

STUDENT SENATE MINUTES

January 9, 2024

Acting-Chair Ponce called the Senate meeting to order at 7:45 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.

- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to elect Senator Ponce as Acting Chair by unanimous consent. That motion passes.

ROLL CALL:

Roll was called and quorum was established with a total of 71 senators present.

Not there for roll call:

- Burton
- Dasgupta
- Diaz
- Drucker
- Ruffin
- Serret
- White

- A land acknowledgment was recited.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Parliamentarian Ortiz:
 - I am the chair of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Government Oversight and Reform, as well as the Parliamentarian.
 - I have never been associated with any major political party at UF; I ran as an independent in the Fall 2023 elections.
 - I have already sent the former senate president's transition reports to all the senators.
 - Blake Cox has resigned from the Mental Health Ad-Hoc Committee.
 - The former senate president and remaining chair agree that recruitment of the ad-hoc committee would be beneficial.
 - The DEI Ad-Hoc Committee was not mentioned in the former senate president's transition report.
 - It should be noted that this committee is not politically aimed.
 - The Government Oversight & Reform Committee is scheduled to meet twice this week to go over what we will work on this semester; I am very proud of this committee for being able to pass legislation unanimously.

- I believe that this makes the committee a very valuable asset to people on both sides of the aisle.
- I would like to extend my gratitude to Mr. Reich and Mr. Lim for all their hard work on this committee.
- My committee will elect a vice-chair that I hope will serve as a liaison.
- May this be the start of a great relationship.
- Senator Zárrate:
 - While I refrain from questioning Mr. Brinkman’s intelligence or dedication, it is imperative to acknowledge that he does show flaws in his leadership.
 - The Supreme Court ruled one of his bills unconstitutional, affirming it to be based on an unclear and unjustifiable ground.
 - Mr. Brinkman was also responsible for creating the election map that would later be ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court for unlawfully depriving off-campus students of their voting rights.
 - His actions as Judiciary Chair contributed to the political crisis that we have inherited due to the senate’s malapportionment.
 - I am honored to nominate Senator Laurel Wentworth for the distinguished position of Senate President.
 - Senator Wentworth has demonstrated exceptional tenacity, transforming an idea into a majority within a semester; this is an exemplary display of leadership.
 - I urge you to earnestly consider Laurel Wentworth for the senate presidency.
 - Your vote carries substantial weight.
 - Can we in good faith entrust this senate’s leadership to an individual with a record tainted by a pattern of misunderstanding and misusing the power they wield?
- Ronin Lupien:
 - I come to speak in support of a bill that hopefully many of you will be seeing, in regards to gender-neutral bathrooms on campus.
 - Your job as a legislative body is to pass legislation, so I hope you will be in support of mine.
- Rey Arcenas:
 - Why should you trust me?
 - The system wants to give you as little as possible.
 - I’m on the opposite of what the system wants; I want you to be a free thinker.
 - Florida Blue Key is at the center.
 - In terms of a bloc, they are like factions.
 - There are three blocs ranging in tiers of power: political, third, and social bloc.
 - You now have an idea of what bloc you are in, so talk to your bloc leaders or your house rep.
 - They usually decide who gets what agency, what position, etc.
 - You can ask for a position in the executive office or for senate leadership.

- Maybe the more you ask, the more you will be rewarded.
- On paper, you all are student leaders.
- Ethan Halle:
 - I will be presenting the contingency plan for the 2024 election.
 - The plan is divided into two parts.
 - In the case of an outage at a polling location that occurs at less than one hour, voting will continue as normally.
 - We will have ASOEs directing students to the nearest possible location.
 - If the outage occurs for longer than one hour on Tuesday, we will add the amount of time lost for up to three hours; this will be added to the end of Wednesday.
 - Time lost on Wednesday will be added to the end of Wednesday for up to three hours; any time lost between three and six hours will not be made up.
 - If the issue occurs for more than six hours, we will add another day of voting.
- Sydney Engstrom:
 - I bring to the attention of the chamber the dire circumstances of queer and gender-nonconforming students at UF.
 - Since I entered UF in Fall 2022, Florida legislation has passed over 20 explicitly anti-LGBTQ+ bills with at least 6 being passed in 2023 alone.
 - I could take some time to review the content, but there would not be enough time to adequately address the issue.
 - I am sure that many of the senators here are aware of the bills that I speak of.
 - I would like to ask every senator here to ponder what it might feel like to be queer or trans in the state of Florida.
 - I don't think any students here expect the student senate to make any substantive changes to the current political atmosphere surrounding queerness.
 - As it stands, the current majority party has not taken any action to address the discriminatory legislation affecting their students.
 - My major concern of this senate is that almost no senators care about the queer constituents that they supposedly represent.
 - When a state demonizes pronouns and our student government does nothing about it, it is demoralizing.
 - I hope I am wrong about these sentiments and I hope that every senator here will support a resolution coming in a few weeks in support of gender-neutral bathrooms on-campus.
 - The only intent behind this resolution is to motivate the university to expand gender-neutral bathrooms to better accommodate all students.
 - I do not want to assume that the exclusion of queer students from the platform is synonymous with being anti-gay or that the lack of resolutions from this chamber to validate or acknowledge queer students is definite.
 - I am concerned about the senators in the majority party.

