

Weyerhaeuser Boardroom

January 23rd, 2025 | 12:00 PM CST



MACALESTER COLLEGE
STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Legislative Body Meeting Agenda

Land Acknowledgement ~ *Ryan Connor* ~ 2 minutes

- We would like to acknowledge that Macalester College and the College Archives are located on the traditional, ancestral and contemporary lands of the Waŋpékhute band of Dakhóta Oyáte, the Dakota nation. We make this acknowledgement to respect and affirm the sovereignty of the Dakota people, ancestors and descendants, and to respect the land itself. We recognize that this acknowledgment is but a first step in recognizing and dismantling aggressive and persistent policies of settler colonialism that continue to oppress to this day. These are the contexts in which the archives functions to this day. The work of acknowledgement must be paired with active practices like the amplification of Indigenous voices and land repatriation in order to be substantive and meaningful. With thanks to Jennings Mergenthal, Class of 2021, for their time and effort in crafting this land acknowledgement.

Visit from Vice President of Institutional Equity, Dr. Alina Wong ~ *Joel Sadofsky* ~ 30 minutes

- Ryan: My name is Ryan, I'm the vice president. Our typical speaker Liv is not here today so it's me today. We're going to be visited by the VP of Institutional Equity Dr. Alina Wong. But before we begin we have new people in the middle so we'll do introductions after this visit.
- Joel: We have Dr. Alina Wong with us today acting as the VP of Institutional Equity. We're gonna hear some updates and have some time for Q and A. We're going to have a speaker's list which means that Ryan as active speaker will moderate. Get Ryan's attention if you have a question. I think

we have half an hour dedicated to Q and A. We don't have to use all that time but we shouldn't go over. So, I'll hand it over to you.

- Dr. Alina Wong: Happy New Year everyone. Also, happy awkward week. Hi, my name is Alina Wong. I'm the vice president for Institutional Equity. I use she/they pronouns. I've been in this role at Macalester starting February 2022. I previously worked at Macalester as the assistant director of the Lealtad-Suzuki Center and the Cultural House coordinator from 2008 to 2012 so this is a return for me. Thanks for the invitation to meet with you all. I came last year to meet with MCSG with members of the Senior Leadership Team. I think this week in particular I wake up every morning with a jumble of emotions, commitments, dedications, worries, and anxieties and then it all starts over again. I'm excited to share with you all the work that we've been doing and will continue to do at Macalester. I want to be clear that I'll focus specifically on initiatives and work that we're doing within the division of institutional equity but know that all of our work is in partnership across campus with faculty, student affairs, other administrative units, with MCSG. None of our work is isolated or alone and I also say we don't own social justice, it is all of our work and responsibility. With that, I'm going to talk about some things that we're specifically leading or guiding. There are 4 or 5 areas of institutional equity where there is specific focus. There's the broad institutional equity areas where Minerva Muñoz, who's the Dean of Institutional Equity and Mayzong Lee, who's our equity specialist, work on doing the history heritage during awareness months, equity education resources, and broader college wide initiatives. There's the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life, the Lealtad-Suzuki Center for Social Justice, and also our Title IX and Non-Discrimination Office. I want to start with Title IX and Non-Discrimination because if you've been following executive orders and anything that was happening over the summer with the Title IX regulations. The Department of Education under Biden in 2024 had put out new regulations but there was a court injunction and I won't get into the legal aspects of it but, for various reasons, Macalester wasn't able to adopt the 2024 regulations. So, even though there was an update from the DOE because of a court injunction we maintained our 2020 policy regulations. What's happened now is that the Trump administration has undone the 2024 regulations which means we're back to 2020 so nothing has changed at Macalester. We also have our Non-Discrimination policy and one of the things I want to make clear is that I know there have been executive orders that specifically target trans students, non-binary students, Gender identity and expression are protected in our non discrimination policy and

