

SG Debate Script- Spring 2021

Hayley Price: Alright hello. Sorry for the few minute delay, we were just figuring out everything with zoom. I just wanted to go ahead and say welcome to the 15th annual Student Government debate, hosted by the Supervisor of Elections. My name is Hayley Price. We look forward to providing a comprehensive debate featuring the three executive tickets vying to be your next Student Body President, Vice President, & Treasurer. I hope tonight is a valuable experience and that all members of the student body remember to participate in our student body elections, on February 23rd and 24th. Before we begin, I would like to take a moment to thank a few people who were instrumental in this process:

- o My advisor, Liz Delaney, James Tyger, Jacobi Bedenfield and RyAnn Gavin for their help in preparing for tonight.
- o Thank you to Action SG for agreeing to film tonight's debate so that it can be viewed by students who were unable to attend.

· I'd like to let you all know that Keg Party will be joining us virtually via Zoom. If you are watching the debate in this room, please make sure to have your audio off so we don't have any echo. Finally, I would like to thank and now introduce our moderator for this evening, Mr. Marna Weston.

- o Mr. Marna Weston is a 1994 graduate of the University of Florida receiving dual degrees in History & Telecommunication. As a UF undergrad, he was involved in campus and community activities. He received the City of Gainesville's highest award for diversity & multicultural awareness in 1991. He also served as President of the UF Speech and Debate team. Mr. Weston has served as moderator for many community debates including Accent Presents Governors Richard Thornburg & Michael Dukakis and more recently an ACCENT Marijuana debate.

- o Mr. Weston serves or has served in a variety of campus positions including: Consultant to the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, Administrative Assistant to UPWARD BOUND, UF Speech & Debate Team Alumni Coach, Instructor for Public Speaking in the Colleges of Agriculture, CLAS, and Warrington College of Business, and University Writing Program Instructor for the AIM Program.

Moderator: Thank you Hayley for your very gracious opening and good evening ladies and gentlemen of the gator nation. I am here in the beautiful ballroom, as we are doing COVID protocols to ensure the safety of everyone involved in the activity. Tonight, I will just say that

elections are about renewal and change. In our republic, we, from time to time, renew with a change, and tonight we will be in witness to that event.

1. Both campaigns shall be granted a maximum of 5 minutes to deliver an opening statement and 3 minutes to deliver a closing statement.
2. One candidate per campaign shall be chosen by the campaign to give the opening statement, and one to give the closing statement. This selected person may give both statements if the campaign so chooses. Any of the specified executive candidates are eligible to speak during this time.
3. Speaking order for the opening and closing statements will be decided by drawing from a hat, executed by the moderator shortly before the debate begins. The campaign winning the draw will decide to speak first, second or third in both the opening and closing statements. The campaign coming in second will pick from the remaining choices and the campaign coming in last will speak during whichever position remains. We performed the draw a few minutes ago and Change Party won the draw. They chose to speak third in both the opening and closing statements. Keg Party will be speaking second. Gator Party will be speaking third.
4. The speaking order for the questions will go in alphabetical order by campaign name and will rotate order for every question.
5. The campaigns will be provided with equal time to respond to each question. The time provided to respond to each question shall be two minutes. A one-minute period will be provided for the rebuttal. And 30 seconds for a second rebuttal.
6. Questions will be asked to the campaigns, and the campaigns will have to decide which candidate will respond to the question. Once the chosen candidate begins to speak, no other member of the campaign is allowed to respond to the same question during the two-minute answer period.
7. Rebuttal may be provided by a candidate other than the candidate who responded initially for any question.
8. Any candidate who goes over the time limit will receive a warning. Upon receiving a third warning, that candidate will be removed from the debate.

With the rules of the debate established and agreed to by both parties prior to the start of the debate, a final reminder that we ask the audience to hold applause until the end of the debate.

Civium in moribus rei publicae salus- the welfare of the state rests on the character of its citizens. That is the motto of the University of Florida and part of the state's seal. Student government is vigorous, and independent, just as the Gator Nation. You will see that tonight. We ask that

everyone who is here, and there's a small number, please realize that the purpose of this hall is not to promote distraction, but to provide an excellent opportunity for every nuance in the debate for those in the Gator Nation who will be voting and are not here. And who knows what sign or sound might make a difference. So, I ask, please, that you hold your applause, that we expect civility in the nature of the gator spirit, but at this time will you please applaud vigorously for all of the candidates. This will be your opportunity. Please.

Thank you very much. Our candidates this evening by party, the President of the Change party Wynton White, the Vice President of the Change party Matthew Rodriguez, the Treasurer of the Change party Amy Nicholas. You may applaud for them at this time if you like.

The President of Gator party Cooper Brown, the Vice President of Gator Party Faith Maniti, and the Treasurer of Gator Party Giovanna Mompremier. You may applaud for them at this time.

And the President of Keg party Michael Ackerman, the Vice President Braeden Allen, and the treasurer Benjamin Haut. You may applaud for them.

I now invite a representative from the Gator Party to give their opening statement.

Cooper Brown: Thank you so much Mr. Weston and good evening everyone. I'm Cooper Brown and I'm honored to be on this stage as the presidential student body candidate for Gator Party. I want to thank the supervisor of elections, action SG, and our fantastic team of student government advising, operations, and services for putting on this debate tonight. I did not begin my time at the University of Florida on the typical path.

