



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
CONGRESS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

THIRTY-FIRST CONGRESS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

Assembly Meeting

October 16, 2023

6:30pm

Agenda

Call to Order: 6:35pm

Pledge of Allegiance: Rep. Gui

Roll call:

Present: Balogun, Beavon, Burns, Ebuara, Gui, Joyner, Pakdehi, Risler, Rowan, Salimi, Solmaz, Vaughn, Velez, Wesner, Wheeler

Absent Excused: Bettley, Delva, Elmi, Galeano, Hussain, Rivers, Rogowski

Reading and approval of the Minutes: Rowan, 2nd - Joyner

Petitions into the Assembly:

At Large Seat - Steven Medarev - Was not able to attend today

Special/Undecided Seat - Madison McCraney

Medical student at FSU. Running outside of the Medical School seats. Was here for undergrad and was highly involved on campus. Was in the Master of Public Health program and wanted to have a big event. Thought they knew about A&S funds and got help from COGS in the past when they needed the extra knowledge about things. It was successful thanks to COGS. Used the tuition waver and was a staff member for a little bit in the College of Arts and Sciences. Gained understanding of navigating the system and wants to give back. Wants to learn about what we do internally. Would be interested in joining Internal Affairs.

Social Sciences and Public Policy Seat 1: Taylor Barber

Originally from Ocala, FL. Came here through dual enrollment. Changed to public health major and really connected with social sciences and public policy. After graduated with UG, entered the Masters of Public Health. Saw and open seat and decided to give it a try. I think that any committee would be good, but I would be interested in Student Affairs.

Questions:

Rowan - for McCraney, will you be petitioning back in for the next Congress? I would like to continue doing it.

Joyner - Are you both free Mondays at 6pm? Yes.

Rowan - What would you like to focus on as a COGS rep? McCraney - I would like to focus on help people with administering funds. Barber - I want to focus on outreach and get introduced to those around.

Pakdehi - Do you have any specific plans for students? Both - no, not yet.

McCraney - I saw a goal was to bridge the gap between COGS and MSC/LSC.

Joyner - point of information - it's okay if you don't know what you want to do yet. You can join and be willing to work and support COGS.

Pros:

Joyner - in favor of both of them. Madison has a unique perspective after being here for so long. Taylor has a unique perspective coming with an AA and only being here for 2 years in undergrad. Being here is enough.

Rowan - I second Joyner. With Taylor, a great thing is that she is on the ballot for the next congress.

Rowan - vote to call to question; Gui - 2nd

Vote: McCraney 15-0-0

Barber 15-0-0

Swearing into COGS

Special Introductions and Student Comments:

Rowan - Special introduction are two 1L College of Law students who hope to join us the next meeting.

Messages from Student Government: N/A

Report from the Office of Governmental Affairs: N/A

Report of Officers:

- Report of the Speaker: The speaker is out today, but will be back soon.

- Report of the Deputy Speaker for Finance: Updated financial report. We are looking good with the grants for Nov.-Feb. and applications are being approved. As you can see, we have \$0 for attendance grants for July-Oct., but a bill is on the agenda for that. We are looking at putting together a workshop for the presentation and attendance grant process, so look for more information coming soon.
- Report of the Deputy Speaker for Judicial Affairs: N/A
- Report of the Deputy Speaker for Communications: Cyber Bowl (share the word); Election donations letter - email it by Wed morning; FSU Votes' Rock the Vote event on November 1st from 6-8pm Volunteers needed

Committee Report:

- C-SAC: N/A
- Internal Affairs: Met Monday and discussed a resolution to require all committees to use a standardized minutes format. Also discussed how to promote culinary organizations with food.
- Student Advocacy: Met last Tuesday and discussed encouraging the congress to support Resolution #5 being presented to day by Rep. Wesner. This resolution impacts veteran students and their well being at FSU. Also exploring possibilities for parking for teaching assistants. Also looking at international student admission policies. Also working on the data analysis on the presentation grants. Will next meet on October 24th. News has come out that free parking will be removed from undergraduate students in the future.
- Student Affairs: Nothing to report. Have not met.

