

## SG Debate Transcript - Spring 2023

6:00 pm – Welcome from Supervisor of Elections, Ethan Halle

Ethan Halle: Good evening everyone,

Welcome to the 17th annual Student Government Debate.

My name is Ethan Halle, and I serve as this year's Supervisor of Elections.

I am very excited to get started tonight and hear from these talented Gators.

We look forward to providing a comprehensive debate featuring the two 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 28th and March 1st.

Before we begin, I would like to take a moment to thank a few people who were instrumental in this process: Jackie Phillips, Ryan Gavin, Clayton Gaulding, and Dr. James Tyger, for their planning tonight. Most importantly, I would like to thank my advisor: Jerome Scott, for his help throughout the election process thus far and especially for his help in preparation for tonight. Thank you. Thank you to the College of Pharmacy Video Productions Services for filming tonight's debate so that it can be viewed for students who were unable to attend. Finally, I would like to thank and now introduce our moderator for this evening, Mr. Marna Weston.

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

Governor Richard Thornburg & Michael Dukakis and has served as a moderator for numerous SG Executive Ticket Debates. 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. Without further ado here, is Mr. Marna Weston.

6:02 pm – Moderator welcomes candidates to the stage & covers the rules of the debate

Moderator, Marna Weston:

Good evening everyone, and Ethan, thank you for your very gracious introductions. It's always a pleasure to be back on campus. Very quickly, before introducing the speakers tonight, for what I know will be a great debate in the traditions of the University of Florida, I would like to remind you of your responsibilities. The motto of the University of Florida is "Civium in Moribus rei Publicae Salus": the welfare of the state rests on the character of its citizens. Those who will be listening to this debate and watching it need to understand every nuance of what is taking place in this arena. They can't do so if the audience is participating. So, I would like to give you the opportunity to applaud all of these candidates right now, and then the rest of the time until we conclude, to have your silence, please, so we can have an excellent debate. Please recognize these outstanding Gators. Outstanding, thank you for that salute and the finest University of Florida tradition. And now to the game. Both campaigns shall be granted a maximum of five minutes to deliver an opening statement and 3 minutes to deliver a closing statement. 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 chooses. Any of the specified executive candidates are eligible to speak during this time. Speaking order for the opening and closing statements was decided by a coin toss, executed by the Supervisor of Elections shortly before the debate began. The winning campaign decided to speak either first or second in the opening and closing statements. The campaign that came in second can choose whatever positions remain. A few minutes ago, the Change Party won the toss. They chose to speak second in both the opening and closing statements. Gator Party will be speaking first.

The speaking order of the questions will go in alphabetical order by campaign name and will rotate on every question. 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. And these kind folks down here will give the signals to let the candidates know how much time is remaining.

Questions will be asked to the candidates, 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. Rebuttal may be provided by a candidate other than the candidate who responded initially to any question. Any candidate who goes over the time will receive a warning. Upon receiving a third warning, and we know that's not going to happen, 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 to ask the audience to please hold your applause until the end of the debate, and you just had a great applause a few moments ago, and thank you for that.

6:07 pm – I now invite a representative from the Gator Party to give their opening statement.

Clara Calavia: Good evening, Gators. I would like to begin by thanking the Supervisor of Elections for hosting this debate, and thank you all for taking the time out of your Tuesday night to come hear about how Gator Party is committed to serving with you and for you. My name is Clara Calavia, and I am running to be your next Student Body Vice President.

I am a third-year, first-generation Honors student double majoring in International Studies and Economics. I currently serve as the Secretary for the Hispanic Student Association, one of the largest organizations here on campus. My drive to serve the University led me to intern for the UF Office of Federal Relations in Washington D.C., and I currently serve as a Leadership and Service Chair in Student Government Cabinet, leading 5 Directors and over 20 Assistant Directors through intentional programming. Now, more than ever, we need experienced student leaders who know how to get the job done.

On our side of this stage, you have three candidates with experience needed to succeed in these positions. I am joined tonight by my running mates, Nyla Pierre, your next Student Body Treasurer and Olivia Green, your next Student Body President. These two women have dedicated their entire time at UF to serving inside of Student Government fostering an inclusive, safe environment for all Gators, and more specifically, those coming from marginalized communities. I know that by the end of the debate today, you will understand who we are, and what we stand for, despite constant lies and attacks from our opponents.

Nyla Pierre is a second-year Industrial and Systems Engineer. She was part of the very first cohort of the Freshman Leadership Experience under Class Councils and now serves as its director which helps to empower and educate future student government leaders. She has made great strides in creating an inclusive and diverse campus by fighting to make students of color feel more comfortable at UF through her leadership role in Students taking Action Against

Racism. As a member of the Budget and Appropriations Committee, Nyla actually understands the Student Government funding process. She has sat for hours in hearings and diligently reviewed every request.

Olivia Green is a 3rd-year Economics and Finance major from Atlanta, Georgia. She began her involvement experience with the help of many freshman leadership organizations such as Freshman Leadership Council, Future Florida Leadership Program, and Black Student Union's Leadership Development Institute. She is currently serving as Senate President following her previous role as Senate President Pro Tempore and Budget and Appropriations Vice Chair. In both positions, she has worked tirelessly to lead the senate chamber, while also interacting with students and faculty.