I was admitted to the University as a PACE student. So almost all of my coursework at UF has been online. If elected, I will be the first Student Body President that started out as a PACE student. Looking back, I am very thankful that I had the opportunity to take online classes because it allowed me to get involved quickly and devote my time and energy to causes that I am passionate about. In addition to my three years of nonstop student body government, I have also served the greater Gainesville community, spending many weeknights and weekend mornings as a baseball coach for 11 12-year old's. One of the reasons I take it upon myself to invest the lives of our local youth is because of the way that my very own mother invested in me and my two siblings. I was raised by a single mother who worked, and still works, 60-hour weeks' paycheck to paycheck to provide for her three kids. Strong women are a constant in my life and I want to introduce you all to two incredibly strong women on my left.

As a frontline worker, Giovanna Mompremier works 12-hour nights, serving patients affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a graduate student, she also serves on the epidemiology task force, focused on recruitment and retention of underrepresented students and faculty. She also serves as the treasurer of the Black Student Union, a home to black students across campus. When the student organization funding model was upended overnight, it was Gio that provided strong, stable

leadership, taking the initiative to study the new system. She equipped herself with the skills necessary to ensure the continued success of the Black Student Union. We need a student body treasurer who knows what it's like to be on the other side of the table, to truly understand the needs of student organizations.

My running mate Faith Maniti has the lived experiences, passion, and knowledge to deliver events that truly enhance the student experience. As a current student life cabinet division chair, Faith oversees the creation of programming that combines education and awareness with just having a good time. In the midst of the pandemic, she showcased adaptability, and innovation by programming safe, hybrid events to maintain community for UF students at a time when we need it most. Her direct understanding of each cabinet position and how they interact with each other is invaluable in ensuring the cabinet works for all students, making her an ideal student body vice president.

As budget and appropriations chairman of the student senate, my committee was tasked with allocating the budget of over 22 million dollars. We successfully increased services to students without raising student fees, all while allocating over a million dollars to student organizations. In my role as Senate president Pro-Tempore and my current role as senate president, I was able to work with and befriend countless student leaders on our campus, including those who sit opposite of me tonight. Student government has two major purposes: to enhance the student experience and be a champion for student voices. We will advocate for the needs of students at this University and utilize the experience we have and the experience you need to deliver the results you deserve. Our campaign mission is to show the student body who we are as people and how we will represent them. Our platform is more than just a wish list of a set of empty promises. It is a contract with the student body that creates a plan to address each and every aspect of the student experience. By the end of this debate, we will demonstrate that myself, Faith, and Gio are ready, able, and prepared to be your biggest advocate, ally, and fan. We hope to have your vote on February 23rd and 24th. Thank you.

I now invite a representative from the Keg Party to give their opening statement.

Benjamin Haut: Hello everyone, my name is Benjamin Haut, and I am currently running for Treasurer under the Keg Party. I would like to thank everyone involved to put on this debate during a worldwide pandemic. I am a senior here at the University of Florida, graduating with a master's degree in business administration as well as a master's degree in international business. Here with me today are Braeden Allen, running for the student body vice president under the keg party, and Michael Ackerman, who is running for student body president under the keg party. I am here with you today because students like us have stood by and watched student government remain ineffective and inefficient in our operations on campus. There is an extreme divide between what the students want and what the students deserve, and what student government has done and is doing.

Moreover, the two-party system has allowed both parties to squallor against each other throughout the entirety of UF students, rather than fighting for the students. And therefore I

created the keg party. To give a voice to those that don't have one and reach a hand to those that need it. We are the party made for gators by gators and we will not waver in that regard. This past year we have seen extreme inaction from UF administration, as well as student government for having proper reaction to the pandemic, racial issues, and ensuring safety for our students in general. We are here to show you the system at hand, the system that has allowed us to get to this point and broken beyond repair. No number of resolutions or statements of no action will get anything done, and we as a student body need more now.

For years, we have been hearing demands from students that have not been met. This is what we based our platform on. As the keg party, we are fighting for things such as online voting, student stimulus checks, easy access to affordable transportation, student safety, student mental health awareness, and overall, the student body's wants and needs.

Obviously, you have not seen any of our names in student government before. Gator party and change party will try telling you that makes us inadequate to serve as your president, bicep resident, and treasurer. We are here to tell you that as outsiders, it makes us even more powerful to do good. The rest of the party members today have been involved with student government and idly standby as nothing gets done. To them, it's nothing more than a title for their resume or an experience to get them into graduate school at the end of the day. If anyone should be called inadequate, it should be the two parties that have held office and student government for years, and do not have real, tangible change to show for it. As three student government outsiders, we represent the student body better than anyone on this stage. We are committed to standing by what the student body wants and delivering to them. If elected, we will listen to the multitudes of organizations on campus that are fighting for change, like UF not one more, Food Injustice UF, Climate Action Gators, UF CAPS, etc. I'd like to take a second to speak directly to all of those currently listening who are deciding who they might want to vote for. We the students of UF are sick and tired of being sick and tired. No more lack of change, no more lives lost, no more accepting the bare minimum, and more influence from those like financial influencers such as Charlie Kirk. If there's anything I want you to take away from this opening speech, it's to leave you with this one question: when's the last time you've thought about what your student government has really done for you?

I now invite a representative from the Change Party to give their opening statement.

Wynton White: Good evening friends, family, and fellow gators. I'd like to start off by thanking the entire SG staff for putting this debate together, and the moderator for their tireless effort. I stand here before you tonight to advocate for change. My name is Wynton White, and I am a fourth-year student majoring in sports management with a minor in business administration. I'm running to be your next student body president. I'm from Miramar, Florida. Throughout my youth, my parents instilled the values of humility, selflessness, and a belief that anything is possible if I put my mind to it. When I was in the seventh grade, Treyvon Martin was killed. It

was the first time that I knew someone that looked like me could be killed in such a violent manner just because of the color of their skin. It was then that I became involved in the Trayvon Martin peace walk, where I learned how to walk with communities that are hurting. And tonight, I want to walk with you.