that won't change. We're also revising our Non-Discrimination policy to make sure it affords rights and protection to all of our community members that we believe should be afforded and is a college policy. We must be compliant with state and federal guidelines but we have, as a private institution, we have our own non-discrimination and Title IX policies within our institution. We'll invite community responses to be part of that process to make sure it's a community informed document. Also, if you go to macalester.edu/equity, it is the institutional equity website. On the left navigation toolbar you'll see something called Equity Education Resources. If you click on that, Mayzong Lee, our Equity Specialist, in partnership with Minerva Muñoz and myself created equity education learning guides that are publicly available. We've shared it with colleagues at other institutions, too. It recognizes that equity and social justice work doesn't just happen in the classroom, in clubs, or in your community but is actually ongoing continuous work that we need to be doing all the time. We created these guides so that people can do their own self work. It includes resources like articles, books, podcasts, videos but also reflective questions and action planning guides so that you're not just thinking and talking about equity and social justice but also how to apply and act on these things. We also created these in parallel to complement our in person workshops which Minerva puts together and will be announced in the Mac Daily. We have about 3 to 5 a semester. They have included topics around implicit bias, pluralism, disability justice work, intersectionality, etc. We welcome your ideas and suggestions especially if you have ideas of workshops that you think that we should be doing, please let us know. Also, if you have skills and knowledge that you want to share or co-facilitate and co-create these workshops with us, please let us know. We're inviting students to co-facilitate a workshop with us with the Serie Center about supporting first gen college students because we know that's an area that we can deepen our resources. The learning guides are available. There's also a way for us since we get a lot of requests for workshops and resources and we can't be everywhere all the time. It also recognizes that it's not a one time thing. You don't just invite us in and we hold a 90 minute anti-racist workshop and viola, you're anti-racist. No, it's work that you need to do and reflective and deep work. The LSC does so many amazing things and provides advocacy support for BIPOC students, LGBTQ+ students, first gen students, and undocumented students. We know that will become heightened in the next 4 years and beyond that so we're looking to see how we can support ourselves during this work and also what we need to do to support our students to prepare for that. We're excited that

the LSC will undergo a huge renovation this summer. So, in Kagin Commons, the Max Center will go to the library so the LSC will be expanded with a large lounge space, kitchen, gender inclusive bathrooms, prayer space and meditation space. There'll also be study and community space for our students to have a place to come together in community. Sometimes it'll be for structured programs and also for students to just be with each other. We're also moving the Cultural House from 37 Mac to the Summit House which I think is 1558 Summit Avenue, which is very exciting. Also, to have an expanded space in Kagin allows us to focus the living learning program in the Cultural House for the residents and then having the LSC space be a focused programmatic space. Hana Dinku, the director of the LSC, is working on a curriculum for the Cultural House residents that will also include an option for a short-term study away for the residents. I know Residential Life will be announcing the room selection so if you're interested in living in the C-House, please sign up for that. I'll close with the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life. They continue to provide guidance and support around religious and faith identities. Sometimes you have an identity you hold and sometimes you're in an exploratory phase and are curious and want to learn more. They do a number of weekly events around Jewish life, Muslim life, Christian life, and interfaith programs, as well. I want to give a shout out, this afternoon they're bringing a speaker Simranjeet Singh who's a Sikh scholar who teaches at Union Theological Seminary in New York City and grew up in Texas. He'll be in the Chapel this afternoon speaking about his experience as a Sikh man growing up in San Antonio, Texas and how his Sikh principles have guided him especially through these times. Now, I want to open up for questions and I'm happy to try to answer them as best I can.

- Ryan: Anybody first?
 - Tristan: I'm wondering to what extent, if at all, if your office is going to be involved in the projects and proposals put forward by the college after their cowardly refusal to divest in Palestine? If at all?
 - Dr. Alina Wong: Not the office, the division in general but individual members maybe. I did serve on the Social Responsibility Committee that reviewed the Mac for Palestine proposal. It would depend on what the college takes on and who gets involved in that. So, not directly to my knowledge but yes, we will be. I just don't know how. It'll probably be more individual people.