As you will hear throughout the night, Gator Party will consistently talk about delivering real results, and we have the evidence to back it up. From negotiating a deal to bring back 24/7 libraries, to expanding the Southwest Rec for all to enjoy, to creating a robust DEI curriculum that has reached over 1,500 students.

But those are just the headlines; in Cabinet, our members have created intentional programs like the PrepSteps initiative, which grants free access to material to help students take the next step on their educational journey. We connected over 400 students with entities like the Field & Fork Pantry, UFPD, and Student Legal Services at our ResourceMe! Fair.

But we're not stopping now. Our platform highlights key concerns students would like to see addressed over the coming year. Issues like community building, DEI, and student organization funding, and, unlike Change Party, we have the ability to follow through with our promises. We look forward to sharing more with you, about our plans tonight.

In a time of urgency, we need action, and a party with no experience would require a learning curve that we simply do not have the time for. We need to elect an Executive Ticket that will build for the future; one that works to create an inclusive and accessible campus and that will enhance the student experience. Our ticket has been committed to our platform and goals since day one, unlike Change Party who for months has been asking people in our own party to run on their ticket. That party who is more concerned with taking credit than taking action, and making noise instead of making progress. Together, with Nyla and Olivia, Gators, I want you to know that we will always stand with you and for you. Thank you.

6:12 pm – I now invite a representative from the Change Party to give their opening statement. Faith Corbett: Good evening, everyone. My name is Faith Corbett, and I am running to be your next Student Body President. Thank you to everyone who came out tonight and for those who made this opportunity for us to move together possible.

Your next treasurer, an incredibly engaged student, Jonner Delgado is committed to his cause. As President of the Liquid Propulsions Team, Jonner knows firsthand the struggle of everyday students applying for organizational funding. Taking a stand as a student, Jonner was able to amplify engineering voices and bring over 100 students just like him to a senate meeting to address our flawed funding model. Jonner took it into his own hands to address multiple Gator Party leaders for their longstanding corrupt system of organizational funding. And through this perspective, Jonner is ready to deliver solutions.

Your next Vice President, my good friend Kacie Ross, is ready to bring compassion to this table. Kacie and I met through MFOS, our first-generation college student scholarship. It is in this space that I have witnessed Kacie speak out and advocate for greater opportunities for Gators like ours. Kacie's identities have allowed them to develop a mindset that is dedicated to

inclusion and passionate representation. Kacie has stood in the face of many adversities on this campus and is ready to join you as we rise with Ross.

After hearing from students just like Kacie and Jonner, I realized how important it is to share our stories and be vulnerable with each other. It is our willingness to be vulnerable that manifests our courage. When I was ten years old, reality as I knew it was stripped from me, and I was thrown into a completely different environment as my mother continued to struggle with her addiction. As I grew older and learned more about the impact of public policy, I took these perspectives to rethink what our political systems could be. I was inspired by foster care reform and substance abuse prevention, and I have vowed to serve and heal by providing resources to those who are struggling. This is why I am honored to move forward together with my colleagues. This last year, Change has shown our readiness to listen to student voices and act swiftly with solutions. Senator Grace Shoemaker let years worth of research, including collaborative meetings and student-based task forces to rally the noise that students did in fact want the changes to create a 24-hour library resource. Senator Hana Ali has led multiple pieces of legislation advocating for the underrepresented graduate and international student voices and called attention to the need for protective policies for these students through instances of blatant racism in off-campus housing.

On our platform last fall, we heard your concerns about wifi accessibility, and Senator Gabriella Montes worked with UFIT to restore wifi outages that resulted from the hurricane last semester. Senator Mohammed Faisal has provided nothing but green solutions, and he is working with the UF Office of Sustainability to provide research-based, evidence-based planning for solar panels in our union. Senator Nathan McGinnis is garnering collaborative efforts with UFPD and campus infrastructure to reassess our campus' lighting.

And this was only a portion of Change's initiatives that have been able to be proposed. This semester, we demonstrated Change's strong commitment to the student body by showing you the numbers. Change authored 66 pieces of legislation, Gator senators only authored 9. This does not even scratch the surface of what we wrote. Our legislation has only ever faced one barrier. That is the Gator Party senators who abuse their positions and titles to strike Change's innovative solutions. Time and time again, Gator has stripped their students of their work and their dignity to parade performative solutions on their platform. Tonight, our opponents will tell you about the numerous promises they have kept in their cabinet.

But I dare you to ask the two sitting senators what legislation they have written, and an even better question to ask them is what promises their party has failed to keep. Was Gator Party "with you, for you" when they failed to pass legislation that would codify a DEI committee in 2020? Was Gator Party "with you, for you" when they defunded 24-hour libraries in 2021? Or were they "with you, for you" when just last month they failed to pass a budget bill that proposed an increase in base funding for \$70 to make up for inflation? Even when it comes to Cabinet initiatives, do not forget that this party denied any responsibility to bring Josh Richards to our campus, a person with current allegations of sexual misconduct with minors, and then failed to pass legislation that would prevent us from contracting with individuals like him ever again. As they deny responsibility for their cabinet to bring such a person to our campus, they simultaneously take credit for cabinet work such as STAAR, whose membership includes Change candidates. Ask Gator party if they give credit where credit is due, or if they take credit when it is politically timely for them. They'll tell you Gator party has been "with you, for you" for years. They'll say that they deserve your vote once again. Yet they have shown you that they are complacent to solely act on your behalf. This Student Government has not only lost your



trust, they have failed to listen and they only started once their position of power was challenged, and they failed to win a majority last fall. There is only one reliable solution for student, and that is Change. We are here to change the system. We are here to change the status quo. We are here to restore faith in your Student Government and provide hope for the future as we continue moving forward together.