I came to UF wanting to be the general manager of a sports team. I walked the halls of Ben Hill Griffin stadium for the past four years, serving as an equipment manager and a defensive student assistant coach. In the spring of my sophomore year, I reluctantly followed a friend's advice to slate for the impact party. That semester I was elected to be the senator of health and human performance, a position I served in for six semesters. During my time in student government, I served as the vice chair for the budget and appropriations committee for two years, as well as on the university IT committee and on the diversity of general education task force. During my time at student government, I learned that ironically our student government is a swamp that houses individuals who deal with performative action and not concrete results. It is time to drain the swamp.

Alongside me, are two brilliant individuals who I have no doubt will lead with unselfishness and be what the student body needs them to be. Matt Rodriguez is your candidate for student body vice president. He is a fourth-year public relations major involved with the Hispanic Student association, a Florida Cicerone, and with the city of Gainesville, created campaigns to further engage the student body with the city's government. Amy Nicholas is your candidate for student body treasurer. She's a second-year natural resources and conservation and political science major. She is written grants to create social change among the youth here in Gainesville. She lobbies for the environmental legislation and tracks budgets of proposed federal bills for the Alachua Conservation trust. The change party has been built on the pillars of equity, social justice, and representation. We pride ourselves on being activists in our community. Our platform advocates for all members of the UF community, and fights for inclusivity on campus. We will move forward together because every gator counts.

Our platform is focused on promoting equity and inclusivity, improving student safety, and increasing access to mental health resources. First, promoting equity and inclusivity: 2020 has shown us we all have ways we can improve our communities, so we are welcoming to all. We can address this here, at the University of Florida. For example, we have concrete plans to finally rename buildings named for people who have harmed marginalized communities. We also have plans to make campus accessible for differently abled classmates and our goal is to make UF a true home away from home for all gators, undergraduates, graduates, faculty, and staff. Second, improving student safety: the safety of gators on campus is an issue we will use fact-based analysis to solve. We have lost four students of our gator family to traffic accidents over the past 4 years, while my opponents were in power. The time is now to find a solution to ensure that not one more gator is lost due to traffic on us around campus. Third, increasing access to mental health resources: the transition to college is daunting for every gator. When we are away from

family and family surroundings, coupled with college life, puts a mental strain and stress on every student. No student should have to suffer alone or in silence. We want to ensure that campus is continually connecting students to mental health resources. Unlike my opponent, I wasn't promised this position since freshman year, so I will walk into the Board of Trustees with freedom to not only use my voice but have the voices of 50,000 students behind me. I will always be real because I stay ten toes down, and I look forward to showing this debate why I am the best man to lead the student body together, forward. Thank you.

Moderator: Our first question is for the CHANGE Party: For the past year the world has been facing the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic, and throughout that time campus has had evolving guidelines, safety procedures, and support services for students. Some of these practices, such as returning to campus, have been met with criticism from the student body. If elected, how does your party respond to those critiques and plan on working with university administration going forward?

You have 2 minutes to respond.

Wynton White: The number is 500,000. No, that is not just the number for the student government productions budget, but that is the number of lives that have been lost in our country due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the New York Times, our school ranked number 2 amongst colleges and universities nationally in the number of COVID cases. We recorded 5,630 positive cases from the beginning of the fall semester to winter break. Aside from \$500,000 onetime rent relief, that only granted 1000 of the 2000 students that applied, a one-time \$500 check, the Gator party has done next to nothing. At the time, the student government reserves account had an excess of \$4.3 million, which gave plenty of room for more action to be taken. The gator party did nothing. The pandemic is still going on, and where has the gator party "I pledge Florida" campaign been? It has been nowhere.

In addition, unfortunately due to mandates the workplace has become more dangerous. We have made national news for professors who are in an outcry. Unfortunately, the gator party made no attempt to advocate or meet the demands of UF faculty. When I become student body president of UF, we will meet with the united faculty of Florida to hear professors' concerns and find intentional ways that student governments can help faculty get representation and decision making and have a seat at the table. We will push for the prioritization of a Gator safe act, for the safety of faculty and students, and not to restore faculty shared governance. There are great opportunities for myself and other student leaders to advocate for faculty in Tallahassee using keystone Florida as well as great gator day. We want to make sure that we are listening to the concerns of students and putting them first. Unfortunately, my opponents have not put students first. They have not led the way in the COVID-19 pandemic and are pushing for social distance measures. Bars are crowded.

Moderator: Gator Party – You may now have a 1-minute rebuttal

Cooper Brown: I believe that the role of student government during the pandemic is to continue student government's role of enhancing the student experience and bringing students together in a way that is safe. Students are getting overwhelmed by Zoom, virtual, and hybrid, whatever that means, but we have to ensure that we are keeping everyone safe and following University guidelines. This past year in student government, SG Productions has provided shows virtually, Accent Speakers has provided some of the best speakers that I've ever seen, the SG cabinet has provided both virtual and hybrid programming, and it is my hope that as vaccines become more readily available we will be able to transition during my term to having more in-person programming for students, and I will always be the biggest advocate for in-person planning, as I believe it is such an important part of the student experience, but we have to be patient.

Moderator: Keg Party – You may now have a 1 minute rebuttal

Braeden Allen: We believe that the party in power, Gator Party, hasn't been doing nearly enough to help the school with COVID, and this is shown in how we've been treated throughout this entire election process. First of all, we had to get like 300 signatures in person, we had to talk to 300 people and collect their signatures to be eligible for candidacy, which doesn't seem very safe, that wasn't allowed to be done online. And, just today, both my colleagues in the Keg Party are experiencing COVID symptoms, but Michael actually is cleared for campus on one.ufl.edu and when we contacted the supervisor of elections about this, he was told to attend the debate anyway, which seems like, to us that student government has been handling COVID poorly,--.

