

STUDENT SENATE MINUTES

October 29th, 2019

The Senate President called the Senate meeting to order at 7:31pm and announced that the meeting may be filmed or audio recorded and may be available to the public. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL:

Roll was called and quorum was established with 83 senators present.

Not there for roll call:

- Ceesay
- Espinoza
- Longland

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Georges Obayi:
 - Fourth year industrial and systems engineer.
 - President of pride student union.
 - Here to speak to the newer senators.
 - Implores everyone else to listen as well.
 - What you have here is an opportunity to do a lot for the campus.
 - Wants senators to notice there is more that they can do.
 - Must not let disagreements and conflict get in between the job they have as senators.
 - Feels that many people in the chamber are viewed negatively on campus and that is hard to know.
 - Was told his freshman year that student government does not do a lot on campus and a few years later, he hates to say he agrees with some of those claims.
 - Is aware that Branden Pearson is being given a position that he is not fit to hold.
 - Notes that he has known Branden Pearson since his freshman year of college. Did not know he was homophobic.
 - Saddens him to be here speaking negatively again.
 - Implores senators to know the power they have here on campus.
 - Would like to see a change.
- Ryan Eliason:
 - Third year psychology major and on the board of two clubs.
 - Is not here to speak on their behalf but on his own.
 - Have attended hearings in which Senator Pearson was a member of the committee.
 - Feels that Branden Pearson was a lame duck at these hearings.
- Senator Silva:
 - Disagrees with the R&A recommendation for Branden Pearson as Judiciary committee.
 - Brings up previous years and examples as to why she believes this.

- Feels that Branden Pearson cannot communicate kindly, “what example does that set for constituents?”
- States rules that she feels disqualify Branden Pearson as an applicant.
- Talks about behavior she noticed in Branden Pearson during last week’s senate meeting.
- Senator Tio:
 - States that her speech is about sexual assault and might have trigger warnings. Invites people to leave the room if needed.
 - 30.1% is the percentage of undergraduate women are people who will experience some type of sexual assault at the university, and 7.7% of undergraduate men.
 - Dean of Students Heather White has stated that these stats confirm that there surely needs to be a culture change at the University of Florida.
 - Believes that cultural change starts in changing the unwelcoming atmosphere that is at the University of Florida.
 - Mentions that the University of Florida Independent Alligator wrote an article regarding Supreme Court Justice Thomas coming to campus in the spring, and students’ displeasure with this, as he has been accused of sexual assault by multiple women.
 - Feels it is unacceptable that someone is allowed to just resign from their position rather than being held accountable for their actions.
 - Inspired by the “We Believe Survivors” club.
 - Building a coalition in support of a resolution standing up for victims of sexual assault.
 - These are issues in which students’ lives are at stake, those being on their phones is not acceptable.
 - Invites people to come out and reach out if interested in helping survivors of sexual assault by drafting a resolution.
- Senator Garcia:
 - Wants to talk about how your words and actions can change someone's life.
 - Spoke last week in opposition to the appointment of Senator Pearson to the open Business Seat.
 - Words mean nothing if your actions speak otherwise.
 - If actions in the past indicate otherwise, why should it matter? Why should we trust you?
 - Touches on privilege, something that Senator Garcia believes many have in this room.
 - Privilege is ignoring someone else’s issues because it does not affect you.
 - Voting for someone based on him or her being “nice to you” is abusing one’s privilege.
 - His behavior shows that he is only nice to people when it is beneficial to him.
 - Sexual assault has increased on campus, and student safety should be a priority.
 - Sexual assault prevention is not a bipartisan issue, it is a human issue.
 - We are more than just statistics, more than a party affiliation, we are people and human.
 - Senator Solomon gave Senator Pearson to apologize to the chamber, which is the bare minimum of what he can do, and he still did not do it.