- We are here and we want your support.
- I think we have put the cart before the horse.
- Maybe we can upgrade the experiences of minorities on campus.
- Emmy Larrew:
 - I am speaking on behalf of the Instagram account uf_politicats.
 - This semester, the account hopes to post bill spotlights to promote bipartisanship in the legislative process.
 - We will be writing a 2-minute long read along with the authors' communication information.
 - Both Change and Vision have expressed interest in extending the Southwest Rec hours; both parties seem to be more inclusive on campus; both parties want to make contraceptive items more accessible.
 - 2024 is the year to actually get things done in this chamber.
 - If you have any pending legislation, you can send it to our email.
- Oscar Santiago Perez:
 - I wanted to say Happy New Year.
 - I want to talk about the senate leadership elections.
 - I am here to share my reservations about the potential to-be nominees, starting off with John Brinkman.
 - I hope that whenever you check the email, that you please respond.
 - I think that ignoring emails is a bit unprofessional.
 - I hope that Saketh does a good job in R&A.
- Senator Monson:
 - I was going to show you an Alligator article about UF banning graduate and international students from 7 listed countries: China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, Cuba, Venezuela, and Syria.
 - Those are deemed foreign countries of concern and therefore people from there can not be teaching assistants.
 - Senator Gangano and I have drafted a bill calling out this discrimination; I'm not sure how they could ever justify this xenophobia.
 - We want UF to stay great and be ranked top 5, and these graduate students are integral for research and stem degrees.
 - In 2020, there were 1,100 international students from China.
 - Additionally, 75% of non-residents were masters students.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton:
 - We have seen a lot of challenges in this chamber in past semesters.
 - I think it is the prime priority of both parties to move forward.
 - Many bills need to be passed.
 - I want to extend the offer, especially to those on the other side of the aisle, to reach out to me.

- You all should have received a link to join the Green Caucus.
- Our first meeting will be January 11 at Reitz Room 2106.
- Jonathan Stephens:
 - I will keep this brief since I know it is an important night for a few individuals.
 - I want to focus specifically on a policy issue back during my tenure as a senator: food security.
 - I want to reiterate to this chamber that 40% of students here identify as food insecure.
 - This campus is having an epidemic of food insecurity, and it's not an issue that can be brushed under the rug.
 - There will be people who will go to bed tonight without enough nutrition.
 - There are multiple policy issues that can solve this.
 - I want to shout out Olivia Green and her administration for kicking off the initiative.
 - The senate needs to be able to put in the hours and the time.
 - There needs to be people within this chamber on both sides of the aisle that need to get on top of this issue.
 - I feel that this senate chamber has failed to recognize the importance of philanthropy within their organization.
 - We have so much power and influence, and I empower everyone in this chamber to get the work done for our constituents.

SENATE OFFICER ELECTIONS:

- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to open the floor to nominations for Senate President by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton nominates Raj Mia for Senate President. Senator Mia accepts.
- Senator Rafanan nominates John Brinkman for Senate President. Senator Brinkman accepts.
- Senator Zárrate nominates Laurel Wentworth for Senate President. Senator Wentworth declines.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to close the floor for nominations for Senate President by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Senator Mia presents 5 minutes for Senate President candidacy:
 - I am a food and resource economics major here at UF.
 - I am also a brother of Alpha Kappa Psi.
 - I was the Ad-Hoc Chair for Satellite Affairs, as well as on the ad-hoc for reapportionment.
 - I have authored over 70 bills here in senate.
 - I have attended over 30 R&A meetings.

