

## **STUDENT SENATE MINUTES**

**September 19, 2023**

Senate President Santiago Perez called the Senate meeting to order at 7:36 pm and announced that the meeting may be filmed or audio recorded and may be available to the public. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. A land acknowledgement was recited. There was a moment of silence.

- City Commissioner Eastman makes a motion to adopt the agenda. Seconded.
- That motion passes.

### **ROLL CALL:**

Roll was called and quorum was established with a total of 53 senators present.

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

- Ali
- Asuncion
- Bader
- Berekhovski
- Ghozali
- Holmes
- Howard
- Imbrigiotta
- Kelley
- Lekebusch
- Lieber
- Liu
- Locascio
- LoSardo
- Mia
- Murtha
- Mys
- Patel
- Simes

### **COMMUNITY FORUM**

- Mayor Ward:
  - Traffic safety is absolutely a priority for our commission; we've declared a traffic violence crisis earlier in the year.
  - We are consistently concerned about people staying alive on the streets of Gainesville, typically pedestrians and cyclists.

- We are aware that we are in a state that is the most dangerous place to be a pedestrian or cyclist.
- City Commissioner Eastman:
  - We are doing a lot of things on University Avenue.
  - We want more students living near UF campus, and this is a zoning change that has been happening since 20 years ago.
  - We're now working with changing the lanes and adding lights that would slow traffic in the southwest area to allow more walkways.
  - This is a priority for everyone on the city commission.
  - We have an \$8.1 million grant to work on this project.
- City Commissioner Willits:
  - The University Avenue project could only happen because of some big dollars that were not generated here in Gainesville.
  - We're committed to take into account pedestrians and cyclists when creating new streets.
  - Last week, a pedestrian was killed in District 3.
  - Since we declared a crisis about traffic violence, we have had way more deaths.
  - For 3 years, I took the bus to UF to go to work.
  - We are also working on NW 8th Ave to make it friendlier for pedestrians.
  - People who invest tens of thousands of dollars into a vehicle will want to use it.
  - The people who walk or scoot to work or school also deserve to be safe.
  - Our goal is zero pedestrian deaths.
- City Commissioner Book:
  - I represent District 2.
  - As you go across 13th Street, 34th Ave, etc., those are roads where we have a lot of construction occurring.
  - We see extreme amounts of lighting and cycle lanes.
  - All the areas where you see development, you will also see multiple forms of movement for transportation for pedestrians.
- There was a question and answer period.
- Mayor Ward:
  - The next item of discussion would be housing & sustainability.
  - We are undersupplied of housing, and this of course leads to higher prices.
  - We might be nearing good supply for specific student housing, but it's really hard to tell.
  - We create a situation through land use and zoning where there are degrees of possibilities to meet needs.
  - We allocated over \$7 million to build low-income housing in our community, which will result in a little over 200 units.

- We try to create circumstances, either through funding or land use & zoning, where the market wants to meet that need.
- There's not a single committee meeting that happens where land use & zoning is not discussed.
- We love talking about housing; we rebuilt our housing and community development program over the last couple of years, and it is really becoming something to be proud of.
- Something I'm super proud of is that the City of Gainesville and the Gainesville Housing Authority is one of 14 communities nationwide that received a \$500,000 Neighborhood Choices Planning Grant.
- There was a question and answer period.
- Commissioner Willits:
  - Graduate students: Join your union, GAU.
  - The average 11,000 workers really don't have union representation.
  - Workers deserve a real raise, not just 1-3%.
  - If you know anyone else who has a form of employment at UF, tell them to join their union.
- Commissioner Book:
  - Your input is critical to us.
  - When there is an issue that someone is passionate about, we get thousands of emails about it.
  - You are an extremely knowledgeable group.
  - The mayor is already elected, but he recently became a new mayor.
- Commissioner Eastman:
  - When I was in college, I didn't really realize how much my voice mattered.
  - UF has a tremendous impact on people who make key decisions in our state.
  - Please reach out to your state representatives to talk about things that you are seeing in the city of Gainesville.
  - I promise you that you all know a lot about what is going on.
  - The average age in Gainesville is 26.
  - You are all a really diverse and young crowd.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Senator Natarajan:
  - I just officially submitted my first piece of legislation.
  - It is about putting ice machines in the dorms, specifically Graham Area.
  - Now that there is a solution to 24/7 hot food in the Graham Area, I thought it would be a good idea to start on the ice machines before my term ends.
  - If anyone would like to work on that with me in the future, please reach out to me.