6:17 pm – Our first question is for the CHANGE Party: According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average employee stays with their employer for 4.1 years. How can Student Government assist in ensuring UF graduates are prepared – both qualitatively and with quantitative competence – for a world with shorter-duration work than ever before?

1. You have 2 minutes to respond.

Faith Corbett: Student Government has historically put graduate senators and students on the back burner. A lot of the times when we canvas to these people, they tell you that they don't even realize they could vote in SG. Historically, SG has actually cut funding to graduate class councils while still saving funding for other class councils. That is why the Change Party decided to incorporate a Secretary of Labor within the new SG model. We also have incorporated many resources for graduate students to be able to see that light. On top of this, our graduate slate is consistent of what graduate representation looks like.

We have members of GAU, Graduate Assistants United, on our slate who are ready to bring that outspoken voice of what grad student fee relief looks like and also advocate for that representation that we actually haven't seen on the Board of Trustees. On top of that, we are also having slates from Graduate Student Council, who have also worked very closely with grad students. What it looks like to set up grad students for the future is by providing grad students representation now. The easiest way to hear how we can supply them with the resources is by

connecting with that community, and recognizing what they do lack and what they do need, and how SG can help. Right now, our Student Government model actually doesn't account for any kind of labor bureau, which is exactly what we're doing by bringing in that Secretary of Labor. So, that's how we would advocate for longevity and the solutions is by providing direct resources and direct representation to those graduate students now.

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

Olivia Green: Thank you. I mean, I think it is quite funny how you say you continue to represent these graduate students when you haven't filled a Grad and Family Housing seat in the past 2 years. What you need to be doing for the grad students is reaching out to them. I have been reaching out as Senate President now in my term running for Student Body President with the Grad Student Council to see what they actually want, and not what you think they want. What they actually want is what we're putting on our platform, expanding SNAP to 13th Street and Tanglewood Village so they have campus safety, so they are able to get to and from campus safely. On top of that, we also have the grad research materials that they are going to be able to get at the SG Printing Lab for free. So you talk about the ways that we are actually working for grad students, this is how. We're going out to these specific grad students, talking to them. As Pro Temp, I worked with them and filled their seats for grad senators, and I saw what they needed, and that is why I put it on our platform. Specific, tangible change. Thank you.

b. Change Party – You may now have a 30-second rebuttal

Faith Corbett: I would like to point out the fact that the Replacement and Agenda committee which Ms. Green is referring to is Gator controlled. Never once should the responsibility of those Graduate seats being denied be on Change voters, because Change is who has provided that representation. Also, on terms of SNAP extension, it shows how disconnected Gator is to

graduates because Tanglewood already has that SNAP route. On top of that, our Graduate candidates are already within existing Grad circles. I'm not speaking on Graduate Students' behalf.

6:20 pm – Our second question is for the GATOR 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 has continued to move towards a \$15 minimum wage, which puts increased pressure on the budget and may lead to cuts in services. If required, how would you approach cuts to these budgets? What would you prioritize?

2. You have 2 minutes to respond.

Nyla Pierre: As a current member of the Budget Committee, I know how the budget process actually works, and I've sat in several hearings for hours and hours and seen how by every millisecond and every submission in the overall process, it really does matter. And we've seen how the old funding model is not working for students, which is why Olivia created the Ad-Hoc Committee to listen and hear student concerns. That Ad-Hoc committee was successful in doing that, and they found a lot of issues with the model. One of the main things we found is that there is a lot of issues with the form crashing. To fix that issue with the form crashing, we are going to split up the funding process into several days so you can have operational, travel, and event on separate days and also have a limited amount of people who can submit requests. You have orgs that are able to have 30 people submit a request and orgs that have 2 people able to submit the request, and that's not really fair in the overall process, so we want to make this as equitable as possible. Now, to our opponents' idea of raising base funding, that's actually not going to reform the budget process, because the ANS fee is not getting any bigger, and I do not know where they think they're going to get this money from. And, frankly, my opponents' main reason for running

is because he is upset about a UF policy. That policy is not going to change, no matter how much they lie to student organizations and say that they are going to fix that policy. When I served in the Budget Committee, I watched as a student org requested to buy bullets. You let Change get empowered, they're gonna take all restrictions off what orgs can request, and you're going to have people buying bullets and guns. And if they complain about SGP and Accent wasting their money, yet students go out to those shows and sell out those shows, so how does that make any sense? So when you sit and complain about Accent and SGP taking money, yet hundreds actually want to go, you're going to allow students to buy guns and bullets? My opponent has never held a student government position before, and has never been a member of the budget committee. How are you going to provide oversight and accountability to a \$23,000,000 budget when you have no experience, have failed to follow simple policies, and failed your organization? It is your fault your student organization did not receive any funding. The policy set in place was by university administration, and your organization was not in compliance, yet you went through several trainings and were told several times that you could not receive funding from your college and from Student Government. So why should voters trust you to lead them when you can't even follow UF policies and failed your own organization?

