

OSA Assembly Agenda
March 18, 2019 at 4:00 PM
Reeve Memorial Union, Room 307 – The Theatre

- I. **Call to Order** – Pledge of Allegiance at 4:00 PM
- II. **Roll Call - Organizations with Voting Rights:**
Present:
Excused:
Absent:
- III. **Open Forum** –
- IV. **Approval of the Agenda** –
- V. **Approval of the Minutes** –
- VI. **Club/Org Recognition** –
- VII. **Guest Speakers** –
- VIII. **Officer Reports** –
 - a. Speaker Pro-Tempore – (Shane – osaspeakerpt@uwosh.edu) – Ellen and I went to the state capital last week. One of the things we talked about was getting funding to fully renovate Clow as only half of it is updated. And I would encourage you to get members of your organizations to apply to be Senators for the end of this year and next year.
 - b. Speaker of the Assembly – (Ellen – osaspeaker@uwosh.edu) – I’m sure all of you are aware of what has been going on regarding the OSA Elections. I want to reiterate that the comments that were made do not reflect the views of this organization. I have reached out to others and I’m reaching out to all of you so that you know that we are here for you if you want to talk to us. There is an Open Forum tonight from 6-7:30 in the Reeve Ballroom to address this. I want to encourage you all to not let this silence you. You have power, you need to use your voices. Tell people how this affected you. If you all don’t speak up, no change can be made. I hope you all have a good spring break and take time to relax.
 - c. Chief of Staff – (Colin – osacos@uwosh.edu) –
 - d. Vice President Pro-Tempore – (Coleman - osavppt@uwosh.edu) –
 - e. Vice President – (Stephanie – osavp@uwosh.edu) –
 - f. President – (Ronisha (Roni) – osapres@uwosh.edu) –
 - g. OSA Office Manager – (Kyla Brown – brownk31@uwosh.edu) –
 - h. OSA Advisor – (Dr. Art Munin – munina@uwosh.edu) – Just a few things, I want to echo Ellen’s sentiments. It is hard that we have to have this open forum, but it is important. On a more positive note, how about that men’s basketball team?

Also we are hosting NCAA Gymnastics championships this weekend. You all can get free tickets to that. Be safe on break.

- i. OSA Directors and Ambassadors –

IX. Presidential Appointments –

OSA 18-029

BE IT RESOLVED that the OSA Senate and Assembly approve the following Presidential Appointments:

- 1. Macy Justinger, Ambassador for Inclusive Excellence

Sponsored by: Ronisha Howard, OSA President

Model UN brought to the floor.
Sociology Club seconded.

Placard vote. Majority in favor.

X. Unfinished Business –

OSA 18-028

BE IT RESOLVED that the OSA Senate and Assembly support the decision of the University of Wisconsin Student Representatives to support the UW-River Falls Student Body President Rosemary Pechous's work to propose the Student Medical Leave Act.

Sponsored by: Ellen Dodge, Speaker of Assembly

Prelaw Society brought to floor.
Model UN seconded.

Speaker Dodge: This was brought last week. This would cover mental and physical health problems and would protect your seat in all of your classes. I spoke to Rosie and she will be taking this to the Board of Regents next week.

Placard vote, unanimous in favor.

XI. New Business –

XII. Committee Reports –

XIII. Discussion –

XIV. Announcements –

Nicole BellCorelli: Regarding SLI Awards. All student leaders got an email, but with Spring Break coming up we wanted to remind you that nominations are due April 4th.

Speaker Dodge: I cannot stress this enough, the open forum is really important so if you are available please go.

XV. Adjourn –

History Club motioned to adjourn.
Beta Theta Pi seconded the motion.

Student Medical Leave Act

March 4th, 2019

Rosemary Pechous

Whereas, it has been justified that to request a leave of absence from classes without taking incomplete, withdraws, or medical leave in the middle of term would not be considered viable under the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA): "Establishing whether or not a request is reasonable is based on whether an extended absence will alter or change an essential objective of the course. In most scenarios, it is very likely that a 3-4 week leave during a semester for a health or mental health issue would not be considered a reasonable accommodation, since missing that much time in a course will most likely result in an alteration of an essential element of the course. If a student does not qualify for this type of accommodation, or the request is not determined as a reasonable accommodation, a discussion regarding the options for the student that semester should be explored. This may include dropping a course, taking an incomplete, or taking a medical withdrawal." (UW-River Falls)

Whereas, it is disheartening to witness the lack of structure and support for students that need to take breaks from class may it be for mental health, family, or medical reasons,

Whereas, unlike Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) which protects employees from being fired if they request a leave of absence for any period of time with proper communication and documentation, there are no protections even similar to FMLA for students.

Whereas, Rosemary Pechous, Student Body President from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, has proposed the idea of Student Medical Leave Act (SMLA) which would have similar protects for students as FMLA does for employees.

Whereas, the idea of SMLA is not fully developed but with eagerness and communication, President Pechous hopes to discuss the realities of the bill with educators, lawmakers, ACLU members, and students; and while "accommodate" has various definitions, President Pechous plans to define the term in order to develop a legal plan of action for universities and students that is interpretable for every circumstance that may arise,

Whereas, it is an issue that there are not viable options other than to take incompletes or withdraw from classes if the need for time-off may occur,

Whereas, SMLA would protect university student's GPA's, paid tuition, and keep graduation goals on track if there were an option for file under SMLA,

Whereas, students that would most benefit from the SMLA option are: non-traditional students with children that may need to take-off time from classes to care for their children, students that are admitted to treatment programs, students with sudden medical needs, and students that need to care-take of family members for a brief time,

Whereas, the outdated idea that students must never miss class, no matter how broken they may be, is unjust; in the 21st Century, universities must protect and support students that need accommodations such as time off; more importantly, universities need to have options for students that need time-off but do not wish to drop out of classes,

Whereas, students with significant life issues are well-aware and usually well-equipped to handle both the situation and their school work; it is unjust to believe that students, for example, with depression, cannot handle doing homework during their time in treatment; and while a student that needs time-off may be incapable of doing *all* their assignments, they are, with an attempt to accommodate, able to complete some of their work,

Whereas, it would actually be discriminatory to suggest a student withdraw or take medical leave based on the landmark decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.* (1999), "*ruling that unjustified segregation of people with mental disabilities constitutes unlawful discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*," and "*The Supreme Court decided under Title II of the ADA that mental illness is a form of disability and therefore covered under the ADA, and that unjustified institutional isolation of a person with a disability is a form of discrimination because it "...perpetuates unwarranted assumptions that persons so isolated are incapable or unworthy of participating in community life."* The court added, "*Confinement in an institution severely diminishes the everyday life activities of individuals, including family relations, social contacts, work options, economic independence, educational advancement, and cultural enrichment.*" (*hhs.gov*)

Therefore, Be It Resolved, the UW-System Representatives, as well as individual campuses, support and encourage President Pechous's work on this project; and encourage lawmakers, educators, and all other parties included to drive this bill forward.

Therefore, Be It Further Resolved, the University of Wisconsin Student Representatives supports and endorses President Pechous's efforts in bringing forward this issue to educators, lawmakers, ACLU members, and students.

Signed,

Alex Smith, Chair

Rosemary Pechous, President
