

STUDENT SENATE MINUTES

February 13, 2024

Senate President Brinkman called the Senate meeting to order at 7:44 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 acknowledgment was given.

- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to a five minute recess by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to a five minute recess. Seconded.
- In a rising vote, that motion passes.
- Senate President Brinkman calls the meeting back to order at 7:56pm.
- Senator Mia moves to a recess until called back by the chair by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Senate President Brinkman calls the meeting back to order at 8:12pm.

ROLL CALL:

Roll was called and quorum was established with a total of 72 senators present.

Not there for roll call:

- Fentress
- Isakson
- Khinsim
- Levine
- Lim
- Littleton
- Matthews
- Nayak
- Penin
- Ponce
- Robson
- Vigna
- Von Holten

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Senator Sarkar:
 - Alyssa Alhadeff, Scott Beigel, Martin Duque, Nicholas Dworet, Aaron Feis, Jaime Guttenberg, Chris Hixon, Luke Hoyer, Cara Loughran, Gina Montalto, Joaquin Oliver, Alaina Petty, Meadow Pollack, Helena Ramsay, Alex Schachter, Carmen Shentrup, Peter Wang.
 - February 14th, 2018: The lives of 17 students and staff were lost in the tragic Marjory Stoneman Douglas highschool shooting.

- Tomorrow, February 14, 2024 marks 6 years.
- Year 1 served as the most devastating.
- Year 2 became easier to greet and drive by Stoneman Douglas.
- Year 3, my Parkland community commemorated with a peaceful vigil.
- Year 4, it felt like time was not real.
- Year 5, we casually gathered and reminisced on the friends we had lost.
- Here we are at year 6; though the community has united, the eerie feeling never goes away.
- We are faced with more tragic statistics.
- In 2022 alone, there were 51 school shootings.
- I remember the vigil in which over 1,000 people came out.
- In simple terms, mass shootings in this country have become a joke and have taken a heavy toll on the lives of many.
- Nobody should have to live in fear.
- Today we live in a society and world where that fear is everyone's reality.
- It's part of our obligation to help the safety of ourselves and our peers.
- Most of us have friends and family to go back to, and the 17 innocent souls who lost their lives aren't able to.
- This resolution would create a safe space for students.
- Our kids deserve better and to feel safe in schools.
- They deserve to have their college experiences and lives full of happiness.
- After the loss of these students, the shooting altered the Parkland community as a whole.
- Senator Azeem and I brought orange ribbons in our personal support to the Orange Ribbons for Jaime movement.
- Gun violence is not a joke but a very serious and fatal reality.
- Ronin Lupien:
 - I wanted to touch very briefly on an article I wrote for the Alligator about what I see as a failure of this chamber to serve its power as a student voice.
 - There was a piece of legislation heard in Judiciary that, while it had its flaws, would have been a step forward; it was failed.
 - While I'm not asking for that specific bill to be brought forward, I hope you all read this article and reflect on your roll as a legislature.
 - IRHA does not want to become the hellscape that senate is.
- Parliamentarian Ortiz:
 - I wanted to speak briefly on some things that have been on my mind.
 - I want to clarify that last week, the oversight committee had unanimously agreed to refer some legislation to the Judiciary committee.
 - Quite frankly, I was outvoted in the committee and was not fast enough on my feet to stop it from happening.

- I am here to publicly apologize and affirm that I have spoken to multiple senators in the committee to make sure this doesn't happen again.
- I want to commend the performance of Senator Littleton, because it's clear to me that he is an independent thinker always willing to voice his concerns.
- Know that if the senate leadership was willing to care for me, they are willing to care for you.
- I feel like it takes great confidence and humility to admit when you don't know what the rules are and actively try to avoid a mistake.
- I want to ask the senate if they'd rather have a Senate President that does make mistakes at the cost of the student body.
- I hope this provides some perspective about how we can work together and give people proper credit where it's deserved.
- Emmy Larrew:
 - If you spoke at the debate yesterday, you did a really good job.
 - Speaking in front of people is kind of scary, so even if you disagree, please give some shoutouts to these people.
 - Don't forget to get a little sweet treat from the front.
- Senator Richter:
 - I was going to talk about the Green New Deal for Florida.
 - Unfortunately due to technical difficulties, we will not be able to hear it tonight.
 - It is some really good legislation from Senator Lamey and other students.
 - As you all remember, the THRIFT Act was the two line item transfers that were a bit controversial.
 - It was passed today in budget, so I appreciate all of you on budget.
 - Green Caucus: we are meeting this Friday in the SG Conference Room probably at 4:00pm.
 - You have to meet at least once a month or you will not be a member.
- Senator Gorlin:
 - I am one of the new senators selected by R&A.
 - I'm a 3rd year student in the College of Medicine.
 - There's about 130-170 students in each classes.
 - We also have PA classes.
 - We have a number of MD PhD programs.
 - I wanted to show that medical students are really cool people and never cease to amaze me.
 - Gators Got Talent is an event we host every year to showcase the talents that our students have.
 - When you see medical, PA, or graduate students, please have respect for them because you have no idea what they're going through.