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

Jonner Delgado: Firstly, the blame should never be placed on the student orgs. It is your job to make it clear to our student organizations what we have to do. This policy change was never made aware to us until it actually did go and affect us. If we're talking about how we're going to make an equitable student government funding model, we're going to have to start shifting our funds away from places where they don't actually affect our students. Accent speakers consistently uses money and wastes it on speakers that provide no value to our students. Yet

\$500,000 worth of honorariums are constantly asked for, especially this semester, from our orgs that could actually bring in reasonable speakers. You also mentioned on the Ad-Hoc committee that they listened to our student organizations, they met one time, and they never would listen to student's orgs after that.

b. Gator Party – You may now have a 30 second rebuttal

Olivia Green: You actually talk about how you weren't made aware, and that it's our fault that the student organization didn't receive funding because of the university policy, yet you were president before treasurer. You received a training that showed you which funding you were going to receive. So actually, you knew by double dipping that you were going to be taking funding from other student organizations. So, it actually poses a question to the legitimacy for why you're running for Student Body Treasurer. Is it to save all student organizations, or is it to save your student organization?

6:25 pm – Our third question is for the CHANGE Party: We welcomed our new university president to campus earlier this month and on his first day in his new role, President Sasse posed the following question: "How will we champion pluralism, curiosity, viewpoint diversity, open debate, and intellectual rigor for our students and faculty, such that our graduates will be prepared to live and work with people of many points of view?" If elected, how will your administration champion these ideals?

3. You have 2 minutes to respond.

Faith Corbett: So when it comes to Sasse's presidency, I want to first address the fact that students have really just been given words, and not a whole lot of action. We haven't really seen policy initiatives to act on the statements that Sasse has provided for us as ways that he wishes to engage with students and protect students. So, firstly, I would say that Change is looking at it in

terms of ways that we can embrace what Sasse is claiming as these ideals, and turn that into action. At this point, he is our university president, and we must accept that. But we should also challenge the way that he is listening to students in terms of not being readily available to students, not being accessible to students, and turning students away at the door. I think that's one thing to address in terms of those ideals that sort of clash. Furthermore, I would say that our Student Government already shows a lack of accountability when it comes to these ideals, and by putting students in place of government actions, you can ensure that everyday students will have a voice in that Board of Trustees. And I will not be afraid to vote no if those ideals are not committed to. What we've seen from Sasse so far, yes it's been recent, is a lack of action. I wanna see policy agendas from Sasse to make these ideals come true. It's not that we don't agree with Sasse on these ideals, it's that filler words don't fill student needs, and we don't need another student body president who is not going to act on students' behalf and will not vote no when needs are not met for students. What we would advocate for with Change is, of course, those ideals are what we would stand for, of course, those are ideals that we say would stand in the seat of adversity, but at the same time, that wasn't what the Student Body President gave you last year, because those ideals were not met by not engaging with student voices. So, I'm not afraid to vote no, and I'm not afraid to commit our university president to policy agendas.

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

Olivia Green: I actually love the point that you said that you were looking forward to seeing the ideals and how to work with President Sasse seeing that he is our university president as you said, we already recognize the importance of working with him as soon as possible. So, we're already working with him. Our cabinet is already working with him on the LGBTQ+ Coalescence Fund and Subcommittee with President Sasse because we see that this is an issue

that's on our campus. We're not going to wait and idly wait until we get into our positions, we're already working on it now. I said in my condemnation as Senate President that did not agree with him, it does not align with my personal beliefs, but that doesn't retract from the fact that he is our university president and we need to work with him. We're working with him right now, what are you doing? Thank you.

b. Change Party – You may now have a 30-second rebuttal

Faith Corbett: The question was posed: "What are we doing right now?" We're on the side of students. We are students, not faculty. We don't have the transitional power that Gator Party has, that has had for the last three years. So that's why we don't have access to faculty. What we do is stand outside of Sasse's door and give him the list of demands that students are asking for. We're not bargaining for faculty, we're here as students. That's what we're doing because we are a student government.

6:29 pm – Our fourth question is for the GATOR Party: In 2020, the university announced the planned closure and eventual demolition of Maguire Village and University Village South. Residents have fought against the loss of graduate student housing beds and advocated for alternatives to demolition. What efforts will your campaign take to support the graduate student experience and these efforts?

4. You have 2 minutes to respond.

Olivia Green: As I said before, and I will say again, none of us are Graduate students, and to speak for Graduate students would be imperative. The importance is that we need to focus on the stuff that we already have. The Graduate Student Affairs Cabinet can actively work to focus on what we need from these Grad students. What I've seen working with the Graduate Student Council in my experience is that they want these free research materials. In terms of Maguire

Village, UF is already working on housing for these Grad students in the future. So although Maguire village is going away, we can still work on making sure that this housing is still accessible for these Graduate students. What I think the problem with Grad students is, is that they don't feel comfortable getting involved because they already have stuff to do. They're already TAs, they already have kids, they already have other jobs to worry about. We want to make that, as a ticket, our main issue, and that's why we're already starting to work with it on our platform points and in our previous positions.

