

## **STUDENT SENATE MINUTES**

**May 30th, 2023**

Senate President Santiago Perez called the Senate meeting to order at 7:04pm and announced that the meeting may be filmed or audio recorded and may be available to the public. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **ROLL CALL:**

Roll was called and quorum was established with a total of 68 senators present.

#### **Not there for roll call:**

- **Alvarez**
- **Fisher**
- **Gurary**
- **Levine**
- **Nayak**
- **Partridge**
- **Rananaware**
- **Stephany**
- **William Grame**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Senate President Santiago Perez:
  - Good evening, senators.
  - The following positions are ineligible to be added to the agenda: Action SG, Campus Safety, Finance and Fees, Special Projects, Student Services, Technology Secretary, and all of the Vice Presidential cabinet nominees. This is because of Student Body Statute 104.16.
  - As the Replacement & Agenda committee was unable to meet this past Sunday, the appointments and reappointments for the positions I stated cannot be added until Replacement & Agenda meets again.
  - I wanted to announce a couple Ad-Hoc committees that I am forming.
  - The Ad-Hoc committee on the Fall 2023 Apportionment Realignment has the purpose to review the bills and forward them to the Replacement & Agenda committee to be added to the agenda.
  - The membership of this committee is as follows: Senator Stephens (Chair of committee), Senator Ali-McClory, Majority Party Leader Liang, Senator Mia, Senator Reich, Senator Vijayaraghavan, and Chairwoman Clark.
  - Additionally, Chairman Cox and Senator Bowman brought the idea of forming a mental health Ad-Hoc committee.

- The members of this committee are as follows: Chairman Cox (Co-Chair), Senator Bowman (Co-Chair), Senator Vijayaraghavan, Majority Party Leader Liang, Senator Lekebusch, Senator Lasch, Senator Neidenberg, and Senator Garcia-Ramos.
- The goal of this committee is to advocate for and create legislation/policy recommendations for the advantage of student mental health on campus.
- **Conor Lynch:**
  - I have been nominated to be Agency Head for Nightlife Navigators
  - Last year, I was given the opportunity to be on the Nightlife Navigators team.
  - One of my main goals for this year is to increase interactivity with the student body.
  - Last year, we did a great job of increasing diversity on campus.
  - We can also increase our interactivity with students through social media presence.
  - The main reason I would do a good job in this role comes from my motivations.
  - Driven by the knowledge that Nightlife Navigators have capabilities to spread life-saving information, this is what will push me to do the best.
  - I promise that if I am given this role I will do everything in my power to bring Nightlife Navigators' impact to the next level.
- **Jason DeHart:**
  - Some of you may recognize me as one of the previous senate secretaries.
  - I am here speaking on how I was failed for the position of Solicitor General in the last senate meeting.
  - Per the requirement on the UFSG website, "This individual needs to be knowledgeable of the University of Florida Constitution and the student body statutes."
  - In last week's meeting, it was made to appear that I have no knowledge of the codes, but I can not emphasize how much knowledge I have.
  - The Senate secretary role was horribly misrepresented; I spent countless hours going over codes, procedures, processes, interpretations, and a myriad of other things.
  - Without my skills and abilities that I have provided to these chambers, this senate would be in shambles.
  - I am actually required to stay up to date on UF Supreme Court carryings since the rulings affect my role.
  - Lastly, I would like to highlight how the real meat of the legal process is focused on research, data collection, and argument formation, all of which are skills I have.