- We have a responsibility in this chamber to understand the needs of the student body.
- In the city of Gainesville, we have a horrible opioid epidemic.
- Muntaha Islam:
 - I am a graduate student at UF, and I want to express my insurmountable fear and anxiety as a physically Muslim student on campus where UF hires unqualified speakers to deliver hate speech.
 - I am certain that there will be an attack on a Muslim student if UF keeps bringing in Islamophobic speakers.
 - I would like to draw your attention to speaker Charlotte Korchak's event last Tuesday in which she used dehumanizing language when referencing Muslims and Palestinians.
 - As an attendee, I felt my body tense as students were applauding her Islamophobia and white supremacist rhetoric.
 - As we know, Palestinian women have been at the forefront of protecting and helping people who have been injured during the airstrikes.
 - When you tell people that Muslim women are oppressed, it reduces us to objects; we are grown women, please respect us.
 - She equates Palestinians to the terrorist group of Al-Qaeda, responsible for the tragic 9/11 events.
 - The only similarity between Gaza and Al-Qaeda is that they are Muslims.
 - Equating Muslims to terrorism is so inappropriate and disturbing.
 - If UF does not cease hate speech, they will be responsible for attacks on students.
 - In Ben Shapiro's talk last year, he kept referencing how it was a Palestinian vs Jew situation, when really Palestinian-Jews exist and Palestinians do not stand for any anti-semitism.
 - Every opportunity UF gives to spew hate speech is another opportunity for a violent person to attack us.
 - Just 4 days ago, a Palestinian-American was stabbed in the chest in Texas.
 - As a visibly Muslim woman, I have always felt the need to prove that I don't stand for terrorism and I feel the need to prove that I'm worthy of respect.
- Senator Banach:
 - I will deliver my support for SSB 2024-1189, which I wrote with Senator Hewitt.
 - I became interested in the topic of e-waste recycling while visiting a friend in FIU for an internship; I saw these centers just outside of a residence hall.
 - The issue with throwing away batteries is that they contain toxic heavy metals that may easily make their way into the groundwater and the soil.
 - Recycling drives only exist part of the year, and the only valid option to dispose these batteries is to call EH&S which requires a phone call.
 - The resolution calls for an e-waste disposal center to be put in Reitz Union.

- Senator Hewitt is already collaborating with Saketh to see if we can get an e-waste unit here in Reitz.
- Syd Engstrom:
 - I'm not trying to be partisan, but I have an issue with what accountability means for Vision Party.
 - Chair, I think you should work on your understanding of the queer community.
 - You need to elaborate on specialized CWC services.
 - Is offering professional development to graduate students discriminatory?
 - It's hard because there's no meeting minutes for the committees.
 - In the 300 Codes, there's no requirement for certain information to be released to students.
 - If you can't do it for your students, do it for yourself.
- Farah Al-Takrouri:
 - I'm here to speak about the rise in Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment on campus.
 - Last week, Holden Zeichner assaulted a protester in Turlington Plaza.
 - Holden violently forced and pushed and hit John when he tried to take his sign back.
 - Holden was caught by the police around 10 minutes after the assault, and he was released but was trespassed off campus.
 - UF has done an abysmal job at supporting their Muslim students.
 - Muslims, Palestinians, and allies do not feel safe on campus.
 - As a group already marginalized, Muslim women do not feel safe walking around during the day.
 - Just yesterday, I was harassed by a person on a bike.
 - I'm asking you all to condemn the Islamophobic hate speech.
 - If you fail to stop this, then it won't be long until someone gets seriously hurt or even killed.
 - These are our rights as students at this university.
- Senator Burton:
 - Happy Valentine's week; everyone looks great with their red and pink.
 - I wanted to wish everyone a happy Lunar New Year; this is the year of the dragon.
 - February is American Heart Month.
 - I stopped by Shands and the Pediatric Cardiac Intensive Care Unit and dropped off goodies to the kids suffering from congenital heart issues.
 - Today I found out that there are 40,000 babies suffering from congenital heart defects every year.
 - Heart disease affects 16 million women.
 - Cardiovascular disease is currently the leading cause of death globally.