- Alec: Out of curiosity, I don't know how the system really works but if the government conditions like the financial aid on the gender issue, is there anything we can do about that?

REDACTED

- Elizabeth: Hi, I'm wondering to what extent does Institutional Equity currently collaborate with ISP and is there going to be any expansion of that collaboration given all the issues that the Trump administration presents to international students especially those from specific countries?
 - Dr. Alina Wong: Yes, we do. Programmatically, it's more the LSC that will be working with the ISP because there's a shared space there. Some of it's direct and some of it is my partnership with Katheryn Kay Coquemont and Javier Guitierrez because ISP sits with Student Affairs. So, really thinking about how we bring our two divisions together. It also depends on what's needed. There's expertise that we don't have that ISP has more. So, some of it is me asking ISC what they need or Katherine and Javier communicating to the entire Senior Leadership Team because it's not just Institutional Equity, it's also the Provost, the Registrar's Office. Having open communication across the college of what are we hearing from students? How are these executive orders or federal legislation impacting this and what can we do? The short answer is yes. The how is what we're figuring out. I want to note too, that this work and partnerships are important when we're not in these challenging times. It's different work but I'm attentive to the fact that we should do the work now and deepen as we go.
- Ryan: Any other questions?
 - Laurice: Thank you for your presence today. My first question is, are you aware of the FSU and the 11 demands that they've made and their argument? I wanted to hear from you about the current progress in terms of that from your department. One of the eleven demands is to create a fund that allows undocumented students to have work study positions and be paid the equivalent of a federal work study. Knowing the new administration, we know that this is a very important thing. How is your department helping FSU?

- Dr. Alina Wong: I met with leaders of FSU when they sent us their list on first gen pay. We've been in continued conversations and I know the LSC has also worked closely with FSU. As an outgrowth of that conversation, we've set up what is loosely called a Financial Barriers Working Group to go through those 11 items and see what we can do. There are some things that we've already done and some will take more work. Some of it is communication of how we make sure people know what resources are available to them around health insurance, I know that was one big thing. Things like the fund for undocumented students will take longer to set up. Some of that has to do with philanthropy and fundraising and some of that has to do with legality and the tax codes. Whenever we give money to anybody, whether it's an employee, a student, scholarship, or Emergency Fund, we have to account for all of that. We need to figure out how we can set up that system that won't penalize our students later. In a conversation we've had with FSU, just better education around taxes because if we offer students a stipend in a lump sum and then 8 months later you have to report it. We need to figure out a way that we're doing this that won't cause further strife. Under our previous administration, when there was more protection for undocumented DACA students, we might need to change some strategies now but it is definitely something that we have on our radar. Hana Dinku is part of that Financial Barriers group and we'll continue to work on that. This is the part, I have to admit that I navigate this daily, is that so much of the things and questions that students are bringing up are the focus of our work but are not actually in our purview. I don't have the authority to set up the fund so we often work in partnership. What I have the responsibility of doing, and I think this what FSU raised that's so important, is who's making sure this happens so that it doesn't fall on the students to keep having to bring it up. That's something that Minerva and I have talked is about structures to bring to Macalester and looking at our staff positions.

That's something else that FSU talked about is having a person or dedicated people. We do have folks but there's a gap so that's what we're working on. Using those 11 items as a starting point and knowing that those aren't the only needs of our students. So that FSU can focus on being students and being in community with each other so they don't have to do that on their own.