- To say I'm underqualified is inaccurate and even inconsistent; Pro Tempore McGinnis and Majority Party Leader Liang were senators for only a single semester before getting their titles.
- If I'm underqualified, what does that make them?
- To be clear, I do not think they are underqualified, but I think it is important to note these inconsistencies that have been laid out by others.
- I'd like to make it clear that I have always been nonpartisan and that I've strived to make connections with students both inside and outside the chambers.
- I am so committed that I quit my paying job to take this unpaid position.
- Majority Party Leader Liang:
  - We had to inform 21 applicants that they would be unable to have a chance to be interviewed for replacement or committee seats.
  - Is it an abuse of procedure, per Rule 12-1f of the Senate Rules and Procedures, which states that, "The Senate may, when considering the committee's recommendation, open the floor to nominations of the other applicants for the seat in question with the support of the majority of the members present."
  - In a standing vote, the nominee recommended by R&A was failed, and in a standing vote of 32-29, another candidate was approved on the floor.
  - Thanks to the Gator caucus for deciding to quorum bust the R&A committee, six pieces of legislation, including 3 that were written by Gator senators, could not be reviewed, heard, or voted on tonight.
  - I want to apologize that we could not hear executive nominations tonight because of the actions of the Gator caucus.
  - Moving forward, I urge Student Body President Green and Gator Party senators to refrain from accusing others from the Change caucus of being corrupt for simply showing up to R&A and taking time to review the executive nominees.
  - I ask that you do your job and respect the democratic process.
- Senator Hartnett:
  - I am a graduate senator.
  - Many of you may not be aware of my accomplishments and qualifications.
  - I say this to demonstrate the breadth of service available for a graduate student who is interested in serving the interests of the community.
  - I am here to speak on the nomination of Paul Camardo as the Graduate, Professional, and Family Affairs executive secretary.
  - When I first reviewed Mr. Camardo's resume, I was less than impressed.
  - President Green said she was impressed by his interview.
  - There will only be 632 graduate & family housing units available at UF, leaving roughly 15,000 graduate & professional students to seek housing off-campus.

- I asked him if he supported the Renter's Rights Ordinances passed by the Gainesville City Commission as well as how he would ensure fair housing for graduate & professional students off-campus since there is not enough on campus.
- His response was that his personal opinions are out of the scope of his duties as a student government official as he hopes mine are as well; he believes his track record shows that he has fought for graduate housing.
- I asked him what his experience with public and private health insurance is as well as how he would go about insisting international graduate students with their concerns given their lack of familiarity with the American healthcare system.
- I asked him about his experience with Baby Gator and how he would provide options for student parents.
- He responded that his knowledge about said topics are on par with the average college student and that he doesn't think there is a metric on how to measure knowledge of these things.
- I am asking for the nominee to be knowledgeable on all issues facing graduate & professional students.
- I ask President Green that the position be reopened for a qualified applicant.
- Senate Pro-Tempore McGinnis
  - Last Saturday, I received an email from Minority Party Leader Allemand condemning the actions of Change Party, making accusations of corruption.
  - He cited six examples of R&A recommendations being objected here in senate and either being tabled or failed.
  - This is not abusive or corrupt.
  - R&A does not have the final say on who fills in open seats; that responsibility falls on the senate.
  - Anyone who does not agree with this does not support democracy needs to review our governing documents.
  - As a result of his allegations, Allemand informed me that none of the Gator caucus members in R&A would attend last Sunday's meeting or any future meetings until Change Party is able to "realign its behaviors."
  - This is unprofessional.
  - During Spring, after the Change caucus won the senate majority, Gator caucus delayed the elections for Senate leadership for several meetings.
  - I will continue to show up, Senate President Santiago Perez will still show up, and Majority Party Leader Liang will still show up. I suggest the other R&A members do the same.
- Member at Large Ponce:
  - I am here to talk to you about the recent proceedings concerning the R&A committee.

- The reason we did not attend the meetings was because we feel as though our time was wasted attending these meetings and our nominations are disregarded.
- I traveled 17 hours to attend this meeting, only to come to the following senate meeting to see that a majority of the R&A committee nominations were cast aside and replaced with others.
- The purpose of the R&A committee is to find the best candidate for the job.
- R&A is split 50/50 between Gator and Change, meaning bipartisanship support must be present in order for a candidate to be approved by R&A.
- This week, Minority Party Leader Allemand informed that we would not be attending the R&A Committee Meeting and to send out a notice to applicants to respect their time.
- We were transparent in saying we were not attending the meeting well beforehand.
- I hope that moving forward, the two parties of the chamber may come to an agreement to better evaluate candidates.
- Member at Large Liu:
  - Over the last couple of months, I have had the privilege of serving as Vice Chair of Programming for the Student Government Institute.
  - SGI is one of the agencies in the executive branch.
  - If you will be in town this weekend, we would love for you all to be a part of our team.
  - Whether or not you agree with our actions or not, we are the only ones who are advocating for these candidates who you agreed are qualified.
  - Halle had the best interview I had ever heard and her resume was amazing.
  - I asked Pro-Tempore McGinnis to share how the R&A committee voted on Halle, and Senate President Santiago Perez voted yes, yet he voted no when she was on the senate floor during the last senate meeting.
  - I feel like my time is not respected, but I will still continue to show up to senate for my constituents.
- Minority Party Leader Allemand:
  - I would like to address the recent events within the Replacement & Agenda Committee.
  - The R&A committee in the Spring semester was ordered to be split between parties, and this decision was made to promote bipartisanship.
  - Hardly any of the committee's nominations have been passed once introduced to the senate floor.
  - Last week, this body chose to recommit a candidate back to the R&A committee.
  - She did not reapply because she felt discouraged by this body that did not have faith in her or her qualifications.