- I understand that my suggestions are easier said than done, but adhering to them can really help to reduce your risk of heart disease.
- Senator Hoffer:
 - I am giving a public comment on behalf of Michael Lim; he could not be here tonight and he had some things he wanted to talk about:
 - I am unable to be with all of you tonight because my mom is going in for an emergency surgery so I'm in Orlando; I ask that you all send your thoughts and prayers to my mom.
 - I have asked Senator Serrett to make a series of motions on my behalf.
 - These bills have been reviewed and amended thoroughly in hopes of removing any concerns about the bills' legality and constitutionality.
 - I look forward to seeing the latest iteration of these bills passed on the floor tonight.
 - I encourage all senators to read my email before next Tuesday, which is when the bill is expected to hit the floor.
 - If it has to be amended a million times and my name be taken off the sponsor's line, it is something I am willing to pay.
- Connor Panish:
 - You may recognize me, I gave a goodbye speech a while ago.
 - My current concern is that Broward is a polling location instead of Cypress.
 - Cypress was made a polling location last semester because of the construction around Broward.
 - I find it my moral responsibility promoting disability for all people on UF campus.
 - Sadly, the elections commission chose to make Broward a voting location even though it is surrounded by construction.
 - You can email the elections commission and raise your concerns.
 - The deadline to change these voting locations is tomorrow.
 - Disabled children become disabled adults, but the moment you hit adulthood you are forgotten.
- Raymond Hopkins:
 - I'm a student here at UF.
 - Florida was and remains the most dangerous place in the country for transgender people like myself.
 - I was optimistic, and now I'm full of rage and disappointment
 - On February 6th, UF Hillel sponsored Charlotte Korchak, the spokeswoman of a lobbying organization that works to try and spread zionism to high schools, college campuses, and communities.
 - Myself and a dedicated group of comrades have been fact-checking her entire presentation and can assure you that she lied for her entire presentation.

- I was suspended from campus for 3 years; my sentence was reduced which is why I am here today.
- The next day UF Hillel had a luncheon with UF police, demonstrating clear bias and a message that students are not safe on campus.
- I want to be very clear that the fight for Palestinian liberation is also a struggle for the eradication of anti-semitism.
- If a public university like UF is not enforcing rules for public organizations, they should also not be enforcing it on us students.
- UF reporters ran slanderous articles on the peaceful demonstrators.
- Open lies were repeated in the article and none of the protestors were interviewed.
- We are terrified because this is a potential threat to us because UF Hillel sponsors former IDF soldiers in its programs, and they had a speaker who is also a former IDF.
- We need this to end now and we need UF to stop supporting Islamophobia in all of its forms.
- Senator Liang:
 - Accessibility means a lot of things, but I'm really disappointed that we can only vote on a number of bills tonight.
 - If you weren't aware, last semester Cypress was used as a voting location.
 - Broward Rec Room is not accessible at all; there's only a temporary ramp.
 - There's so many construction obstacles that are safety issues.
 - The Supervisor of Elections should ensure that all voting locations are ADA compliant.
 - I'm gonna be submitting an authorization this or next week that I'm calling the Menstrual Accessibility Pilot Project (MAPP).
 - I want to fund \$5,000 towards this.
 - I'll be reaching out to you all for sponsors.
 - 2/3 of the 17 million women here can't afford menstrual products.
 - It's important that people don't miss classes because they don't have access to menstrual products.
- Senator Mia:
 - The first bill adds to the table of contents in the 100 Codes a new satellite campus chapter.
 - The second bill adds an entire chapter; I made it in the summer and has been bouncing around since then.
 - I'm not too big of a fan of some of the amendments, but it is what it is.
 - Because of the whole website issue, I don't think we're hearing it today which is upsetting.
 - There's a satellite campus being developed in Jacksonville for mainly graduate students.

- Without any provisions for governing that campus, all of the funds would go to that campus here.
- It makes any student who goes to the Jacksonville campus commute to senate here.
- This provides a framework for people 4 years down the line to deal with.
- I find the drop of public comment from 5 to 3 minutes very concerning.
- Senator Alvarez:
 - If you disagree with the things you're doing, don't do it.
 - Vision: Last semester, your new party was formed and you were here to save us from gridlock.
 - Your leadership promised to you that you'd be better than Gator Party, so please hold them to that.
 - Last meeting, Senator Mia made a motion to remove Samantha Simon from the bloc, and a good portion of the other side of the aisle chose to not allow that.
 - As you start your campaign for SBP, please answer our questions.
 - Last meeting, you didn't answer any of our questions when we were asking about the executive nominations.