- Ronin Lupien:
  - Somewhere in the room, there is a paper I passed around encouraging everyone to support SSB 2023-1244 in promotion of Bisexual Awareness Week.
  - I hope everyone here can be a sponsor on the bill.
  - Hopefully someone can make a friendly amendment to add all the names on the paper to the sponsors line.
- Senator Damera:
  - I am the party president and co-founder behind Vision Party.
  - Vision Party members and its affiliates have been attacked, harassed, lied about, and slandered.
  - It is very easy to slip into the same pattern of hate and political speech.
  - Vision Party will not engage with the hate.
  - We're not bound by partisanship; our mission is beyond stagnancy, politics, complacency, etc.
  - To those watching, we have a new vision for student government built for all of you.
  - Our vision is here to stay.
- Minority Party Leader Liang:
  - Something really exciting on our agenda tonight is an authorization to create a new RTS app.
  - I wanted to come here and give a run-down about corruption in UF student government.
  - Here at UF, we have a century-old political machine called "the system."
  - If you didn't know, a political machine is a system run by a select few to maintain influence and jurisdiction over its members.
  - The system controls everything you can imagine in terms of leadership positions at UF.
  - The system controls all of this through the bloc system.
  - They communicate with each other through closed-door meetings and exert control over their members through use of books to keep track of who has voted.
  - They also coerced their members to vote by saying that you won't have your house meal for the night if you don't vote.
  - The system rebrands every couple of years so that when the seniors graduate, the new freshmen will be coerced into this ideology.
  - If you don't believe me when I talk about rebranding, there are a few examples throughout UF history.
- Senator Pelton:
  - I want to thank the city commission for coming out here; it was inspiring to see the role that our senate plays within the city.
  - The Green Caucus will have our first meeting tomorrow.

- I have seen a lot of corruption firsthand here on this campus.
- I understand the narrative and messaging of wanting to keep things kind and polite.
- Those narratives are founded in lies.
- I heard today the lies that, “nothing has gotten done in this chamber over the summer.”
- This is not true.
- In just the summer semester, we authored over 150 bills.
- This is a result of having a competitive student government.
- There is a high level executive branch official that led me on.
- I found out that the reality of this relationship was to get information out of me.
- I implore you to do your research.
- I ask the leaders of this new party: please actually represent these claims you make.
- Mayor Ward adjourns the City Commission meeting.
- Chairperson Stephens:
  - I want to thank the city commission for coming out here and sharing the work they are doing for their constituents.
  - I’m hoping we can continue this partnership in order to advance students and the city of Gainesville in general.
  - If you are ashamed to have been a part of any of the actions depicted in the past presentations, I want you to reconsider your involvement in these actions.
  - I want the senate to focus on SSB 2023-1222; I want to commend Chairman Cox for offering to spearhead this.
  - I’m happy that in this bill, if passed, we will be able to allocate \$500 more to these organizations.
  - As for SSB 2023-1223, this increases the promotional limit from \$2 to \$3.
  - SSB 2023-1243 allows student performers to showcase their talent by giving them a platform.
  - SSB 2023-1244 is the resolution celebrating Bisexual Awareness Week and the importance of sexual inclusivity at UF.
  - SSB 2023-1062 is the Indigenous Land Acknowledgment Act that would mandate that the land acknowledgment be delivered at keystone events from student government.
  - I understand that the Student Body President has used the first amendment expression violation to drive her concerns about this matter, but I urge us to think critically about this.
  - Individuals who are indigenous have to hear the Pledge of Allegiance, but we as a group can’t give a land acknowledgment to uplift and support them.
- Senator Alvarez:

- I originally wanted to say that I hope this campaign will be one that is accepting and inclusive.
- We all want this to be a fair election for everyone involved.
- It is obviously inappropriate for any of the behavior described by Senator Damera to occur.
- I would like Senator Damera to meet after this meeting with myself and Faith Corbett to discuss these matters.