- Joel: I want to add that MCSG has been delegated the task of appointing 2 students to the Financial Barriers Working Group. My hope is that we get one person from LB who is interested who I would prefer that they identify as first generation or low income and then hopefully a student representative outside of MCSG.
- Aisha: Are you working at all to increase the resources that first gen students have access to? I know you're remodeling and expanding the LSC so are you going to create a position of someone catering to first gen students? In a broad sense, are you going to work within the remodel to increase those resources?
 - Dr. Alina Wong: I want to be clear about this in terms of increase. This is what I mean about staffing. We do have someone in the LSC who's responsible for guiding and supporting first generation students. We know that there is more work to do so we work in partnership with the Community Engagement Center because they work with Posse, Questbridge students so we are working on that. That's what I mean when I talk about staffing structure and what are things that we need to do so that there's better support and attention given to first gen students.. Also about how we build those partnerships across the college. There's no way that one person can provide all of the support and I know that that's not what you're asking for. But we do need someone whose responsibility is to ensure that the work is happening. Whether that'll result in a new position, I don't know yet but we are working on that.
- Aisha: As a suggestion, I think it would be cool if you guys could make those resources accessible to the whole school. I know that there are first gen students, like myself, who are not

in Questbridge, or Posse, so it would be helpful if those resources expanded past that..

- Dr. Alina Wong: Yes, absolutely, thank you for your follow up question because that's what I meant. Yes, many of our students are in those and we recognize that there are first gen students who aren't in those cohort programs. We also found in our research that it's sometimes not only first gen students but there might be international students who are struggling with navigating the U.S. higher education system or might be having challenges. We want to make sure that our resources are broadly known and not just by those in specific programs. That's why the expansion of the LSC space is one of them and that's why we're also looking at structures and programs, as well.
- Ryan: Any final questions before we wrap up? Thank you so much for coming. *[applause]*

Introductions ~ *Ryan Connor* ~ 5 minutes

- Name, pronouns, position
 - Ryan: We're going to be going around and saying names, pronouns, and position. I'm Ryan, Vice President, he/him.
 - Joel: Joel, he/they pronouns, I'm the president, and a senior geography major.
 - Marina: I'm Marina, she/her, Junior class rep and class lead, and bio major.
 - Chloe: Chloe, she/her, I'm a first year rep and probably math and econ.
 - Cem: Cem, any pronouns, first year rep, and I'm interested in psychology and maybe political science.
 - Aisha: Aisha, first year representative, she/her, likely economics major.
 - Cooper: Cooper, they/she pronouns, senior class rep, and political science and anthropology double major.
 - Elizabeth: Elizabeth, she/her, senior class rep, and political science major.
 - Ainsley: Ainsley, she/her, junior class rep, and political science major.
 - Emma: Emma, she/her, health and wellness liaison, junior, and biology and computer science major.

- Ash: Ash, he/him, athletics and recreation liaison, sophomore, psychology and studio art double major.
- Willow: Willow, any pronouns, belonging and accessibility liaison, junior, WGSS and political science double major with a human rights concentration.
- Laurie: Laurie, she/her, MCSG advisor, Executive Director of Center for Student Leadership and Engagement.
- Else: Else, she/her, chief of staff, senior, geography major.
- Emi: Emi, she/her, Associate Director of Center for student leadership and engagement, advisor of AAC, CEC, EPAG.
- Garrett: Garrett, he/him, Coordinator of Student Organizations, advisor of SOC, FAC.
- Tristan: Tristan, they/them, senior, WGSS major, AAC chair.
- Philomena: Philomena, she/her, history major, Cabinet chair.
- Sylvia: Sylvia, she/her, senior class rep, anthropology major.
- Aditya: Aditya, he/him, sophomore class rep, neuroscience and econ major.
- AnLian: AnLain, he/him, sophomore class rep, math major.
- David: David, he/him, sophomore class rep, history major.
- Laurice: Laurice, he/him, sophomore, international student liaison, econ and data science major.
- Galjer: Galjer, she/her, sophomore, dining and residential life liaison, political science major.
- Mathilda: Mathilda, she/her, media and outreach coordinator, senior, econ major.
- Thea: Thea, she/her, sophomore, secretary and treasurer, geography major.
- Alec: Alec, he/him, SOC chair, data science major.