GOODBYE SPEECHES:

- Chairman Amster delivers their goodbye speech.

AMENDMENTS TO THE MINUTES:

- There were none.

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

- Majority Party Leader Seifer moves to approve Matthew Mullings for the open graduate seat by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Majority Party Leader Seifer moves to make a bloc of the pieces of legislation from SSB 2024-1137 to SSB 2024-1199 under first readings by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Majority Party Leader Seifer moves to table the aforementioned bloc by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Majority Party Leader Seifer moves to make a bloc of all the legislation under second readings by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Majority Party Leader Seifer moves to approve the aforementioned bloc by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Majority Party Leader Seifer moves to strike SSB 2024-1129 and SSB 2024-1070 from the agenda by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Chairwoman Kinggard moves to strike Aritra Dasgupta from the approved absences by unanimous consent. Objected.

- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to approve SSB 2024-1000 by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to approve SSB 2024-1024 by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to approve SSB 2024-1027 by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to approve SSB 2024-1035 by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to approve SSB 2024-1041 by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to approve SSB 2024-1042 by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to approve SSB 2024-1050 by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to approve SSB 2024-1091 by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to approve SSB 2024-1092 by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to approve SSB 2024-1093 by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to approve SSB 2024-1130 by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to approve Conor Ruffin's approved absence by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to create a bloc of the following approved absences: Freddi Rappoport, Angelina Fentress, Wesley Littleton, and Sarik Shah by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to approve the aforementioned bloc of approved absences by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to strike the approved absence of Aritra Dasgupta by unanimous consent. That motion passes.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton moves to adopt the agenda by unanimous consent. That motion passes.

STUDENT BODY OFFICER REPORTS:

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

- Senate President Brinkman:
 - I'd like to yield to Senator Serrett for five minutes.
 - Senator Serrett:

- I wanted to make a comment about SSB 2024-1174.
- I believe that this resolution was written in good spirit.
- After reviewing the bill, I noticed two names with errors.
- I am willing to help with this bill, but I want to make it clear that the victims did not die just to be factual errors on a page.
- I wholeheartedly agree with honoring the victims.
- I'd like to address some stuff mentioned about the website.
- All proper deadlines were followed by the Pro Tempore and advising; there was just a technical difficulty outside of anyone's control.
- We can all sit here and wonder what could and should have been done, or we can move forward.
- While there are some gray areas in the rules, I try to give grace with some issues that may arise.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

REPLACEMENT & AGENDA:

- Pro-Tempore Damera:
 - Permanent Senate Seats:
 - Graduate and Family Housing
 - Off Campus
 - Building Construction
 - Dentistry
 - Design, Construction, and Planning
 - Graduate (8)
 - Pharmacy
 - Veterinary Medicine
 - Open Committee Seats:
 - Information & Communications (2)
 - Budget & Appropriations (1)
 - For those of you who have not worked with AJ Amster, there's this indescribable feeling that this kid is going places.
 - How brave is it to stand up here, be vulnerable, and leave senate because it's taking away his happiness?
 - AJ Amster has done one of the greatest things that I have ever seen a senator do in this chamber.
- Minority Party Leader Pelton:
 - To Senator Amster, I know that we definitely had some of the most intense exchanges.

- I know that it's kind of my job to hold people accountable, but that's just the job of the minority leader.
- AJ, you are one of the most amicable people in this chamber.
- You have always been kind, even when I have not been the kindest in return.
- Hopefully we can move past everything that has happened in the past.

JUDICIARY:

- Chairman Amster:
 - I know that we did not get to listen to a lot of legislation tonight.
 - Legislation is due by Friday at noon.
 - Thank you and good luck to all of you.
- Senator Insuasti:
 - I'm currently representing the Graham Area and have the honor of serving in the Judiciary committee.
 - The past couple of weeks serving in Judiciary has been a learning experience and at times frustrating.
 - I will commend Judiciary; I think we are collaborating in ways that haven't been seen.
 - I want to bring up failing multiple bills.
 - I'm not saying that every single transparency bill was perfect, but I think that the time would be better spent addressing the legislation.
 - I don't think that improving transparency is unnecessary.

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS:

- Budget Vice-Chair Lekebusch:
 - Chairwoman Ponce could not be here tonight.
 - Today, the committee met to approve two authorizations.
 - We tabled two 800 code revisions.
 - Docutraq opens base funding March 18 at 9:00am.
 - Operational, event, and travel requests open March 25 at 9:00am
 - Docutraq closes for base funding requests on April 1st at 4:00pm.
 - As always, please reach out to Chairwoman Ponce with any questions.