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

Kacie Ross: The focus is what we have, no focus is what you took from us. Gator Party ignored Graduate students at Maguire Village and University Village South. The Student Body President passed policies as a Board of Trustees member in 2011 that would eliminate housing for good. Despite administrative and public pleas for a reversal in policies, Gator Party have demonstrated they are looking towards restoring solutions, not assisting students with preventive safeguards to keep students out of homelessness in the first place. Thank you.

b. Gator Party – You may now have a 30-second rebuttal

Olivia Green: I already just explained how we were actively working with Graduate students to make sure that they have these accessible housing opportunities. I already explained in my previous point, and I will repeat again if you're not listening, that we are working to expand SNAP to Tanglewood Village. I know you said that they don't have Tanglewood Village there, they do. And we're going to continue to work for that, and to make sure that these campus safeties are available for Grad students. And to you saying that we don't work on housing, I just explained time and time again that that is a point that we are going to focus on because we see the issue with Grad students. Thank you.



6:32 pm – Our fifth question is for the CHANGE Party: Your platform includes making Southwest Recreation Center open 24/7, expanding free printing to all academic spaces, and securing free meals for student employees during their shifts at work. How much do you estimate these initiatives would cost? What sources of funding would you look to utilize and how do you juggle promising these initiatives in a financial environment that may already require cuts to the existing budget?

5. You have 2 minutes to respond.

Faith Corbett: So I would first like to start off with the funding for food insecurity. That was legislation that was written by Jonathan Stephens and that was proposed by at time sitting budget chair Catherine Giordano, who is Gator. Even though there was support from Big 5 entities, such as the Reitz Union, such as the Student Rec, we actually saw that Gator Party asked us not to pursue that piece of legislation, but that funding model is already set up. In terms of moving forward into what else we would look at cutting, we have had a strong sentiment with seeing that ACCENT and SGP events are not at full capacity or sold out as Gator has said. We haven't seen that trend until recently when they had to reassess the speakers they were bringing after Josh Richards. So what we would do is we would reallocate that kind of funding to look for more longevity for student events. I think also there is an aspect of a reality of A&S fees needing to increase at some point because of student wages. That's something that Gator Party does share a sentiment in and something that we would absolutely share a sentiment in, is as wages increase for students, we do have to look at the fact that A&S fees do have the probability of rising, and that is where that funding would come from so that student fees are going directly back to student assistance. And that's the project that we would look out for. In terms of Southwest Recreation, we would try to implement the same funding model that they had before when

Southwest was open in terms of only being closed from 3 am to 5 am, so we would look to parallel those funding models that already existed and return to the resources we had pre-COVID. Those are the funding models that we would have in place, and that is what we would look forward to.

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

Clara Calavia: First of all, I would like to note that the past three ACCENT shows have been packed. Change Party may not like the shows, but students do. I would like to throw some numbers. As far as the food insecurity that they were talking about, that would take \$165,000 taken out of student activities, services, and student jobs, so when you're saying that money goes back to students, it really is not because you would be taking the money away from them. Also, those meal swipes that they want to give only to those students working in the Reitz and Southwest Rec. These students might not even necessarily identify as food insecure, and you'd be leaving 54,000 students without resources themselves. Instead, we should be focusing on the Field & Fork Pantry by increasing donations and our efforts to help not only a select number of students, but the student body in general. You also have to know that some international students have visas that don't let them work in the Reitz or in Southwest Rec or in general, so you'd be leaving those students out of your plan.

b. Change Party – You may now have a 30-second rebuttal

Faith Corbett: It's not that what we support is exclusionary. We understand that we can't provide resources for all students, but we do understand that there is a large majority of students who are working on our campus because they are food insecure and they are low income. With \$165,000, the number you gave out, it's a little imperative for them to be taken from student jobs and given

back into meal vouchers, so that actually wasn't the case. And Reitz and Southwest Rec would just be a pilot program. We are not excluding those—

6:36 pm – Our sixth question is for the GATOR Party: This past year, the Florida Legislature passed House Bill 7 which focuses on instructional topics and practices at universities across the state which sparked controversy regarding the purpose of higher education. What do you view as the role of higher education in today's society?

6. You have 2 minutes to respond.

Nyla Pierre: Yes, so one of our main priorities this upcoming year is DEI. As a black woman, I deeply understand the need to have DEI on campus. One of the main things that I have loved about this campus is the ability to have a space like IBC to go to, where I can see people who look like me, see people that I can work with and build a community with, which is why we want to advocate for the LGBTQ+ community and the APIDA community to have that, as well. We've also seen an increase in vandalism on campus, so we want to implement safety measures to make sure that that does not happen again. We want those spaces to remain as safe as possible for all students, and to bring up STAAR, you said that we're taking credit. Again, this is another situation where you were more concerned with taking credit than actually taking action because STAAR has been at work. The chair of STAAR is in this room, and he, in this past year, has transformed STAAR from focusing just on race relations to DEI initiatives. We've reached over 1,500 students on this campus. From trainings, to student org presentations, sororities, frats, Student Government, we've reached areas across campus that we have never reached before. So to say that we're not doing anything, we are. And to bring up the acts of hatred that have happened on this campus, members of our party have been deeply affected by those acts of hatred, and we continue to stand in solidarity with them. And I would like to say that situations

like this should be bringing us together, but Change Party insists on driving us all apart. Together we rise, divided we fall. Change Party continues to divide us by misconstruing information online to the *Alligator* or their very own Instagram in hopes of attaining a vote. Gator Party will continue to be the party of positivity, and we will continue to support all students at the University of Florida. Our platform is more than a just wishlist set of empty promises. We will fight for the protections of our students on campus.