Moderator: Change Party – You may now have a 30 second rebuttal

Wynton White: Yes, SG Productions and Accent have done a great job doing and holding virtual events. But unfortunately, my opponent, who is the presidential candidate for Gator Party and the current Senate president, has passed no legislation or bills to continue the support of students throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, or ensured that we can bring in online voting to have a safe voting period. Absolutely nothing. That is a failure of leadership. Student body, you deserve better.

Moderator: Our second question is for the GATOR Party: Student voices have recently called for a boycott of Aramark and their partnership with the University of Florida, specifically due to their use of prison labor and labor practices. The university is also currently accepting bids for a new food service contract to be in place by Spring 2022. If elected, what role will your administration play in the bidding process and addressing student concerns

You have 2 minutes to respond.

Cooper Brown: So, the food service contract does expire soon and the committee that meets to come up with a contract is the food service advisory committee, which is composed of high-level administration as well as students. I will make sure that I will appoint individuals to the food

service advising committee who will advocate for a provision in the next food service contract that prison slave labor will not be permitted. This is something that should not be anywhere near the University of Florida, and I will make sure that I am appointing individuals to the food service advisory committee who will advocate for this. I will stand up for this in conversations with administration and in my role when I become elected as the student representative at the Board of Trustees.

Moderator: Keg Party – You may now have a 1-minute rebuttal

Michael Ackerman: Personally, our party believes that this issue shouldn't even be brought upon to government, honestly, we believe that this is an administration issue. However, if and once we are elected this is something we will discourage. Personally, as a finance major I understand the need to save money, I understand the want to cut costs, but this is not something we can do that for. Our party focuses on human rights and Aramark has practices of using prison labor that we do not condone, so although we believe that the administration does need to listen to their students and release Aramark from their responsibilities, we will be 100% on that when we are admitted to student government.

Moderator: Change Party – You may now have a 1-minute rebuttal

Matthew Rodriguez: On top of using prison labor, Aramark is guilty of unpaid overtime, withholding benefits from its employees, poor food quality, lack of options for vegan and vegetarian diets, supporting the prison industrial index, and covering up sexual assault claim on their higher ups. It is ironic to me that the senate Pro-Tempore sitting across the aisle is saying that he would support the end of prison labor, when over this summer, when he resided as senate Pro-Tempore, I wrote a piece of legislation calling for the immediate cessation of using prison labor in our agricultural feat. Not only was this resolution failed, but it also never made it to the floor to be heard. The senate meeting following that, there were 20+ people that signed up for public comment. These are student voices; these are the voices of workers that are not getting paid enough to live in their own community.

Moderator: Gator Party – You may now have a 30 second rebuttal

Cooper Brown: I want to start by saying I disagreed with that resolution being postponed in the summer and if it did make it to the senate floor, I would have proudly voted yes on it. I am committed to being the loudest voice in the room and using my role as student body president to appoint individuals to the food service advisory committee who will advocate for a provision in the next food service contract.

Moderator: Our third question is for the KEG Party: This past year has highlighted the ongoing prejudice and racism that black people and people of color experience in this country. How

would your party go about supporting black students and students of color at the University of Florida?

You have 2 minutes to respond.

Michael Ackerman: Alright, the Keg party has a great responsibility to give back to all students on campus, not just those who voted for us or those being represented by us, we want to give back to absolutely everybody. So, because of that, our policy is that especially for the black community, we would love to increase our representation within UF. The Way we are doing that is by first and foremost, listening. We like to go out and hear what problems students care about and challenges a lot of our members of our communities are experiencing. And that is the first step really, and it seems very simple but it's a step that the student government has not been doing. Many students, such as exchange students or students of a minority, say that they feel that UF does not do enough for them in terms of the service they offer and attention they receive. So, that's the biggest thing within the Keg party, is to really dive in and understand what our students want. And from that, we want to see certain change throughout campus, one important change is renaming the Reitz Union and the O'Connell Center, as you may know they are named after segregationists, and that is not a good look for UF, not a good look for us and how we would like to move forward. We will be actively listening to our students and doing as best as we can to implement change through increasing overall diversity and increasing participation of minority groups.

Moderator: Change Party – You may now have a 1-minute rebuttal

Wynton White: It goes without saying that we have a diversity problem on campus and within our student government. In 2009 to 2020, black undergraduate enrollment has decreased from 10% to 5.6%. It's funny that my opponent's hail Gio Mompremier's treasury position in black student union, when over the summer, the Gator Party did not support any of the black student union's demands, and I know because I was a black senator within the Gator Party and my voice was not listened to. Over the summer, the Gator Party failed three bills regarding civil rights, and so our party will work to listen and work with the administration to ensure that diversity and inclusion specifically for black students is increased on campus. Do not let my opponents come up here and say they care about it because it is not on their platform and they have not been working on it. They have a 33% completion rate since they have been in power since 2019. They are incompetent and they have not been working for the student body, especially for black students here on campus.

Moderator: Gator Party – You may now have a 1-minute rebuttal

Giovanna Mompremier: As a member of a minority community on campus, I understand the need of marginalized communities and that they need to be listened to and heard. As a former member and past treasurer of the black student union, and as a black woman, I am part of the less than 6% of black students on this campus, and that number continues to shrink. My presence on this stage and

bringing my seat to a table that historically would have not considered my voice, is key. It is important that our party understands that being aware of petitions and statements that are being released so we can identify the problems and effectively lift voices. There needs to be advocacy for representation, not just the classrooms, but within the CWC, DSO, United we care, MCDA, and student affairs, which are all important parts of the student experience. Our community came from a promise that our focus would be to create a campus that is more equitable and inclusive for all students.