Committee/Cabinet Check-in Time ~ *Committee/Cabinet Chairs* ~ 10 minutes

- Ryan: We're going to switch over to committee meetings. There's been some pretty big changes across a lot of the committees so if we could talk some time with the new members that'll be great. So, we're going to take 10 minutes and I'll call us back at 12:47.

Retreat Idea Generation ~ *Ryan Connor* ~ 5 minutes

- Planned:
 - Icebreaker/teambuilding activity
 - Update on finances

- Semester goal setting
- Suggestions?
 - Ryan: We're going to move on now. Our retreat is going to be February 1st. It's a Saturday, it's not overnight like in the fall. We'll be doing an icebreaker and team building. We'll do a finances update and semester goal setting for the Spring. We'll revisit the goals we made over the Fall retreat. We also wanted to open it up to you guys to get some feedback on what you guys would or would not want at the retreat.
 - David: I think it would be good to have time with our sub-committees.
 - Ryan: So, more committee time? Awesome.
 - Laurice: Can we plan some fun activities as well. Get Garrett on the guitar.
 - Ryan: Yeah, we'll get Garrett on the guitar.
 - Laurice: Maybe some team bonding, building activities.
 - Ryan: Yeah, we'll get some good team bonding.
 - Marina: What's the snack situation?
 - Ryan: What do you want the snack situation to be?
 - Marina: Not Toppers.
 - Ryan: We'll think about it. We'll probably not have Toppers. Any food suggestions? Apple sauce?
 - Else: The retreat is from 1 to 5 so it's not really a mealtime thing.
 - Ryan: You should have lunch before. We have no money.

Announcements ~ 5 minutes

- Class night on Friday (1/24) ~ *Class leads*
 - Ryan: Class nights. Let's go from first years to seniors. Take the mic, say what you're doing and what time.
 - Aisha: Ok, so for our night it's a bit elaborate but we are thinking of doing a starry soray and/or garden party. We have big plans and we're still sort of figuring out the venue. A lot of the venues on campus are either too big or too small. But it'll be good. We might need help and volunteers.
 - David: Maybe we shouldn't have let them go first but we're going to do pizza and ping pong. It should be from 6 to 8 there'll be ping pong and pizza.
 - Marina: We're going to have a snacks and board game night in the Loch. There'll be snacks and card games and music and vinyl painting. In the Loch, 8pm to 10pm.

- Sylvia: Ours is called Fond Farewell, a little goodbye for our last semester. Hopefully people will come and they'll write letters to themselves that they'll get at graduation and there'll be hot chocolate.
- Brighter Campaign Event (1/28) ~ *Laurie Adamson*
 - Laurie: Hi everyone. You might have seen an email of an event happening on Tuesday, the 28th. It's at JWall. You're all invited and they're going to have coo mittens. There's an ice skating rink and food trucks. It's to celebrate the launch of Brighter which is the new campaign Macalester is looking at. Typically, there's a strategic plan that's set and then they launch a campaign to help fund the plan. This is not a fundraising event but more so a launch. It's from 5pm to 7pm on the 28th and it would be great if you could come!
- Elections ~ *Joel Sadofsky*
- Retreat February 1st ~ *Joel Sadofsky*
- [OL Applications](#) due 2/14 ~ *Emi Menk*
 - Emi: Hello! We are looking ahead to August and Orientation Leader applications are opening today. There's a link to position description in the announcements. TLDR, students who are Orientation Leaders get to come back to campus early, your meals are covered, and receive a stipend. Else, Laurice, Elizabeth all did it before and they're all great resources. We'll have info sessions and next week there'll be a big blast of information coming out. It's a super great experience, if you have any questions, come talk to me. I highly encourage you to apply, it's great!
 - Ryan: At this point, the meeting is adjourned. Thank you all for coming and thank you to all the new members for coming.