**AMENDMENTS TO THE MINUTES:**

- Senator Rafanan moves to correct the spelling of Avantika Naidu’s name by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Senator Rafanan moves to approve the minutes by unanimous consent. Objected.

**AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:**

- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve all bills under second reading by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1210 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1214 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1216 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1217 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1218 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve SSB 2023-1219 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve SSB 2023-1220 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Chairperson Stephens moves that any added sponsors for any bills to be sent to the senate secretaries by tomorrow at noon by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve Amendment 1 to SSB 2023-1242 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve Amendment 1 SSB 2023-1224 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve Amendment 1 SSB 2023-1236 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to add Budget & Appropriations Chairman Cox as an author to SSB 2023-1222 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.

- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve SSB 2023-1222 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve SSB 2023-1223 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve SSB 2023-1224 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve SSB 2023-1225 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve SSB 2023-1228 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1230 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Senator Natarajan moves to amend SSB 2023-1231 to remove the period in the sponsors line next to Minority Party Leader Liang and replace it with a comma by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Senator Natarajan moves to amend SSB 2023-1231 by adding the word “President” after “Inter-Residence Hall Association” by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Senator Natarajan moves to amend the sponsors line on SSB 2023-1231 to add Senators Hana Ali and Anna Huber by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Senator Natarajan moves to approve SSB 2023-1231 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1232 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1233 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1236 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1238 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1240 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1242 by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1243 by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1244 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to table SSB 2023-1061 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.

- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1185 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1196 by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1200 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Liang moves to approve SSB 2023-1201 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to have all university committee nominations heard and voted on as a bloc by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve Jacob Kanfer for the Commencement Committee by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve Samantha Simon for the Environmental Health and Safety Committee by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve Saketh Damera for the Food Service Advisory Committee by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve Sazzad Mabud for the Food Service Advisory Committee by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve Johnny Liu for the Food Service Advisory Committee by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve Leah Goldberg for the Food Service Advisory Committee by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve Nikhil Patel for the Food Service Advisory Committee by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve Jacob Kanfer for the Local Fee Committee by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve Ayesha Khuddus for the Persons with Disabilities Committee by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve Samantha Simon for the Sustainability Committee by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve Shelby Schultz for the Transportation and Parking Advisory Committee by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to approve Julia Van De Bogart for Chief Justice by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to override the veto for SSB 2023-1062 by unanimous consent. Objected.

### **THIRD READINGS:**

- Chairman Cox moves for a quorum call.
- Chairperson Stephens moves for a recess by unanimous consent. Objected.



- Chairperson Stephens moves for a recess until called back by the chair. Seconded.
- A voice vote was conducted.
- Minority Party Leader Liang calls for a division of the house.
- In a standing vote of 27-22, that motion fails.

**ROLL CALL:**

Roll was called and quorum was established with a total of 52 senators present.

**Not there for roll call:**

- Ali
  - Asuncion
  - Bader
  - Berekhovski
  - Clark
  - Ghozali
  - Holmes
  - Howard
  - Imbrigiotta
  - Kelley
  - Lieber
  - Liu
  - Locascio
  - LoSardo
  - Mia
  - Murtha
  - Mys
  - Patel
  - Penin
  - Seifer
- Senate President Santiago Perez reads the veto message from Student Body President Green:
    - SSB 2023-1062 seeks to require the reading of an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement before a variety of Executive and Judicial Branch events.
    - While I am evaluating how my administration may incorporate land acknowledgement into areas of our work, I believe this bill as written is an inappropriate overreach by the Legislative Branch.
    - As a general rule, one branch mandating speech from another branch strikes me as a violation of the separation of powers.