- Does not want someone chairing the Judiciary committee who cannot apologize or own up to his mistakes.
- Senator Martinez:
 - Senator for the CLAS.
 - Wants to bring attention to something she feels the chamber has been ignored.
 - Paired with fellow Senator Rush to work on the issues that first generation student's face.
 - 22% of 2023 enrolled students are first generation.
 - Many in the chamber know what it feels like first-gen.
 - For those who do not know, "let me tell you what it feels like."
 - Constantly felt worried, fearful, and anxious.
 - Had to go through a lot of things she did not know how to handle.
 - Constantly faced with adversity, and uncertainty.
 - Struggle does not end when coming to this campus.
 - Whenever she has to make decisions that other students handle, she has insecurities that sometimes other students do not face.
 - Has become so connected to first generation students, and wants to continue this. The First-Gen Caucus is the first step.
 - Students who parents have not completed a bachelor's degree, are considered first generation as well.
- Senator Pearson:
 - Was appointed the Business senator last week.
 - More excited for the opportunity to serve as the Judiciary Chair later this evening if elected.
 - Here to address the allegations put on him by the Inspire party.
 - Believes that the minority party is upset that Senator Pearson exposed information about the Inspire party previously in a letter to the editor with the Independent Alligator.
 - Was the first of many to bring up allegations against the Inspire Party.
 - The livestreams in which these things have happened have "magically disappeared."
 - We should never promote a space in which students are to be attacked.
 - When objecting someone's speaking time, he did in fact do this.
 - Offered an amendment to the Senate Rules and Procedures that secured 5 minutes to all speakers for the future.
 - Regarding him calling an end to a meeting, people failed to realize he did this because the room reservation was going to expire.
 - Voted against his own motion, to make sure that Senator Jackson's legislation was heard.
 - As a victim of domestic abuse, he has tried as a Senator to make change to the culture around abuse on campus, especially sexual awareness and sexual assault.
 - Committed to doing good things as the Judiciary Chair.
 - It is evident that there are two distinct visions.
 - Sees a student senate that cares for one another and another one that thinks there will always be division.

- Others see a Student Government that is constantly pitted against each other.
 - Do you want leadership that will focus on the flaws, or leadership that will try to change them?
 - Not here to play party politics, but rather serve students first.
 - Senator Solomon:
 - Has only been a senator for two weeks.
 - His history did not start two weeks ago, but rather in the summer.
 - Attended many senate meetings and got involved as much as he could.
 - There is no greater calling in life than to serve others and the students.
 - The more and more he got involved with the process, he was able to see what it truly was like.
 - Felt hostility in the senate when trying to speak up. Especially from Senator Pearson.
 - On June 19th, 2019, Senator Solomon gave Senator Pearson time to apologize for his previous actions, one of them being to adjourn a meeting in which Solomon's legislation would not have been heard, and he did not rescind it.
 - Wants to talk about the actions that he wanted to Branden Pearson to apologize for.
 - Senator Pearson did not resend his motion, Senator Solomon feels he should have.
 - It is important that we respect free speech and the freedom of expression in this chamber.
 - Important we do everything we can to encourage and lift each other up.
 - Does not have faith that the objection to Branden Pearson being Judiciary chair will be successful.
 - On this note, Senator Solomon begs and pleads with Senator Pearson to understand that everyone deserves to get the light of day.
 - At the end we were all elected or chosen to be here.
 - Senator Lima:
 - Inspire caucus will be voting against the Judiciary chair R&A committee recommendation.
 - Outlines the main reasons why Senator Pearson is being opposed as the new Judiciary Chairman.
 - Feels that Branden Pearson deficits actions that have been documented.
 - Feels the speech Branden Pearson gave was an action to silence marginalized voices.
 - Speaks on Senator Pearson previously objecting to the extension of public debate time.
 - Lists multiple reasons he feels that Pearson is unfit for the Judiciary Chair position.
 - Glad that the full Senate has the chance to debate the nomination.
 - Will be moving to postpone this appointment indefinitely.
 - Senator Chou:
 - Wants to address a few things before addressing the main body of his speech.