Moderator: Keg Party – You may now have a 30 second rebuttal

Michael Ackerman: I could sit here and do exactly what the Gator Party is doing and say the statistics about what we want to do, but what we are not about that. We are about change and we are about quick change. One thing everyone should know is that if we are elected, we are going to work directly on that issue as fast as we can.

Moderator: Our fourth question is for the CHANGE Party: The base rate for student fees has not increased since 2015. This includes the health fee, activity and service fee, and the athletic fee. During this time, the state has implemented raises and is now moving toward a \$15 minimum wage, which puts increased pressure on the budget and may lead to cuts in services. If elected how would you prioritize the budget and what would you do relate to student fees?

You have 2 minutes to respond.

Amy Nicholas: The Gator party likes to point out the fact that I am an under qualified candidate on this stage. The reason I am here today is for the fact that I have served underprivileged communities. I have served in marginalized communities, fighting for their goal to have equitable funding and that is why I am here. The ability for this University to offer the opportunity to have a \$15 minimum wage needs to be approved. We will actively work to fight for this. We will also make sure that the protection of our student fees will not be undertaken. But what I will say, is that within the student community and the way that we distribute the funding for student activities, is not an equitable way. The reason that I am here is because I know what it is like to not have equitable funding. I know how to sit and change that. I've written grants to do this, and so I am here to advocate and make sure that all of our students have that representation, that your activities will be protected, and also that we have the ability to serve an equitable future and a prosperous university by offering a living wage.

Moderator: Gator Party – You may now have a 1-minute rebuttal

Cooper Brown: One of Gator Party's platform points is to fight against base tuition heights, as we think that college should be affordable for everyone. But let us talk about the health fee. It is well documented that the CWC needs additional funding to meet the needs of student's mental health. As it currently stands, the CWC is understaffed, and students have to wait extended

periods of time to receive basic services. This is absolutely unacceptable. The time is now to expand the number of CWC counselors. How do we do that? I believe that the health fee should be raised by \$15 a semester, which is about the same as going out to a decent lunch, so we can hire more counselors and alleviate longer wait times, which can lead to more students being seen and treated at the same time at the CWC. I will work with the members of the Board of Trustees to explain the importance of this increase for the student body.

Moderator: Keg Party – You may now have a 1-minute rebuttal

Braeden Allen: When it comes to the issues of students and the money they spend for the school, and issues with the money, our platform really has one thing that we are focusing on and that's stimmy checks for the students. All of us are college age dependents, as are most of the rest of the student body, and we did not get stimulus checks the last two times they were handed out even though we are going through the exact same pandemic as the rest of the world. And we really want to put those checks into the student body so that way we can have equity funding.

Moderator: Change Party – You may now have a 30 second rebuttal

Wynton White: Our party does agree that we need more counselors in the CWC. It's funny that when it's politically convenient my opponent Cooper Brown can come up here and advocate for more counselors, but when he was Senate President, there has been no legislation passed by him to advocate for more counselors in the CWC. Student body remembers this. In the fall, he couldn't stand up for mental health and wellness, so why now? We also want to advocate for more aid to gators so they can get more stimulus checks. We also reject heightening student fees.

Moderator: Our fifth question is for the GATOR Party: Over the past year we have unfortunately lost multiple students to traffic related accidents. How does your party plan on improving campus safety both on and around campus?

You have 2 minutes to respond.

Cooper Brown: So, first off, we just want to say that we really are deeply saddened by the losses in the Gator community over the past year due to traffic and safety related issues. IT reminds us just how precious life is, and that it should not be taken for granted. Students should be able to walk around our campus and surrounding areas safely. Although traffic safety is out of the direct control of student government, what we need to be doing is working with University of Florida government relations offices in Tallahassee and Washington, DC and push our local and state officials for improved safety measures on University Avenue and other big roads that surround campus

And yes, I'm thankful that the University has brought together a task force to bring plans forward to the Florida department of transportation, but we need to make sure that there is action

that follows through. There are a lot of immediate fixes that can literally happen tomorrow, like fixing the dim lights on University Avenue. Speaking of lighting, we also need to improve lighting in areas besides University Ave. For example, the lights by Norman Hall and Sorority row are dim and the area is dark. Many students walk back to those apartments at night. The Gator Party is committed to improving that. We, as student government leaders, need to ensure that we are using our advocacy platforms, such as the External Affairs office, to keep the pressure on our elected officials when it comes to traffic safety and campus safety around campus.

Moderator: Keg Party – You may now have a 1 minute rebuttal

Benjamin Haut: I would thank you to the student government for the resolutions passed about traffic safety. With that being said, that's all it was. A resolution, and nothing has actually happened to make a change. This is the University's problem, not just a student government problem, but since UF expects students to do everything for them, so nothing substantial has gotten done. We will bring this to the Capitol to implement real solutions here to fix the problem, not just resolutions that are only words.

Moderator: Change Party – You may now have a 1 minute rebuttal

Matthew Rodriguez: I, along with the rest of the ticket, and all of the Change Party, extend our deepest condolences to the families and friends of Abigail, Denise, Maggie, and Sophia. It would be a disservice to their lives to not take action. That is why we, with the Change Party, fully support the cause for action and the proposed solutions from not one more, their founder Kaley Tisk, and the University of Florida in their proposed solutions to the Florida Department of Transportation. I agree with Cooper Brown. There are actions that can happen today and tomorrow. That is why just this morning, I had a meeting with our city manager, where we discussed how to improve our city's design and safety of our roads. We, before even elected, have created bridges between our UF community and the greater Gainesville area to ensure that these tragedies never happen again. Not just on University Avenue, but on any street in the city where a student steps on.