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

Kacie Ross: The Gator Party failed to pass an authorization for NPHC Gardens. Gator actively utilizes its newfound stance on AAPI and LGBTQ+ issues to influence voters without thinking about the impacts of leaving those folks out of the conversation. Change Party is highlighting grad students, low income, and working students. Communicating through cabinet's representation and actively listening to these students' wants and needs, not neglecting them. STAAR was on Gator's socials when Change's members are there. Gator Party failed to reach out to any queer on AAPI Change senators when writing resolution centered around these issues. Who's taking it political?

b. Gator Party – You may now have a 30-second rebuttal

Olivia Green: I don't know if this is an experience thing, but as I said before, we did not fail the authorization. We were already working on getting security cameras for the NPHC Gardens. We were already working on making sure that these DEI initiatives were being heard. As I said in a previous question, we are working on the coalescence summit, so not only President Sasse, that you seem to be worried about as well, we're making sure that he's educated and the students that are LGBTQ+ are being heard. We're already working on these DEI initiatives, and instead of talking about what we're doing wrong, which is clearly nothing, you need to be talking about

how you're going to work for these DEI initiatives and how you're going to work for these students.

5:41 pm – Our seventh question is for the CHANGE Party: Since the announcement of the increased hours for the Marston Library trial period, both campaigns have claimed credit for the initiative. What did members of your party do to advocate for increased hours at Marston and how do you plan to ensure students are aware of this trial period?

7. You have 2 minutes to respond.

Faith Corbett: 24-hour libraries has been on Change's platform ever since Gator removed the funding and pulled back SG funding from those initiatives. What we have done, actually, you can point out Grace Shoemaker somewhere in the crowd, she led multiple student-based initiatives for students to collect research on how many people are occupying Martston overnight, how many people are leaving Marston when they closed the doors, how many people are we pushing out of our libraries simply because we as a student government don't want to take the responsibility to give students back what they need as a resource. What we saw in summer of last year was Grace Shoemaker actually proposed legislation through other senators, such as her replacement senators, that would take money from SGP and ACCENT, that would fund a student government plan for 24-hour libraries. Grace conducted multiple research initiatives and presented that research on the senate floor, but every time you saw Gator's silence, no one in Gator wanted to support the initiative from student government funds, and that's okay, that's fine. But when Lauren announced that the provost was going to fund it, and that Lauren was going to do that, Grace actually reached out and asked to collaborate on the initiative, and Grace's doors were shut. So you want to talk about the politicization of what students need, you guys have been doing it since day one. Constantly you have pushed out

Change as the minority caucus to help on the initiatives that end up on your platform. That's why STAAR is on your platform right now but not ours. It's not us politicizing these issues. So when Grace comes and Grace asks Lauren to help on that initiative and the doors are shut, of course we are going to provide a transparent answer to what actually happened. These libraries are not 24 hours for the next year. They are not 24 hours over summer, and they are not 24 hours over break. Only during the Fall and Spring semester, so which we end in the same trial period that we were in when Gator Party refused to fund for the last three years. That's what Change has been doing. We bring transparency to the table because you actively shut doors on students.

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

Olivia Green: The reason the stuff that your platform is saying is not on your platform, it's because it's stuff that we've already done. In terms of SG funding, are you saying that Gator Party removed student government funding for the 24/7 libraries? Because that's actually incorrect. The contract ended due to COVID. That narrative is automatically null and void. When you actually talk about how Grace had all this hand in this project, but you stated in the *Alligator* that she had no direct hand in the project. So when you keep talking credit where credit is due, you need to give credit to the current administration that worked tirelessly with the provost to secure those 24/7 libraries as a pilot program to make sure that we're not using student dollars. We have not used student dollars in the past, and we will not use student dollars in the future. This pilot program is to make sure that students are actually utilizing it. A survey is not action. A pilot program is to actually ensure if students are going to these 24/7 libraries, because I can tell you in the past they haven't. Thank you.

b. Change Party – You may now have a 30-second rebuttal

Faith Corbett: I would just like to point out that Gator Party has officially put out a stance that they don't believe that 24-hour libraries are being utilized by students by saying that that's not what they've been using them for. I would just like to point out, that when it comes to the pilot program, I understand how a pilot program works, but when COVID allowed that program to be nonconclusive and the provost invited SG to another year of funding, SG was the one who said no, which was Gator Party's administration. And I would also like to point out that this current administration is the very same one who gave us Ben Sasse on behalf of students' voices not listening to them.

6:45 pm – Our eighth question is for the GATOR Party: Student organization leaders and advisors have expressed concerns regarding the differences of being classified as a general student organization and a university sponsored student organization. What is your plan to address student concerns with the student organization classification policy?