- Reemphasizes that people have come to speak out on the actions of Branden Pearson, which does not happen often with just any senator.
- For someone to come to Senate and take time out of their day to speak against a nomination says a lot.
- Says that Branden Pearson was illegally serving on three committees, while also running for a Senate seat while being the President’s assistant.
- States that Branden Pearson’s lack of working with a team hurt the Gators Matter campaign for free menstrual products on campus.
- Uses two pieces of paper that showcase Senator Pearson and plagiarism, one of them being a piece of legislation that was sent to the Judiciary Committee by Senator Pearson.
- “We can do better than Branden Pearson.”
- Senator Amrose:
 - Very first interaction with Student Government was going to the Judiciary committee back in 2017.
 - Very clear that most people on the committee at the time did not enjoy their time, and this theme has continued.
 - Does not feel there has been a change in Senate leadership to attempt to make minority voices heard.
 - The Judiciary Committee has failed many bills written by Senator Amrose.
 - Feels that Judiciary committee is unwelcoming.
 - It is not a collaborative space. It has been a partisan one.
 - Feels it is a partisan space, would like for one minority voice to be on the Judiciary committee.
 - Making sure leadership of the committee is not trying to prevent minority party legislation is not very difficult.
 - Does not have much faith that someone who has failed previous legislation would suddenly start passing legislation they once would turn away.
 - Talks about meeting he had with Branden Pearson today, asking him questions about his leadership.

*****If you wish to hear any speeches given during public debate please request the recordings from senatesecretary@sg.ufl.edu*****

AMENDMENTS TO THE MINUTES:

- There were none.

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

- There were none.

SENATE PRESIDENT’S REPORT:

- Senate President Dunson welcomes the senators.
- Yields her time to Jacobi Bedenfield, Senate Program Coordinator:
 - Jacobi Bedenfield welcomes the senators.
 - Gives presentation on “Using Basic Parliamentary Procedure.”

REPLACEMENT & AGENDA RECOMMENDATIONS:

Judiciary Committee: Branden Pearson

- Senator Lima moves to postpone the recommendation indefinitely. Senator Jackson seconds.
 - This motion is debatable. The procedure will be as follows: two rounds of con pro debate followed by a vote
- **First round of con:**
 - Senator Hernandez: Has waited for two weeks waiting for applicants and it is crucial for a chair to be appointed for legislation to be heard that hasn't been for a few weeks due to vacancy of the chair. Senator Pearson has been the only applicant to apply.
- **First round of pro:**
 - Senator Lima: It is clear that this is not an applicant that can represent the chamber adequately. This person has done things not in the interest of students, and more time should be given to find better applicants. Just because he is the only candidate, does not mean that this will remain the case.
- **Second round of con:**
 - Chairwoman Jones: R&A met this week but also to appoint Judiciary chair. Feels it is important to go forward with the hearing to hear both sides and listen to all sides. It is important to hear the whole picture and story. Feels it would be wise to have healthy debate.
- **Second round of pro:**
 - Senator Jackson: Concerned with the fact that Senator Pearson has refused to meet and discuss legislation multiple times. This was not the case with former Chairman Sandifer. Is concerned about future working relationships with both senators and students, and Senator Pearson.
- Senator Lima motions for a roll call vote. In the eyes of the chair, that motion fails.
- There was a motion for the division of house.
- In a standing vote, in the eyes of the chair, that motion fails.

Branden Pearson:

3 Minutes of Presentation:

- Senator Pearson gives his various experiences that he believe qualifies himself for the open Judiciary Chair position.
- Goal is to create a committee that promotes unity.
- Major project he will be working on his creating rules and procedures that will pertain specifically to the Judiciary committee.
 - In the past, legislation has been heard with volatile rules and procedures. Wants to fix this issue.

There was a motion to suspend the Senate Rules and Procedures to extend speaking time by 3 minutes by unanimous consent. Approved.

- Wants to meet with the Rules and Ethics Chair and other senators to talk about 300 codes because he feels that work on the 300 codes have been inconsistent and patchy.

- Wants to work with I&C chair to highlight high quality legislation that is being passed in the chamber. Wants to do a monthly recap of legislation that is being worked on and passed on in the chamber.
- Mentions working on the Mental Health Task Force during his freshman year.
- Served as University Police Department liaison his freshman year.
 - Created program to show students the dangers of drinking and driving.