Moderator: Gator Party – You may now have a 30 second rebuttal

Cooper Brown: Absolutely. We need to be standing alongside of the advocacy groups, such as UF's not one more and using my voice as a student representative in the board of trustees to ensure that there is action that follows through from the Florida Department of Transportation, keeping the pressure on our elected officials, and making sure that nothing like this ever happens again.

Moderator: Our sixth question is for the KEG Party: It has been two years since the Student Government has implemented a new student organization funding model. What, if any, changes would your administration advocate for?

You have 2 minutes to respond.

Michael Ackerman: Alright, so as we said, the number one thing that we are advocating for are those stimmy checks. But, when it comes to the actual budget model, again, that involves so much thought process and responsibility in different sectors of campus and university grounds. Again, this is something we would love to get more of an opinion on from our constituents. What do they feel like is being underfunded from within UF? Personally, I'm in the MIB and I am paying an increased rate of tuition, but unfortunately some of my grants were lost. I had an international trip planned, which was cancelled due to COVID, and a lot of these things I'm not seeing any type of payback for money I spent on these things that I can't do. So really, our main point is to listen to the actual students here, you know, what do you want to be more involved in? What do you think UF spends too much money on? Um, really just taking those ideas within the student body and trying to tackle the budget from a concentrated perspective, rather than just going into thinking we know what is important.

Moderator: Change Party – You may now have a 1 minute rebuttal

Amy Nicholas: The current budget model right now gives \$500 of funding to smaller organizations. While it puts those organizations in a need position that provides them resources, it puts larger organizations in need of more equitable funding in a tight position. So what we need to do is have an audit and compliance arm within the student government to ensure organizations are being physically responsible and accurately reporting their attendance. And also, working with student government finance to find an intentional software that allows for forecasting modeling and data analytics to ensure we are maximizing our funding resources given the capacity of student government organizations registered within SAI who can request funding have an equitable amount. We need to eliminate excessive requests of funding that aren't used and ultimately get rolled over to the next semester by other organizations and we need to make sure that--.

Moderator: Gator Party – You may now have a 1 minute rebuttal

Giovanna Mompremier: As a past student organization treasurer, that has actually gone through the process of the new fiscal system, I think it is important that everyone knows that the system we currently have in place needs to be revised. Docutraq, in case my two treasurer opponents do not know, is a system in which student organizations request funding. It was truly created for the old fiscal system and is unfit for the new fiscal system. I plan to transform Docutraq. I will present more information on what SG funded organizations can receive funding for. Since we are committed to accessibility, I am requiring a template be instilled. Student government must do a

better job on information regarding budget request deadlines. I will implement a calendar of important deadlines and takes so that organizations are more aware of those dates. The system needs to be adapted for large organizations programming such as history and awareness months, and annual events so they get the respected funding that they deserve.

Moderator: Keg Party – You may now have a 30 second rebuttal

Michael Ackerman: We would just like to end off saying that we don't understand why the system is complaining about the system. The Gator Party has had an opportunity to revise this model and they did not do so. One thing I learned about this is that actual change will happen. The model will be revised for increased capital flows and increased allocation.

Moderator: Our seventh question is for the CHANGE Party: Your party has posted multiple videos on social media calling out Student Government for not representing the entire student body, how do you plan on representing the needs of the entire student body

You have 2 minutes to respond.

Wynton White: Thank you, Keg Party, for bringing that up. Unfortunately, my opponents in the Gator Party, who have had a supermajority in the Senate, are bringing up multiple issues within student government while they've had the unanimous power to change all of this stuff. So, there are a bunch of empty promises that are being brought up in this debate. One thing that we will do to empower students is listen to our grad students. Grad students pay more fees than the undergraduate population. They feel the added student fees that are levied on them are unaffordable and unfair, comparable to what they should be getting. We have met with the graduate students united to hear their voices and make sure that we are empowering them. We want to make sure that they are getting constant fee relief, so they don't have to pay fees that are levied on them that are in an exorbitant amount.

We also want to pursue policy change to secure access to affordable medical care and better family medical care. The Gator Party in the senate last fall limited the ability of regular students to write legislation, as well as limited the amount of time, as well as limiting the amount of time that students are able to sign up for public comment. We want to roll back these rule and procedure amendments and we want to make sure that we are hearing our student body's voices by allowing them to write legislation. We also want to care about our student athletes when it's not game day. As a part of my plan, I plan to advocate on the board of trustees for a partnership with the UAA to empower student athletes with the name image rights that they will be getting in July of 2021. Again, we also want to listen to minority voices and I, on the board of trustees, will advocate all day, every day for voices to be heard on this campus.

Moderator: Gator Party – You may now have a 1-minute rebuttal

Faith Maniti: First, I would like to clarify that if there is anybody within this room that is qualified to speak about graduate experiences and needs, it is my running mate Gio Mompremier as the current grad student in this room right now. Personally, within the cabinet, within my position as vice president, I will actively be looking for diversity and representation within the future cabinet team. I think it is our responsibility as SG officials to implement and advocate for any and all diversity efforts on campus. So, for cabinet with diversity week, while we partnered with past councils, I think this week would be much more effective and genuine considering partnerships with big nines, or even organizations such as students taking action against racism. Through these leaderships, we can provide seats at the table and plan inclusive and anti-racism events. In this way we aren't planning for what we think students need, but what we actually know from experiences.

Moderator: Keg Party – You may now have a 1 minute rebuttal

Braeden Allen: First of all, even though we aren't on stage, both Ben and Michael are graduate students, so they are qualified to talk about it as well. But in terms of disputes, that's not our whole thing. We are not really involved in student government, so we don't have political plans in place and we want to give students what they want. And what we want is to get rid of DuoPush, every time you log into one.uf that sucks. We want fewer emails from the school. My inbox is full of emails from UF.

