

From the Desk of the Undergraduate Student Government President - Thursday, Feb. 13, 2025

Dear Bowling Green State University Administration,

It is the belief of the Undergraduate Student Government President and the undersigned executive board members that BGSU did not do its due diligence in regard to the ice storm that hit Bowling Green yesterday evening. In this letter, "I" is used as the President of Undergraduate Student Government's voice and perspective. "We" is used as the voice of the USG President and the executive board members that signed the letter.

Yesterday evening, water on the ground was rapidly turning to ice and as I walked across campus, I could see students slipping and some falling trying to make it home or to class. Between 3:30pm-5pm, the walkways were not being salted, yet water was actively freezing across campus. On the short walk from the Union to Eppler before my 4:30pm class, I slipped multiple times and saw a student fall. After class, while walking to my car in Lot E, both a faculty member and I were slipping on the ice between the Union Starbucks and Shatzel Hall. I watched 4 students fall on that short walk, including a serious fall where a student fell off a curb and hit their back on the ground. It took me 10 minutes to travel the very short distance to my car due to slipping on black ice over and over. Last night, a student told me they were in a car accident while coming to campus for a 7pm class because they would have gotten a zero on their class presentation if they did not go.

Most conversations I have had or overheard from students, faculty, and staff have mentioned the unsafe conditions on the roads and how their commute to BGSU felt unsafe. Thankfully, the walking paths were salted, so I saw fewer students slipping. Unfortunately, some students found the commute to campus difficult. A student told me that she had to sleep on a friend's couch because she could not get to her house in Perrysburg after she had to go to her 7pm class, due to the attendance policy. Overall, many students felt that the preparations for managing the ice storm on campus were inadequate.

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Communication regarding winter storms via email left out vital information regarding travel safety procedures, weather impacts on campus, and emergency contacts and resources. On-campus residents did not receive an email to warn them of icy sidewalks but had to hear through word of mouth or by slipping on sidewalks themselves. The email contained vital information about parking restrictions on “snow streets” for city crews to remove snow and ice, which was important to include. We believe that more information should have been included in the email such as the sidewalks being slippery, information on potential class cancellations, and how to advocate for yourself if you believe it is too dangerous to commute to class. Some students do not feel empowered to communicate with their professors about missing class due to the weather, so they risk their safety by commuting in unsafe conditions. If BGSU is not going to cancel classes, due to valid concerns about contact hours and university operations, they at least need to provide resources for students to advocate for themselves.

Another issue is the college-level policy regarding moving classes online. A professor informed me that The College of Arts and Sciences has a policy that classes should not be moved to Zoom unless Bowling Green public schools are cancelled or the district in which the professor lives is cancelled. We believe that autonomy for professors to decide when it is appropriate to move their classes online should not be removed by a policy.

USG conducted two informal Instagram polls in the morning to gauge student opinions on the cold weather. The first question asked, “If you had a late-night class (yesterday) or early morning class (today), how should classes from 7pm-10am been handled?” Results showed that 14% wanted them to stay in-person, 34% wanted classes to shift online, 28% wanted them to be cancelled, and the other 23% just clicked to see the results. The other question we asked was “Have you felt unsafe commuting to campus or walking on campus in the last 24 hours?” Results showed that 46% reported feeling unsafe both while commuting and walking on campus, 12%

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felt unsafe only while commuting, 31% only while walking across campus, and 11% did not feel unsafe at all. This shows that a majority of students either want classes to be cancelled or moved online and have felt unsafe either traveling to or on campus in the last day.

Our call to action is threefold and aligns with our previous call to action in USG Senate Bill 01. Increased communication from the University when there are potentially hazardous cold weather conditions on campus, proper preparation for known weather events before they occur (i.e. salting roads before the water turns to ice), and setting policies at the college or department level that give professors the autonomy and even encourages them to either cancel, move classes online, or create hybrid options when roads could be potentially dangerous, especially for commuters from rural areas. Please let USG know what it can do to support this process, as the student body has let us know this is a pressing issue that needs rectification.

Thank you,

Elyse Adrian, Undergraduate Student Government President

Executive board member signatories

Abigail Burger, Internal Affairs Chair

Brandon Walker, Director of Health and Safety

Sydney Gourley, Chief of Staff

Hannah Steil, Legislative Secretary

Tiago Gaboardi, Director of Inclusion and Belonging

Gyllien Anderson, Speaker of the Senate