Three minutes of question and answer:

- Senator Hernandez: how do you plan on creating a more equal process for hearing legislation?
- Senator Pearson: One idea would be set a specific time of presentation, question and answer, and deliberation.
- Senator Karim: If elected, will you promise to sincerely and fairly consider all pieces of legislation, regardless of party affiliation?
- Senator Pearson: The intent of a judiciary chair is to have equal and fair hearing for legislation. Another idea he has is to make sure that legislation is being heard in certain order.
- Chairman Brown: How will you as chair make sure you are meeting quorum on a consistent basis?

There was a motion to extend question and answer period by 5 minutes by unanimous consent. Approved.

- Senator Pearson: One plan he has is setting a consistent time to meet every week so that everyone is planning ahead to meet instead of figuring it out the week of.
- Senator Solomon: Will you contact the authors of legislation to explain why certain pieces of legislation have failed?
- Senator Pearson: Yes, met with Senator Amrose and others. Talked through ways to implement a consistent criteria when reviewing legislation. Wants to make sure that legislation that does not meet the five criteria is tabled instead of failed to work with authors to make sure that if there are any changes that can be made.
- Senator Nelson: What would you do as the chair to make sure progressive legislation is vetted in order to advance the student body?
- Senator Pearson: Making sure that every judiciary committee member knows the five criteria needed to pass legislation. Will be hosting a workshop with his committee members once they are appointed.
- Senator Jackson: Can you explain what “implication” means to you?
- Senator Pearson: Defines his view of implication- something that would be an unintended consequence.

There was a motion to extend the question and answer period by 2 minutes by unanimous consent. Approved.

- Senator Amrose: What side of students do you think you represent?
- Senator Pearson: Worked on the sexual assault prevention resources with the Internal Affairs team. These recording soft wares used, streamlined the information in order to provide for victims. Highlights his ventures on the Mental Health Task Force, and working with multicultural organizations on what mental health means during Mental Health Week.

There was a motion to extend the question and answer period by 45 seconds by unanimous consent. Approved.

First Round of Con:

- Senator Lima: Senator Pearson failed to explain why he did not support a piece of legislation to install blue lights on campus. This is not the character that is necessary for one to be a Judiciary Chair.
- Senator Garcia: Senator Pearson talked a lot about mental health but Senator Pearson's decision against blue lights affected many students.
- Senator Nimar: Expresses her discontent with Senator Pearson chairing this committee, based on previous things he has done in the chamber.

First Round of Pro:

- Senator Hernandez: Ideas that the applicant presented tonight shows that he clearly wants to increase transparency and accountability. Has also shown that he is interested in creating an equitable process for hearing legislation. His previous experiences and successes should speak volumes to his qualifications.
- Senator Gunby: It is clear that Senator Pearson has shown that he is not doing this for a resume line, but rather because he wants to make the university a better place. Mentions many opportunities and experiences that he has shared with Branden Pearson that he feels qualifies him as a nomination.
- Chairwoman Girschick: It is important to remember that this is still a place to learn.

Second Round of Con:

- Senator Nimar: In regards to comment made earlier, about him being the only applicant, no one else applied against him because everyone on the judiciary committee are also a part of his same party and would not run against him. No one is doubting his qualifications, but rather speaking out against his past actions. The decision made tonight could change a lot.
- Senator Bindi: Elected in the spring, his first resolution written, commemorating Dance Marathon at UF, was not taken because of Pearson's piece of the same topic was taken first. He was declined to be adopted as an author and sponsor, and he avoided Senator Bindi.
- Senator Solomon: Against Senator Pearson's nomination because of his partisan behavior.

Second Round of Pro:

- Chairwoman Girschick: this is a place for us to be learning. If he is taking the time to teach his committee members then he is clearly investing in that learning community.
- Chairman Brown: The idea that Senator Pearson mentioned about having office hours and specific rules and procedures for the judiciary committee is something he has never heard while in the chamber. He also has worked alongside him and can attest to his ability to be a chair.
- Senator Wikan: Has served with Senator Pearson in multiple facets and has always had a great experience with him. Senator Pearson works hard for past, present, future students at UF.