- I would also welcome a conversation with members of the Legislative Branch in the future if they would like to discuss particular topics before writing legislative mandates that impact the Executive Branch.
- Chairperson Stephens gives a response to the veto message:
  - I think it's really cowardly that people from both sides want to quorum bust.
  - If you want to leave, go ahead.
  - This bill does nothing to violate the first amendment, this is a representation of government speech.
  - I don't understand why it is so hard for us to say that indigenous rights matter on this campus.
  - Senator Mia had to come here to avoid the quorum bust.
  - I am getting fed up with the political gains that this side is playing.
  - We have folks out here who don't care about these rights.
  - You should be ashamed of yourself because you know what kind of stuff you were trying to play.
  - I am not asking questions, because you should have read the bill; which a lot of you don't.
- There were three rounds of con-pro debate.
- Chairperson Stephens gives 2 minutes of final privilege.
  - I'm getting tired of this argument that it's about procedure.
  - Indigenous folks are a part of this student body.
  - I have defended Jewish rights, asian hate, the black and latinx community.
  - The fact that we are entertaining that we shouldn't be doing an indigenous land acknowledgement is far beyond ridiculous.
  - I want you to think and wake up.
- In a standing vote of 42-10, the veto is overridden.
- Senate President Santiago Perez reads the veto message from Student Body President Green about SSB 2023-1097:
  - This bill intends to post the office hours of several Agency Heads on the website.
  - While I agree with the sentiment, this bill was never presented to me as an idea so I could discuss and evaluate with my team regarding the logistics of this.
  - While they are already required to do the time, this can be served in many capacities.
  - We are already brainstorming doing something similar to this and seeing as it is the job under the executive branch, I would like to continue working on this initiative with my team, therefore I am vetoing this bill.
- Senator Mia gives 3 minutes of response to the veto message:
  - This bill was written during the summer about 4 or 5 months ago.
  - This bill would say that the agency heads have to post their office hours on the SG website.

- This bill does not mandate the office hours, it only mandates putting the hours on the website.
- I have not heard back from Student Body President Green after her veto message; she claims that she has something in the works.
- Office hours are there for all of us to go to; we shouldn't allow our ability to know office hours to be obscured.
- This is pretty straightforward, I don't know what else I could ask for.
- There were five minutes of non-debatable technical Q&A.
- There were three rounds of con-pro debate.
- Chairperson Stephens moves to previous question by unanimous consent. Objected.
- In a standing vote of 34-19, the veto is overridden.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Senate President Santiago Perez clarifies the voter record.
- Pro-Tempore McGinnis announces the open seats:

#### Permanent Seats:

- Agricultural & Life Sciences
- Beaty Towers
- Dentistry
- Design, Construction, & Planning
- District A
- District B
- District C (4)
- District D (2)
- Graduate (9)
- Journalism
- CLAS (2)
- Medicine
- Pharmacy
- Veterinary Medicine

#### Committee Seats:

- Budget (1)
- I&C (3)
- Judiciary (4)
- R&E (4)
- Chairperson Stephens:
  - Judiciary will be meeting sometime in the next couple of weeks.
  - I appreciate the folks who stood up for the Indigenous Land Acknowledgment who weren't in the Change caucus.

- What I don't appreciate is that Chairman Cox would do a quorum call in coordination with the majority of people because he wants to entrench his power.
- Majority Party Leader Roberts moves to appeal the decision of the chair that Senator Stephens did not make a personal attack towards several senators. Seconded.
- Senate President Santiago Perez disregards that motion.

**ROLL CALL:**

- Senator Wood-Barron moves to use voter records as final roll call by unanimous consent. That motion passes.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

- The meeting was adjourned at 10:59 pm.