- I have sat in on the R&A committee, and would be experienced in judiciary and Robert's Rules.
- I have chaired the senate before, and have also served as the Senate President Pro-Tempore's Chief of staff, so I have gone through the Rules and Procedures numerous times.
- There were 5 minutes of Q&A.
- Senator Brinkman presents 5 minutes for Senate President candidacy:
 - I am very honored to be in front of you all.
 - I know a lot has been said about me, and I will address this now.
 - I'm from Jacksonville, Florida, and I am a triple major in economics, political science, and philosophy, with a minor in history.
 - I had the opportunity to serve on the Judiciary and I&C committees.
 - When I was elected as CLAS senator, I was elected as Judiciary Chair, which I will talk more about later.
 - I know many have said that I have not been open, and I want to try to work on that.
 - I believe the Senate President is the servant to the senate and the student body.
 - I would like to be transparent about my decision-making.
 - With the senate budget, I would like to provide Baby Gator with additional funds.
 - I would also like to see through the electronic voting system for senate.
 - I agree with everything Jonathan Stephens said during his public comment, and I do believe that food insecurity is a huge issue that needs to be addressed.
 - Additionally, I believe the reapportionment map for Spring 2024 needs to be drafted, as well as an Activity and Service Fee budget.
 - Thank you all for giving me the time.
- There were 5 minutes of Q&A.
- Senator Liang moves to extend the Q&A period by 5 minutes by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- There were 5 more minutes of Q&A.
- A vote was conducted by roll call.
 - Alvarez- Mia
 - Amster- Brinkman
 - Antonik- Brinkman
 - Arzt- Brinkman
 - Azeem- Brinkman
 - Banach- Mia
 - Barrios- Brinkman
 - Bedine- Brinkman
 - Brinkman- Brinkman
 - Bryan- Brinkman

- Budhai- Mia
- Damera- Brinkman
- Dunnam- Brinkman
- Enriquez- Brinkman
- Fentress- Brinkman
- Gangano- Mia
- Gigliotti- Brinkman
- Hendricks- Mia
- Henley- Brinkman
- Hewitt III- Brinkman
- Hoffer- Mia
- Idiculla- Brinkman
- Insuasti- Mia
- Isakson- Brinkman
- Islam- Mia
- Jaramillo- Mia
- Jubran- Brinkman
- Kelley- Brinkman
- Khan- Mia
- Khuddus- Brinkman
- Kinggard- Brinkman
- Lamey- Mia
- Leavengood- Brinkman
- Lekebusch- Brinkman
- Levine- Brinkman
- Liang- Mia
- Littleton- Brinkman
- Marcus- Brinkman
- Matthews- Mia
- McGuire- Brinkman
- Mia- Mia
- Monson- Mia
- Naidu- Mia
- Nayak- Brinkman
- Pelton- Mia
- Penin- Brinkman
- Permane- Mia
- Phung- Mia
- Ponce- Mia
- Prieto- Brinkman

- Quattrocchi- Brinkman
- Rafanan- Brinkman
- Rappoport - Brinkman
- Robson- Brinkman
- Rodriguez- Brinkman
- Rubaii- Brinkman
- Sarkar- Brinkman
- Seifer- Brinkman
- Thomas- Brinkman
- Vance- Mia
- Vargas- Brinkman
- Vigna- Brinkman
- Vijayaraghavan- Brinkman
- Von Holten- Brinkman
- Wang- Brinkman
- Wentworth- Brinkman
- Werner- Mia
- Whitaker- Brinkman
- Wood-Barron- Mia
- Worden- Mia
- Zárrate- Mia
- In a roll call vote of 42-24, Senator John Brinkman is elected as the new Senate President.
- The Senate President is sworn in.
- Senator Hendricks moves for a quorum call. Dilatory.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to open the floor for Senate President Pro-Tempore nominations by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Senator Idiculla nominates Senator Saketh Damera for Senate President Pro-Tempore. Senator Damera accepts.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton nominates Senator Liang for Senate President Pro-Tempore. Senator Liang accepts.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to close the floor for Senate President Pro-Tempore nominations by unanimous consent. That motion passes.

QUORUM CALL:

- Burton
- Dasgupta
- Diaz
- Drucker
- Rappoport

- Ruffin
- Serret
- White
- Quorum was established with 70 senators present.

- Senator Damera presents 5 minutes for Senate President Pro-Tempore candidacy:
 - I am honored to be standing up here.
 - I am a public health and economics major from Tampa, Florida.
 - I've been representing PHHP for 2 years, and I'm very proud of my college.
 - I've served on 3 committees: Budget, Rules & Ethics, and Judiciary.
 - I'm the former Vice-President of the Dream Team at UF.
 - I have a few big ideas for this position and a few ideas in general.
 - I would like to see a senate alumni network to provide advice, mentorship, and support.
 - I'd also like to see a freshman engagement program, since freshmen are very eager to get involved on campus.
 - The third idea is a committee feedback form as a way for constituents to provide feedback on the committees in order to make processes more transparent.
 - I believe that writing a bill to enforce service hours to senators to make sure that the work we are doing is meaningful and to make sure they are serving their community.
 - I'd also like to reimplement and redefine the SGAA in order to hold student government officials accountable.
 - I want to implement Big 5 collaborations in order to allow students to receive more from us.
 - There were 5 minutes of Q&A.