8. You have 2 minutes to respond.

Nyla Pierre: Yes, this policy was set up by UF administration, and again, as I have said before, no matter how much people want to lie to students and say they're going to change this policy, this policy is not going to be changed. We need to be able to work with this policy, which is why we're trying to reform the budget process by allowing more students to be able to request money in a fair and equitable process. So again, we're going to split it up in several days, depending on the type of budget request—event, travel, operational—and then limit the amount of people that can actually request the funds. But for me to sit up here and say that I'm going to change the policy, when I know that I actually can't, would be a lie.

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

Jonner Delgato: When our student organizations came in and filled the senate chamber, our voices were denied, and no one was there to hear us. All we were asking for was that our classification as a USSO would be brought up as a policy change. I had never asked or never said that we would be able to change it, but we need a voice for our student organizations that, when policies like this get made, we can have a voice to go out and change that. Our student organizations are the backbone of our university, and we need to be able to fight for them. If we don't have people in office to be able to do that, then how do we have a student government that we can rely on?

b. Gator Party – You may now have a 30-second rebuttal

Nyla Pierre: You want to talk about relying on people? Let's talk about the fact that your club could not rely on you to follow simple policies. You went through trainings and were told several times that you could not get student government and your college funding. You're not allowed to do that. So why should the student body trust you if your student organization can't trust you? And why should voters trust you if you believe that your organization can take away funding and opportunities from other orgs who only receive funding just from student government?

6:02 pm – Our ninth question is for the CHANGE Party: What innovative ideas do you have for Cabinet programming?

9. Change Party– You have 2 minutes to respond.

Kacie Ross: Some innovative ideas I have to change within the Cabinets under my power is positions. Allowing for quality representation, and not International Affairs seat to be left open. International Affairs seat to be filled with students who are not international. Protecting Diversity



Cabinet because there have been attacks statewide and nationwide. At this current moment, it is crucial to allow for spaces for students.

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

Clara Calavia: As the only Student Body Vice President candidate on this stage with actual Cabinet experience, I have seen the way Cabinet supports students on ways that we can better serve the student body. DEI across all divisions, not only Diversity Division is something we will heavily focus during my term in order to promote embracing diversity at the University of Florida. Through our Multicultural and LGBTQ+ Affairs Cabinet, who will not only provide intentional programming like we did this year with the Coalescence Summit but also advocate for the creation of an AIPDA LGBTQ+ institute. It is quite funny to me that currently a freshman Assistant Director right now has more experience than my opponent, which really should make you question who is running the Cabinet- those directors who know Cabinet dynamics, or my opponent, who, quite frankly, is unqualified. I would also like to note that in their platform, they talked about wanting to give reduced-cost test prep for GRE, LSAT, and MCAT. Well, if you would have done your research, you would have known that this is something that we have actually already provided to our students for free through Cabinet this past month. Thank you.

b. Change Party – You may now have a 30-second rebuttal

Faith Corbett: I would first like to say that although my colleagues don't have bureaucratic positions in which they claim these titles, and all the work that happens under them, that doesn't mean they're unqualified. The people next to me are real students who understand real student issues and want to bring that innovation to the table. I would also like to point out that even though the opposing VP candidate is in the Leadership and Service Cabinet, there were no events

that allowed for the development of leadership and service that took place this year. And I would also like to point out that it is because we are regular, everyday students that we do—

6:50 pm- Our tenth question is for the GATOR Party: What was the hardest decision you have taken as a leader? What helped you to prompt the best course of action?

Olivia Green: I think my hardest decision as a leader was truly serving as Senate President in my current role. One of the hardest things to have to go through in senate is the respect. I did not receive a singular bit of respect from Change Party the entire time as my term as Senate President. But that doesn't matter, because I have a job to do, and that is a job that I am going to continue as Student Body President because frankly, noise is not action. As you've seen today, clearly, noise is not action. We have been showing what we've been doing, we've been showing what we are going to do in the future, and we've been showing how Change Party continues to talk about stuff that we've done wrong, but yet we continue to rebuttal with real, action. That is the hardest thing I had to do as Senate President- is listen to myself and remind myself what I'm here to do, and that's a job.

a. Change party 1 – minute rebuttal

Faith Corbett: I would like to say when it comes to the term of respect, I have been given none by Gator. I have been laughed at and mocked on the senate floor, Senate President Olivia Green has motioned to me to sit down as if I were a dog in front of a hundred people. The willingness to be corrected is important in leadership. It is not obstructionist for Change to call on correct procedure. When we motion for the correctness of what the Senate President should already known to do because that's part of her qualifications, that's not disrespect. It should be an opportunity for a leader to learn when they are incorrect. If you are not allowing yourself to accept the humility to correct yourself, maybe you should reassess the hardest decision you've

had to make because you haven't made a hard one yet. So, when it comes to that, I would also advocate the fact that noise is all that we get from students, and that noise is what we turn into action. The noise that Change accumulates is what Gator action decides to take on because although they tell us no, they take our platform points to push us out of the action of it and take of for themselves and put it on their own accomplishments list.

b. Gator Party – 30-second rebuttal

Olivia Green- A member of your party calling me a clown on the Senate floor- is that respect? As I've told you before as Senate President, I will tell you, your experience with point-of-informations and point-of-orders are incorrect. To answer the question of what is the hardest thing that you should've done as your role, the hardest thing you should've done in your role is becoming a better Minority Party Leader that works to work with the Majority Party as we have done to you.