- In the upcoming days, I hope to speak to Majority Party Leader Liang in order to revise the Rules and Procedures to allow for a Q&A for nominees.
- Prior to last week's meeting, Majority Party Leader Liang assured me that all but four of the executive nominations would be passed.
- Only one was passed.
- To the senators, I urge you to approve these candidates if you truly believe they are qualified.
- Cassie Urbenz:
  - I was extremely disappointed to see a court-ordered partisan breakdown deal.
  - During my time as a senator, I wrote a bill writing land acknowledgment to be added to a skeleton agenda in order to serve as a reminder for those who serve in R&A.
  - The quorum bust that occurred this week was an escalation that will only get worse.
  - I hope to see you on June 10th and Maguire Village (UVS) for a graduate housing block party from 2-5PM and a no-pool pool party.
  - I expect to see you there if you have ever mentioned graduate housing for political gain.
  - It's exhausting and frankly embarrassing to see finger-pointing when questions are asked or answered
  - I commend Senate President Santiago Perez, Judiciary Chairman Stephens, Senators Hartnett, Levine, Nair, Liang, Marcelino, Wood-Barron, and Pelton, for passing legislation and prioritizing services for the student body.
- Chairman Stephens:
  - I am a little confused as to what the strategy is right now.
  - When we look at the nominations that some of you have been fighting so hard for, in that same breath you guys don't show up to an R&A committee where these nominations can be added to the agenda.
  - You advocate for legislation similar to what Minority Party Leader Allemand spoke of, and by the Rules & Procedures it seems as though R&A has to meet what goes on in the agenda.
  - Where you make one decision to make a political stand, I do not understand where the logic in any of these decisions are.
  - I implore the minority caucus to come up with a more concrete, succinct solution to these problems, whether that is working with the majority caucus or just doing your job.
  - While I do respect a lot of the work you guys are doing, I hope that you guys consider that the small things you are doing are not making sense.
  - We are not here to do performances, we are here to get the policy work done and deliver for our constituents.

### **AMENDMENTS TO THE MINUTES:**

- There were none.

### **AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:**

- Majority Party Leader Liang moves to adopt the agenda. Seconded.
- In a voice vote, that motion passes.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Senate President Santiago Perez:
  - I will be signing a couple bills.
  - The first bill I have is SSB 2023-1051.
  - The second bill I have is SSB 2023-1053.
- Chairman Stephens:
  - This will serve as both of my committee reports.
  - The Judiciary committee will be meeting Friday, June 2nd, at noon in the SG conference room (Reitz 3039).
  - Due to the Judiciary committee being delayed multiple times, I did advocate to the senate president to create an Ad-Hoc committee.
  - I have two different positions I have filled: Judiciary vice-chair (Senator Marcelino) and Judiciary clerk (Senator Ali-McClory).
- Pro Tempore McGinnis:
  - This will serve as my R&A report.
  - The open seats are as follows: 3 I&C, 3 Judiciary, and 4 R&E.
  - For permanent seats: 2 District A, 4 District C, 1 District D, 1 Graduate, 1 Veterinary Medicine.
  - For Summer A replacements: Jennings, Public Health and Health Professions, and Sophomore.
  - For Summer C replacements: Accounting, Building Construction, District E, Engineering, 3 Graduate, Lakeside, Law, Liberal Arts & Sciences, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Sophomore.
- Chairman Cox:
  - Budget has sent out the organizational bill.
  - The committee will be meeting next Tuesday to review legislation.
  - I want the politics to stay far away from budget.
  - I ask that you reach out to me before submitting budget legislation.
- Chairwoman Clark:
  - I will give the R&E report.

- If you had an incomplete voter record last week, please email the senate secretaries with your corrections before 5pm on Wednesday.
- R&E will be meeting tomorrow at 11:00AM in the SG conference room.
- Any excuses for today's new senator orientation are due by next Tuesday.
- Chairman Ghozali:
  - This will serve as the I&C report.
  - We had our first I&C meeting today.
  - We are going to be meeting with SG marketing this week about getting some new tabling items.

**ROLL CALL:**

- Chairwoman Clark moves to use voter records as the final roll call by unanimous consent. That motion passes.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 pm.