- Senator Liang presents 5 minutes for Senate President Pro-Tempore candidacy:
 - I am a third-year political science major with a minor in philosophy.
 - I am co-president of the Student Fellows at the Bob Graham Center.
 - I was elected to represent CLAS.
 - I served as the former majority party leader for the Change caucus.
 - I think I sat in over 50 interviews; having served in R&A, I definitely think my past experiences would be crucial to this position.
 - I am currently the Faculty Senate Delegate.
 - I believe I am level-headed and able to compromise.
 - I hope to ensure a positive, bipartisan experience for all senators.
 - One idea I have is enhancing communication and collaboration amongst senators via Slack or Discord.
 - I want to increase the accessibility of SG outside of hyperpartisanship by providing interview preparation resources on the SG website and by sharing

feedback with the candidates and ways to improve and ensure that all individuals are supported.

- I want to collaborate with the City of Gainesville and Faculty Senate by establishing policy councils.
- Through proper code revisions and Rules and Procedures changes, these councils would work closely with UF administration and faculty senate.
- This would help with tackling off-campus public safety and lighting issues.
- There were 5 minutes of Q&A.
- A vote was conducted by roll call.
 - Alvarez- Liang
 - Amster- Damera
 - Antonik- Damera
 - Arzt- Damera
 - Azeem- Damera
 - Banach- Liang
 - Barrios- Damera
 - Bedine- Damera
 - Brinkman- Damera
 - Bryan- Damera
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 - Enriquez- Damera
 - Fentress- Damera
 - Gangano- Liang
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 - Hoffer- Liang
 - Idiculla- Damera
 - Insuasti- Liang
 - Isakson- Damera
 - Islam- Liang
 - Jaramillo- Liang
 - Jubran- Damera
 - Kelley- Damera
 - Khan- Liang
 - Khuddus- Damera
 - Kinggard-Damera

- Lamey- Liang
- Leavengood- Damera
- Lekebusch- Damera
- Levine- Damera
- Liang- Liang
- Littleton- Damera
- Marcus- Damera
- Matthews- Liang
- McGuire- Damera
- Mia- Liang
- Monson- Liang
- Naidu- Liang
- Nayak- Damera
- Pelton- Liang
- Penin- Damera
- Permane- Liang
- Phung- Liang
- Ponce- Damera
- Prieto- Damera
- Quattrocchi- Damera
- Rafanan- Damera
- Robson- Damera
- Rodriguez- Damera
- Rubaii- Damera
- Sarkar- Damera
- Seifer- Damera
- Thomas- Damera
- Vance- Liang
- Vargas- Damera
- Vigna- Damera
- Vijayaraghavan- Damera
- Von Holten- Damera
- Wang- Damera
- Wentworth- Damera
- Werner- Liang
- Whitaker- Damera
- Wood-Barron- Liang
- Worden-Liang
- Zárrate-Liang

- In a roll call vote of 46-24, Senator Damera is elected as the new Senate President Pro-Tempore.
- The Senate President Pro-Tempore is sworn in.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to open the floor for Member-at-Large 1 nominations by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- A senator nominates Senator Maya Idiculla for Member-at-Large 1. Senator Idiculla accepts.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton nominates Senator Asif Islam for Member-at-Large 1. Senator Islam accepts.
- Senator Idiculla presents 5 minutes for Member-at-Large 1:
 - I am a second-year political science major and minoring in entrepreneurship from Tampa, Florida.
 - Before senate, I was a budget clerk.
 - I am currently the sophomore director in Class Councils.
 - I am also an Indian Student Association director.
 - One of my goals is to improve the interview process and evaluate interviewees based on application and interview.
 - I also want to prioritize bipartisanship by fostering open communication and creating collaborative efforts.
 - Finally, I want to be a resource for individuals as an interviewer and previous interviewee.
 - Before becoming a senator, I wrote legislation on allowing students to book classrooms after hours and on weekends for academic purposes.
 - I also want to improve religious holiday academic policies, supporting the implementation of an interfaith calendar within classrooms.
- There were 5 minutes of Q&A.
- Senator Islam presents 5 minutes for the Member-at-Large 1 candidacy:
 - I am a 3rd year computer science major representing CLAS.
 - Sitting in on the R&A committee and setting the agendas for senate, I have previous experiences that qualify me for this position.
 - One of the things I have sworn is to be objective and bipartisan on the R&A committee.
 - I have worked with over 100 individuals in the country, I am an easy person to communicate with, and I will get back to you quickly.
 - One final duty in this position is to assist the Senate President and Senate Pro-Tempore.
 - One idea I have to improve the senate experience is to implement objective rubrics for evaluating applicants early.
 - If you want to be a better candidate, you deserve the proper feedback.