Third Round of Con:

- Senator Solomon: Believes that chamber should be picking someone who has not been so heavily politically affiliated.
- Senator Chou: Finds it interesting that no one has addressed Senator Pearson's plagiarism. Calls out several things he feels that Senator Pearson lied about. Feels that

Senator Pearson has a lot of power but not done much for the students. Actions speak louder than words.

- Senator Amrose: Feels that Senator Pearson already ran the judiciary committee and feels that the committee did not do much during his time there.

Third Round of Pro:

- Senator Douglas: Believes that Senator Pearson has the tenacity, work ethic, and ambition to serve in this position.
- Senator Alexander: Has known Senator Pearson for a year and has seen Senator Pearson serve in many capacities and do a good job. Senator Pearson highlighted wanting to work with the I&C committee and he feels that this is a great opportunity.
- Senator Kaighin: Feels it is important that everyone is working together on legislation which is something that Senator Pearson is advocating for.
- Chairwoman Jones: As chair of Information and Communications, it was pleasant to have someone else reach out to her. Feels that the Senate recap would be invaluable to the chamber.

There was a motion to suspend the Senate Rules and Procedures to add two rounds of con-pro debate, mirroring the same time allotted. During a voice vote, there was a motion for a division of house. In a standing vote, in the eyes of the chair, that motion fails.

Two Minutes of Final Privilege:

- The objection that is being made tonight is not about qualifications, but rather it is party political.
- For a party to state that they are advocates for communities of sexual assault as well as marginalized students, and to stand here and attack him, someone who has had personal experience with abuse, is disheartening.

Senator Lima moves for a roll call vote. In the eyes of the chair, that motion passes.

Roll call vote:

Alexander, Brady	Y
Amrose, Zachary Aaron	N
Anderson, Drew	Y
Attlesey, Dylan	N
Barocas, R. Matthew	N
Bennett, Madeleine	Y
Bindi, Nikolas	N
Blomeley, Emily	Y
Brown, Cooper	Y
Castillo, Melody	N
Ceesay, Ibrahim	Absent
Chatoff, Jordyn	Y
Chou, Zachariah	N
Cordova, Julia	Y
Diaz, Matthew	Incomplete VR

Douglas, T. Colson	Y
Dunson, Emily	Senate President
Espinoza, Maria	Absent
Faisal, Mohammed	N
Fallin, Brandon	Y
Freedman, Austin	Y
Galeano, Noemi	Y
Garcia, Isabella	N
Girschick, Samantha	Y
Glover, Jackson	Y
Goel, Nandini	Y
Gomez-Clavijo, Santiago	N
Goren, Andrew	Y
Groux, Anabelle	Y
Gunby, David	Y
Hernandez, Gabriela	Y
Hoffman, Feraby	Y
Jackson, Kristen	N
Jain, Mallika	N
Jesurajan, Jessica	Y
Jones, Meryl	Y
Kaighin, Lindsay	Y
Kanouse, Laura	Y
Karim, Raisa	N
Karimi, Solmaz	N
Kays, David	Y
Kendrick, Tyler	Y
Lai, Zhonglin "Savannah"	N
Le, Lynn	N
Lima, Ben	N
Lloyd, C. Thelwell (Wells)	Y
Longland, Seth	Absent
Lovesky, Bailey	N
Maniti, Faith	Y
Marsh, Eric	N
Martinez, Jessica	N
Martinez, Ramon	Y
Miller, Timothy	Y
Morris, Abby	Y
Muralidhara, Sparsha	N
Murshid, Minaal	N

Nelson, Marcus	Y
Nimer, Sana	N
Oni, Busa	N
Orban, Steven	N
Patel, Sahil	N
Phillpot, Audrey	Y
Pearson, Branden	Abstain: Candidate being voted on
Pepple, Grace	Y
Portugues, Anthony	Y
Potthast, Olivia	Y
Ragan, Rebecca	N
Rajaei, Moein	Incomplete VR
Reineke, Chase	Y
Rodriguez, Yanissa	N
Rush, Alana	Y
Sandifer, Will	Y
Shaw, Libby	Y
Shoaf, Alexander	Y
Silva, Angel	N
Singleton, Stephen	Y
Skinner, Ryan	N
Solomon, Colin	N
Stern, Alyssa	Y
Tio, Paola-Claudia	N
Urbanski, Mary Kate	Y
White, Wynton	Y
Wiggins, Lillian	Y
Wikan, Audrey	Y
Wilder, Ryan	N
Wray, Kyle	Y
Zimmer, Shawn	N