Moderator: Change Party – You may now have a 30 second rebuttal

Wynton White: So, if Gio is the most qualified to talk about graduate students, then why isn't the Gator party letting Gio come up here and talk about grad students? The first thing that we want to do is listen and we want to partner with the MCDA to hold a campus wide student survey so that we are listening to students. My opponents keep talking about diversity and inclusion, but they do not include a diversity and inclusion seat within the senate. My opponent Cooper Brown included a diversity liaison, instilling a diversity liaison instead of a diversity and inclusion committee in the student senate to improve the student experience with minorities is like asking Dan Mullen to win ten games with a coaching liaison instead of a coaching staff.

Moderator: Our eighth question is for the GATOR Party: What do you perceive to be the biggest challenge for the Cabinet and what would you do to address it?

You have 2 minutes to respond.

Faith Maniti: As the current student life division chair, within my past term, I think the biggest challenge within this past year has been adapting to new COVID guidelines while trying to best serve the student body and avoiding zoom burnout. One way we can address this is by ensuring quality over quantity with intentional programming. Right now, every semester, each director is required to direct at least one event. However, they are often expected to hold around 2 or 3.

With every cabinet director, that's between 50-75 events each semester. I want to work with each chair at the start of the fall and the spring to focus cabinet's events on the students most relevant needs to prioritize quality over quantity. This way, we can effectively utilize the cabinet's budget and existing supplies from the SG office, while also recognizing critical areas on campus.

In my response to COVID guidelines, I continue to offer events with options for both virtual and in person. Of course, I would assure the safety of these students in the in-person events through several measures. As an example, at the beginning of the semester I oversaw the planning of the mental health awareness week. One of the hybrid events, sunset yoga, which took place on Flavet field, I submitted an event safety guide for not just that event but all events taking place in person within student activities and involvement. For future events, I want to enforce the use of these event safety guides, not just for permit approval, but for an outline for directors to follow. In regard to the hybrid nature, this is a guide that I want to utilize for future events to address cabinet's challenge of navigating zoom burnout within the pandemic as we look to a post COVID future.

Moderator: Keg Party – You may now have a 1 minute rebuttal

Michael Ackerman: UF administration is not doing anything. Students ask Aramark to be gone. Nothing happens. Students want the names of some of our buildings to be changed. Nothing happens. Students want Charlie Kirk not to come to our campus. Nothing happens. Our main goal, our biggest issue right now, is getting administration to understand our issues and getting them to act. So, when we get into student government, what are we going to do is let them hear the students. We are going to absolutely let them know what they are dealing with and why action is needed now.

Moderator: Change Party – You may now have a 1-minute rebuttal

Matthew Rodriguez: I think that the biggest issue that is happening right now is the lack of oversight and streamlined communication. So, last semester there was diversity week. And during diversity week there was an event called open mic night. And open mic night was supposed to be run by the vice president and other individuals in his cabinet. However, I was approached by the HSA president and asked if I wanted to run the open mic night. Now I know, I have no position in the cabinet. I have no position that is associated with it, and I'm fine with that, I had a great time planning it, but when we arrived at this room to plan an event that I did with NAACP that featured rappers and poets, no one was here to record. It was a friend of mine that had to run to find the vice president to ask him to use his own iPhone, to then record the GBM that we had been planning for months on end without any support from SG. So, it's not just quantity, it's quality. It's direct oversight from the vice president, which I will do, and I will ensure that no meeting happens the same way that mine did.

Moderator: Gator Party – You may now have a 30 second rebuttal

Faith Maniti: I think it's quite interesting that someone with no cabinet experience or position within the cabinet is commenting on the flaws of our communication methods, when in fact we do have streamline communication within our own cabinet. But going forward, in regard to student organization, this is why I want to connect each of the 1000 organizations with each of their respected chairs to better streamline communication but also to assist in raising awareness for those individual, marginalized, student organizations --.

Moderator: Our ninth question is for the KEG Party: One of the important roles of Student Government is acting as a voice for the University of Florida Student Body to the local, state, and federal governments. If elected, what would your administration's lobbying agenda be at the state and federal levels?

You have 2 minutes to respond.

Braeden Allen: As we said before, we kind of see ourselves as a direct line between the student body and student government, and beyond that to the state government and the nation as a whole, and that again is because we are members of the student body, and we know what the average student wants. We are average students, if I say so myself, and we think that we can kind of just act as a direct link for what the students want for those who are not involved in student government. We can lobby for whatever the students think that we should.

Moderator: Change Party – You may now have a 1-minute rebuttal

Wynton White: As the student body president, I would go to the state capitol in Tallahassee, not for photo ops like my opponents do, but to actually advocate for policy and change to impact the student body. My first agenda would be lobbying the state of Florida to transfer the ownership of University Ave to Gainesville, so that we can begin creating a new and safer Avenue. I find it interesting that current Gator party president Trever Pope is just now making his trip to Tallahassee now to advocate for anything regarding traffic safety. I question what was happening all of winter break. I would also lobby for more funding for more diverse course offerings and more funding for an increase in diversity liaisons. Unfortunately, we have lost our chief diversity officer so i will advocate for more funding for us to implement a strategic, multi-year and multi-million-dollar diversity and inclusion plan. We will also advocate for the rights of student athletes when it comes to the name image and likeness act, as well as graduate students. We will advocate for graduate students--.

Moderator: Gator Party – You may now have a 1-minute rebuttal

Cooper Brown: What we need to be doing in our lobbying efforts is lobbying the Florida Department of Transportation to improve the safety of University Avenue. It is an insufficient street structure and students are being killed. It is our job to stand up and stand alongside

advocacy groups such as UF not one more to support their proposals, not to amplify our own voices but to amplify the voices of those students and support for the complete street.