- I want to be more approachable to everyone; even though this position does not require it, I would be posting my office hours to allow constituents to speak to me.
- I would like to emphasize the selection of passionate and dedicated candidates who will not lose their seat.
- There were 5 minutes of Q&A.
- In a standing vote of 43-23, Senator Idiculla is elected as Member-at-Large 1.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to open the floor for Member-at-Large 2 nominations by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Senator Liang nominates Senator Zárrate for Member-at-Large 2. Senator Zárrate accepts.
- Senator Enriquez nominates Senator Laurel Wentworth for Member-at-Large 2. Senator Wentworth accepts.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to close the floor for Member-at-Large 2 nominations by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Senator Zárrate presents 5 minutes for the Member-at-Large 2 candidacy:
 - I grew up in the Netherlands and speak 5 languages.
 - I am a triple major in biochemistry, philosophy, and German with a minor in Spanish.
 - I have demonstrated leadership experience in student organizations.
 - I am a member of the Green Caucus and the Women's caucus.
 - I have a passion for making a positive impact on campus life.
 - I want to ensure that DEI is stressed within the R&A committee.
 - I am a fair, objective, and nonpartisan senator and want to bring my broad outlook that reflects the entirety of campus.
 - I stand for increasing student engagement with student government.
 - I have started to host office hours within Lakeside.
 - I want to proactively establish agendas to address student needs.
 - I want to be a resource for all, so talk to me if you want to write a bill.
 - I want to use SG services to the fullest extent, and this involves the Reitz, UFIT, etc.
- There were 5 minutes of Q&A.
- Senator Wentworth presents 5 minutes for the Member-at-Large 2 candidacy:
 - I represent the off-campus district.
 - I am from Destin, Florida.
 - I served as a replacement senator this past summer.
 - I was a member of the R&E committee, and am a current member of Gator Growl, Flip the System, and STAAR.
 - When I first came during this summer, I was actually affiliated with Change Party.

- As someone who has worked on both sides of the aisle, I have seen numerous perspectives on issues and can be able to work with everyone in the chamber as I have developed relationships with people from both sides.
- I want to ensure platform points are met and can be seen on campus by those who elected us.
- I would like to host numerous “meet your senators” events and open a suggestion box for students.
- I want to alternate scheduled interviews in R&A to provide fresh deliberation.
- I would like to work to find a more efficient way to teach senators about voter records.
- There were 5 minutes of Q&A.
- In a standing vote of 46-22, Senator Laurel Wentworth is elected as Member-at-Large 2.
- Senate President Pro-Tempore Damera announces open R&A seats:
 - Committee Chairs:
 - Judiciary
 - Budget
 - R&E
 - I&C
 - Permanent Senate Seats:
 - Graduate and Family Housing
 - Building Construction
 - Dentistry
 - Design, Construction, and Planning
 - Education
 - Engineering (2)
 - Graduate (8)
 - Law
 - CLAS
 - Medicine
 - Pharmacy
 - Veterinary Medicine
 - Off-Campus
 - Freshman
 - Committee Seats:
 - Budget (2)
 - I&C (4)
 - R&E (6)
 - Judiciary (7)

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

- Senator Mia moves to add the Budget and Rules & Ethics committee reports by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to previous question by unanimous consent. That motion passes.

BUDGET:

- Acting Budget Chair Ponce:
 - The Budget Committee has completed all allocations.
 - Budget Committee: please look out for a text from me; we are going to have to meet.
 - There were a few errors with the student organizations budget.
 - We are going to meet again to allocate the remaining budget.

RULES & ETHICS:

- Senator Mia:
 - We have been going back and forth on absences about food poisoning.
 - If you are absent in the future due to an illness, please provide some form of documentation.
 - Please apply for R&E..
- Parliamentarian Ortiz clarifies

ADJOURNMENT:

- Majority Party Leader Amster moves to use voter records as final roll call by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- The meeting was adjourned at 10:41 pm.