety to women's safety. The continued need for more lighting on campus is prevalent in many of our constituency reports. The need for lighting goes hand-in-hand with the need for safety measures protecting our women on campus. More lighting has been called for along the routes to the sorority house complex from the parking lots that service them until adequate parking for sorority women is met. Additionally, many women on campus, especially those living in Guild-Memorial and Brandt Halls, have expressed their concern for the lack of lighting

and other measures that have allowed for suspects to perform heinous acts of indecent exposure. More needs to be done to prevent these crimes from happening so that women on campus can feel more safe on campus. Valparaiso University is a place of zero tolerance for this behavior.

Other safety measures that have been called for in these reports revolve around winter safety. A concern that was prevalent in many of the constituency reports was the need for faster and better snow and ice removal. Students have voiced that the snow and ice removal around campus does not match with when the university holds classes, meaning that the sidewalks and roads have not been completed by the time classes resume after a snow day. Ice has been a contributing factor to many students falling on campus sidewalks due to sidewalks and stairs not being salted regularly or evenly. This also has brought up the concern for more sidewalks to be installed in certain places for better winter and spring safety, such as in front of ASB and Mueller Hall. This has been addressed in Student Senate's recently-passed [SR002-SP20](#). Students, especially commuter students, have also voiced their need for a universal Zoom option when classes are held while off-campus conditions may not be safe. Currently, this option is up to the individual professor, but with a university-wide guideline that would require faculty to have a Zoom option for times of inclement weather, students would feel more at ease when off-campus road conditions may be poor.

Inclusivity is an essential part of the constituency reports. Some of the issues addressed surrounding inclusivity is the need for more diversity-and-inclusion-based programs to allow underrepresented students to feel more welcomed. The pressures for underrepresented students at a predominately white institution are real and hard to avoid, so we as students, and the university as a whole, must be doing everything in our power to address this, and the first step is by implementing everything in the Action Agenda. There was a concern that Student Senate is not diverse enough, and that is an issue that needs to be addressed. Our Executive Board will do everything we can to make Student Senate be a more welcoming institution for underrepresented students to be a part of and to come to for concerns. There is also a need for inclusivity in our physical structures, too, with making our buildings ADA compliant. Too many buildings on our campus, such as Neils Science Center and Mueller Hall to name a couple, are not ADA compliant and that needs to be addressed. This goes along with other campus upgrades that students would like to see be made such as updating the ARC, Fitness Center, and LaPorte Residence Halls.

Other than these concerns, the Student Body is feeling good about moving forward from the pandemic. There has been positive feedback with the changes being made with dining services, especially with concerns being quickly addressed with Founders and the upgrades being made for the Bell & Beacon. Students would still like to see more options and longer operating hours at Founders, but for the most part, students are happy with the service of Parkhurst. Students are also excited for the upcoming campus events and seeing COVID regulations beginning to be

lifted. There has been a concern with student involvement with campus events and in student organizations, but this is being addressed by the Office of Student Life and respective student organizations - with more COVID regulations being lifted, there is a hope that there will be an increase in student involvement.

Lastly, Student Senators asked their constituents their feelings on returning to the 10-minute passing period. From their reports, there was not overwhelming support for keeping the 10-minute passing period or returning to the 20-minute passing period. Students do not want to return to earlier classes in the morning and later classes in the evening with the return to a 20-minute passing period, but also feel that 10 minutes is not enough time to get to classes across campus or get food in the afternoon between classes. When asked to choose, many students actually wanted to see a 15-minute passing period introduced because they feel that this is a sufficient amount of time to get food and get to class on time. We posed this question to our constituents because of the shift in campus culture during the pandemic of students staying a few extra minutes after class to discuss topics with their professors and classmates, it has allowed for more time to grab a quick lunch with peers, and it has allowed students more time to get to classes.

Student Senate has spent the last 7 months diligently working on revising and updating our Constitution and Bylaws to make them more understandable and create more streamlined and efficient processes. On March 21st, 2022, the Student Senate unanimously passed a new Constitution, Bylaws, and accompanying Addendums, the likes of which have not been seen in 30+ years. We are excited to see how future Senates implement these changes and how the Student Body can better utilize Student Senate. In the coming weeks, we will be hard at work beginning to implement the transition to our new system and preparing for what we hope will be a great election. If there are any questions to the constituency reports of our Student Senators, our new Constitution and Bylaws, or for Student Senate in general, one may contact senate.president@valpo.edu or senate.vp@valpo.edu. Student Senate's mission is to actively speak out for student interests and concerns, and this report serves as a pinnacle of this mission to make student concerns more available and present.

Sincerely,



Ben Jacobs
Student Body Vice President



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