6:53 pm – At this point that now concludes the question portion of the debate. We will now move into closing statements.

6:53 pm - GATOR Party you now have 3 minutes for a closing statement.

Olivia Green: Thank you. First, I would like to take a moment to thank our moderator Marna Weston, the Supervisor of Elections Office, Action SG, and the team at Student Government Advising & Operations for putting this debate on tonight. My name is Olivia Green and I am running for Student Body President for one reason: the stakes are simply too high to choose Change. Our student organizations are facing a funding crisis and my opponent's plan is in direct violation of university policy, and therefore will never be implemented. Our Activity & Service Fee budget is tightening every year and yet our opponents propose charging students for costly

services like 24/7 libraries and gyms. No matter what Change Party proposes, they either fail to recognize the major flaws, or don't want to admit their platform is a set of empty promises.

Not only do their ideas not hold up, but their ticket is seriously underqualified. Mr. Delgado's first interaction with Student Government has been the fact that he was present at multiple meetings held with members of both parties as we worked to address his student organization's concerns. In those meetings, Mr. Delgado was advocating to allow his and a select few organizations to continue to receive both exclusive university benefits as well as Student Government funding. That doesn't seem fair to me, competing for a limited amount of money that students don't receive any other organizational benefits at all. That doesn't seem fair to me. Mr. Ross has no experience with the Student Government Cabinet and just weeks before he accepted Faith's last resort offer, he applied to work on Gator Party's campaign. Didn't you say on your application that you think Gator Party is working to "improve the comfort and environment for others on our campus and in our community"?

And, I have served alongside Senator Corbett for two years. During her time as Minority Party Leader, she allowed the most fringe elements to take control of her caucus. I have been called a clown, as I've said, I have been called racist, I have been called a slur that I won't dare mention on this stage. But none of that childish behavior bothers me as much as the tactics Change Party continues to use at Senator Corbett's encouragement that seeks to do nothing but delay and disrupt the orderly business of Senate.

Experience matters, and we need to elect leaders that know how to get the job done. Those leaders are Nyla, Clara, and myself. The people who have been with you, and for you every step of the way. We won't try to turn students against each other by fanning the flames of division and hatred. We won't take an antagonistic approach to working with administration

which will serve nothing and no one. We will lead Student Government with integrity and dignity. We will be the hardest-working team that the Gator Nation has ever seen. And if you place your trust in us by casting your vote for Gator Party on February 28 and March 1, you will be voting for leadership and not lip service.

7:11 pm – CHANGE Party you now have 3 minutes for a closing statement.

Kacie Ross: Good evening, UF. Tonight you have seen our initiative gain life. You have also seen Gator Party ponder their responses and fail to show how they are prepared to serve you. For the past 2 years, Change Party has fought for 24/7 Marston, when Roe v. Wade was overturned, Change Party heard you and worked with you to find a plan for accessible contraceptives. We gave our students a voice for the past 2 years, a voice that is usually neglected. Our opponents continue to deceive you by saying they are fighting for DEI initiatives, saying they are the only one who fought for 24/7 libraries, and saying they support our student organizations. After suffering a humiliating loss, Gator Party's President Lemasters voted to approve Ben Sasse. So promises were made, but students were betrayed. Gator Party continues to claim they are "with you, for you", yet when they only authored nine bills to Change Party's sixty-six in the last five months. They've shown their not willing to keep their platform promises. They say they meet with one-hundred organizations in one hundred days, but that's a road they have already failed to accomplish. The lack of quality in Gator Party initiatives show how unprepared they are to serve and tell you why I chose Change Party. Gator Party should be ashamed and embarrassed by their fails to stand with our students, with my peers, with faculty. Why should our student body trust Green on the Board of Trustees when she can not do research or spells names correctly. Why should we trust Calavia who served in numerous Student Government positions, but has little to show for it? It makes me question: is she running for Vice-President, or is she looking to add to

her resume? Because me? I value the morals and values of our Student Body. Why should we trust Pierre, who sits on the Budget and Appropriations Committee, like she said, has never served on a student organization's leadership and has voted countless times to disrupt tangible change? Gator Party has been in control for the past three years. In 2020, the student body didn't have hope in T. Pope. 2021, we didn't have, we could not count on Coop. 2022, Lauren led us to Ben Sasse. Now, it's 2023. Do not get gaslit by Green. Allow my running mates and me show you what it means to value actual, tangible change. What it really means to fight with you and for you on February 28th and March 1st by voting Change. Thank you.

7:14 pm – Event ends.

Moderator- Thank you and well done. Our event is about to end. Ladies and gentlemen, the power now returns to you. Remember: "Civium in Moribus rei Publicae Salus". It's your choice. Thank you everyone for attending, and I want to encourage everyone strongly in that greatest of Gator tradition, renewing our civic leadership, renewing our Gator greatness, to please come out and vote on February 28<sup>th</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>. Goodnight, it has been an honor, and Go Gators!

*Note: This transcript has been written verbatim to the best of our ability. Please reach out to [senatesecretary@sg.ufl.edu](mailto:senatesecretary@sg.ufl.edu) with any corrections. The recording of the live stream can be found on the Student Government Facebook page at <https://fb.watch/iTDNKnN4a0/>.*