In a roll call vote of 46 to 33 the Replacement and Agenda committee recommendation for the open Judiciary Committee Chair: Branden Pearson is approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:
REPLACEMENT & AGENDA:

- Senate President Pro-Tempore Sandifer welcomes the senators.
- There are some open permanent Senate Seats:
 - Education
 - Graduate (8)
 - Medicine

- Nursing
- Veterinary Medicine
- There are open Committee Seats:
 - Budget & Appropriations (1)
 - Allocations (1)
 - Judiciary (4)
 - Rules & Ethics (2)
 - Information & Communication (2)

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS:

- Chairman Brown welcomes the Senators.
- Hearing schedule for operational and travel budget will be finalized soon.
- One open seat on the committee. Reach out with questions.
- Will be holding 800 Codes workshops. First one will be 6:45pm next Tuesday.
- Office Hours: Monday from 10:45am-11:45am.

ALLOCATIONS:

- Chairwoman Girschick welcomes the Senators.
- Will be holding 800 Codes workshops. First one will be 6:45pm next Tuesday.
- Will probably send out the 800 codes workshop PowerPoint after the meeting.

JUDICIARY:

- Chairman Pearson welcomes the senators.
- Four seats are open for the committee.
- Meet after this meeting for members of the committee to coordinate a meeting time this weekend.
- Will most likely be holding office hours, but will send out an email with day.
- Thursday: Office hours 10:30am-11:30am.
- Anything outstanding before being appointed as chair needs to be resubmitted.

RULES & ETHICS:

- Chairwoman Morris welcomes the Senators.
- You are allowed 3 unexcused absences including half absences. At two absences you will be getting a warning email.
- Constituency and absence forms are going to be due.
- Two seats are still open. Apply.
- Go Nationals! Go Jags! Go Gators, Beat Georgia.

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION:

- Chairwoman Jones welcomes the Senators.
- Will be sending out mentor-mentee forms next week.
- SG Polo order forms will be out soon, as well as name tags.
- Updates and tabling emails will be coming out soon.
- Exciting tabling opportunity on November 18th from 11 am to 1 pm at the Field and Fork remodeling opening.

- Has two open seats, if you have any questions or concerns reach out to her at info@sg.uf.edu

FIRST READING:

- There were none.

SECOND READING:

- There were none.

BILLS PENDING SIGNATURES:

- There were none.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Senator Solomon: Glad that Chairwoman Jones mentioned the reopening of the Field and Fork Pantry, encourages people to donate when at Aramark locations.
- Senator Jackson: “Once Upon GatorNights” is this Friday. Trivia event at Orange and Brew is going to be the night before. Flyers are with Senator Jackson. Free food and bowling.
- Senate President Pro-Tempore Sandifer: Explains the voter record for this meeting.
- Senator Amrose: if you are a CLAS student, go to their Facebook page and vote on their survey on creating a neuroscience major.
- Senator Bindi: Cicerone applications will be opening soon, reach out if you have any questions.
- Senator Ragan: October 31st: Halloween Concert at Century Tower.
- Senator Tio: If interested in working on legislation supporting sexual assault victims, please reach out.
- Chairwoman Morris: if you have events that can count for constituency send it to her in an email for her and her committee to add it to their calendar.
- Senator Karim: Authoring a bill to provide food at SG for students with dietary restrictions. Please reach out to collaborate.
- Senator Rush: The opening of La Casita will be 11 am on Sunday November 17th.
- Senator Nelson: Invites anyone who wants to coauthor his resolution celebrating UF becoming a 7th university to email him.

ROLL CALL:

- A motion to use voting records for final roll call by unanimous consent. Approved.

ADJOURNMENT:

- The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 PM.