Moderator: Keg Party – You may now have a 30 second rebuttal

Braden Allen: It sounds like the other parties basically want to do what we want to do; the difference is they've had opportunity to do that and they haven't. We previously said we want to listen to the student groups, we want to listen to those people who need to be heard, and we are going to make it happen.

Moderator: At this point that now concludes the question portion of the debate. We will now move into closing statements.

GATOR Party you now have 3 minutes for a closing statement.

Faith Maniti: So especially in the midst of a pandemic, I want to thank everyone watching tonight both in this room and through any virtual option that they choose to do so and taking time out of their day to hear about our passions and goals for this University. Tonight, Gator party has laid out comprehensive visions for the student body. In contrast, our opponents have done nothing but hurl false accusations and baseless claims. Despite overproduced graphics and dramatic background music, Change Party's smear campaign videos are nothing but lies. So allow me to set the record straight. Gator party and its candidates have never and will never take money from Charlie Kirk or Turning Point USA, or any other outside organization. Change party should focus less on these false accusations and more on finding qualified candidates. I invite students to look deeper into what lack of experience, empty promises, and selfish intentions mean to them in a leader.

Former senator Wynton White cared so little for his responsibilities as senator and for his constituents that he got kicked off of the budget committee and off of senate for not showing up. How can you trust that he will show up to the board of trustees to represent the entire student body, when he can't even represent his own constituents? How hard is it to attend a weekly zoom meeting?

Matt Rodriguez has no experience with the student government cabinet and just weeks before he accepted Wynton's last resort offer, he applied to work on Gator Party's campaign. Didn't you say on that same application that you think we have the best candidates? Amy Nicholas has never held a student government position before and has never been a treasurer of a student body organization. How can you provide oversight and accountability to a 22-million-dollar budget when you have no experience?

And the Keg party is nothing but a joke. Period. At the end of the day, this lack of experience is detrimental to students when the other parties are inevitably unable to fulfill their empty

promises. Our platform is one with achievable goals that we can be held accountable for. When you don't have the experience, you also don't know the limitations, and the only ones being hurt are the students you gave false hope to. Through our years of experience, Cooper, Gio, and I have all proven time and time again our dedication to serving the school and our communities. Election day does not mark the end of our work. In fact, it is merely the beginning. On February 23rd and 24th, vote for a party that delivers tangible results. Vote for the party that is here for every gator.

Moderator: KEG Party you now have 3 minutes for a closing statement.

Benjamin Haut: First and foremost, I would like to thank each and every one of you for your time in debate. I would also like to thank the moderator for his time and his snazzy mask. I feel like the Gator party's experience makes them completely inexperienced at what they do. Everyone on this stage today, while they have made some great points and we are all working towards a better UF because we are all friends, with that being said, we, as the Keg Party, have not and will not stand for a lack of action taken by administration, as well as the current one. This is the time now to those listening to stand up for what we believe in so we can make real change. I personally want to see more beer in and around campus, I want to see more electric scooters, and above all else, some stimmy checks. While I'm not in grad school, I feel like I do have an education to say all these things. Keg party was made for gators by gators and we want to see the swamp thrive and not drain. Thank you for your time.

Moderator: CHANGE Party you now have 3 minutes for a closing statement.

Matthew Rodriguez: Firstly, I want to thank you all for taking time out of your very busy schedules to listen to us debate today. I understand why you feel dissatisfied. Up until today, your vote has not mattered. It has been a one-party system. The Change party, however, brings you candidates that are not only experienced inside of student government, but outside. We have been at your meetings. We have planned events you have attended. We have walked alongside you in protest. And we have fought with you together for our underrepresented communities. We stand next to you today as the change makers, and we promise to be the change that this school needs.

The other party has experience, sure, but it is experience with how student government has always been. They've been a part of the system for 4+ years, and if we know anything, the system breeds complicity. They might not burn the school to the ground, but they will do nothing to uplift the students who have been neglected entirely by the Gator party. Our black community, LGBTQ+ community, Hispanic community, and other minorities will continue to be ignored or tokenized. Option for the sole gain of their party. We stand before you today ready to remove Aramark off of this campus, change the name of any racist or homophobe that is plastered onto the walls of this esteemed University, and make sure that every last student knows that SG is here to serve them. Not the interests of a special interest group, or the 1%.

While we are fighting for this, the party across from us nominates the same racist and homophobic individuals to positions of power, as we just saw this past summer, with the internal affairs nominee. Voting Change party is not only making a change for this campaign season, but it is giving every student a voice from today on, that was scared to speak out before. Your vote is building a movement on this campus that is not afraid to tell the Gator party that we do not want them anymore. Your vote is the embodiment of the audacity of change. To see the problems in the system, and not be afraid to speak out without fear of retribution. And the hopes of creating a better future for all Gators. On February 23rd and 24th, grab your mask, grab a friend, and come vote for the future of this school. It is time to kick out the individuals who fight tooth and nail, and who bend every rule they can, to make sure that they remain in power. Bring back transparency to this campus. Bring back true representation and diversity to positions of power, and let your voices be heard. Vote change party. Thank you.

Moderator: Ladies and Gentlemen, the speakers have concluded. I invite you to give applause to Gator, Keg, and Change party at this time. Thank you all. Gators at home, gator nation, the choice is now yours. Let your voice be heard. The power returns to you this election. We ask you to vote on February 23rd and 24th. Thank you, supervisor of elections Haley, thank you Liz, thank you everyone, and mom, I love you. I know you're listening as well. Thanks everybody, and go gators.