RULES & ETHICS:

- Chairwoman Kinggard:
 - AJ, I'm so sad that you're leaving, but thank you for answering all of my questions.
 - The joint committee meeting with R&E and Judiciary this Friday the 16th at noon.
 - R&E will be meeting at some point this weekend at a time to be determined.

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS:

- Chairman Vijayaraghavan:
 - AJ, you are one of the kindest and most open-minded people I've ever met.

- Thank you to all that wore pink and red tonight; we will take a picture tonight.
- There's a senate retreat on March 7th.
- Senator Budhai:
 - I'm also doing the newsletter so if anyone is willing to contribute what they're passionate about in senate or any pictures, please do so.

AD-HOC ON MENTAL HEALTH:

- Senator Liang:
 - AJ, thank you for bringing up mental health; it's not something often talked about in the chamber.
 - I saw many of you submitted some really good mental health resolutions.
 - I received some materials from the CWC to promote mental health resources to students.

AD-HOC ON REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS:

- Senator Azeem:
 - The reproductive rights committee met this past weekend and it was great.
 - I'm excited to collaborate with the Women's Caucus soon.

AD-HOC ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION:

- Senator Budhai:
 - I understand that we are a relatively new committee.
 - Please let your VP candidate know that we do exist.
 - We have a meeting tomorrow in Marston at 3pm; it's free for anyone to attend.
 - As for the Ron DeSantis resolution, it was tabled due to implications.
 - For the voices that this bill does not represent, it is bigoted and I don't care about the voices in opposition to communities of color.
 - It's pertinent that we hold our elected officials accountable.
 - We have a class called Race Law.
 - I suggest you all diversify the courses you take since we may not have these courses in the future.

AD-HOC ON GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT & REFORM:

- Parliamentarian Ortiz:
 - I want to express how heartbroken I am to see AJ go.
 - I understand that these last couple of weeks have been very difficult for many of us, and I believe that the senate owes you an apology for causing you this stress.
 - This is not the first time people have left because of mental health.
 - I give chair reports about how it is that there are redeeming qualities on both sides of the aisle, and I am booed by some members in the chamber; I think that's a part of it.
 - I'm hopeful because I know that this chamber is sometimes moved by words and consequences.

- When I was here a few weeks ago, I made a promise that we'd be deferring legislation to the Judiciary committee.
- I want the committee to keep in mind that even though it does have the right to make the motions as they deem necessary, that we should be mindful of the promises that are made in the chamber.
- I want to express my excitement with the student government platforms that were discussed in yesterday's debate.
- There's been an explosion of interest in the Oversight & Reform Committee; many have reached out about joining it.
- If there's someone who is exceptionally qualified, I encourage you to apply.
- I am proud that my committee has been able to pass most things by unanimous consent.
- I was very impressed by what Senator Quattrochi offered and he answered my questions perfectly.
- I would like to invite you to clerk for the committee at the next committee meeting.
- There is pending business on the floor for our committee that I can't discuss until I have a private conversation with the Senate President.
- Mistakes were made at the last committee meeting and I apologize; there's no excuse and we will do better.
- Senator Mia moves to suspend Rule X to table the committee chair's report by unanimous consent. Objected.
- Senator Mia moves to suspend Rule X to table the committee chair's report. Seconded.
- In a rising vote, that motion fails.
 - I want to reiterate that we are trying to lead by the example of cooperation.
 - Out of respect for the time of the chamber, I will wrap up by reiterating that we have pending business that I would like to discuss with senate leadership.
 - Thank you for your time and patience, and I hope to see some cooperation going forward.

FIRST READING:

- Senator Mia presents on SSB 2024-1024:
 - I'm at the point where I'm not re-running for election.
 - This bill would add a new chapter to the 400 codes.
 - This bill would post any petitions and counter-petitions on the SG website.
 - At a minimum, this would just allow for a paper trail of the judicial proceedings.
 - This mandates that they have to record audio for any proceedings in order to keep records.
 - This is really just a transparency bill at the end of the day.
- There were 5 minutes of non-debatable Q&A.
- There were 3 rounds of con-pro debate.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Senator Monson: It is former senator Ali's birthday.

Senator Mia: I will send everyone a copy of the Satellite Affairs bills.

Chairman Vijayaraghavan: Please stay after for a picture.

Member-at-Large Wentworth: Thank you Emmy for making everyone a valentine

ADJOURNMENT:

- Chairman Amster moves to user voter records as final roll call by unanimous consent.
- The meeting was adjourned at 10:53 pm.