Funding Requests:

Bill #31: Southeast Review

If you remember from our last minute, the Southeast Review is requesting \$3,500 for a speaker for their event. They have selected a speaker and have submitted a

breakdown of the cost and how they will get the funds for the speaker. They have attached a flyer about a fundraiser being held tomorrow.

Questions:

Rowan - move to extinguish time; Wesner - 2nd.

Pros:

Rowan - Many thanks to the organization for giving us so much information. You went above and beyond our request. The organization is bringing in a very respective author and will provide a great service to the university. Thank you for sharing this information and wishing you the best of luck.

Balogun - This all looks perfect. If we can use this as an example of how a petition should be, it would be great.

Burns - Thank you for coming back tonight and I wish you the best for this speaker.

Balogun - Motion to extinguish time; Vaughn - 2nd.

Cons - Gui - motion to call to question; 2nd - Risler

Vote: 15-0-0

Bill #32: Music Theory Society

This bill is from the Music Theory Society and is asking for funding for their 41st conference being held virtually with two key note speakers. The conference will have different presentations by scholars and graduate students. They expect 30-50 attendees. They will advertise it through their department, organizations, and social media. Requesting the amount for two speakers for their honorarium. Want to make it virtual in order to make it more accessible for those within the field of Music.

Question -

Rowan - Is this honorarium taking into account that this is virtual? Yes, usually this is the amount for one speaker if it is in person. This is a usual amount for speakers.

Has there been fundraising efforts for this? This request is for the honorariums, but we will be fundraising in order to get a larger zoom room subscription since our Dean said that Zoom might not be renewed by FSU. We currently have 30-35 members of our organization, but we are expecting higher engagement from those outside of our organization.

Risler - motion to extend time; Gui - 2nd.

Rowan - What is your estimation of FSU students in attendance? We are expecting around 45-50 graduate students and there could also be undergraduate attendance and that student population is around 100 students. It's hard to estimate how many undergraduates might attend.

Joyner - Is this open to the community? Yes. It is free. We are asking for donations in hopes of getting more community support in the future. We will be advertising it to anyone and everyone interested.

Pakdehi - It is totally virtual? Yes. What about making it hybrid to help make connections with other people in the field? Last year's conference was hybrid, but we found that most people struggled to attend in person and most presenters were graduate students who couldn't afford to attend in person from other institutions.

Pros -

Joyner - I'm in favor of this. I like how you thought about the future and are looking at fundraising. Having it online is great for accessibility. Could be a good way to connect with HBCU students. I like that it is open to the public. It is important to bridge gaps and increase diversity. We need to uplift the arts more now than ever.

Rowan - I feel better about this bill after talking to the RSOs. Make sure that there are more accurate details on future bills. It's good to encourage events that are for graduate and undergraduate students to help promote undergraduates to stay here. This also helps us build a representation for COGS around undergrads.

Cons -

Salimi - Call to Question; Balogun - 2nd.

Vote: 15-0-0

Bill #33: Transfer from Presentation Grants to Attendance Grants

This bill is to move funds from the presentation grants to the attendance grants from the July-Oct. 2023 funding period. We ran out of attendance grant funds and will need to increase this amount so that everyone can be approved. There is enough funds from presentation grants to be moved to attendance grants. Yield my time.

Questions -

Joyner - When you say July-October 2023, this ends October 31, 2023 right? Yes. Once someone puts in an application, it is for a conference during that time period. These are budgeted throughout the year to make sure that we aren't running out of funds.

Balogun - is this the exact amount we need for that purpose or will we need more? This is the exact amount we need.

Pros -

Joyner - I'm in favor of this because many presentations are in the summer. People in my field usually attend in the fall to find a post-doc.

Salimi - I think the deputy speaker of finance did a great job with this.

Ebuara - Extinguish time; 2nd - Joyner

Cons -

Rowan - call to question

Vote: 15-0-0

Unfinished Business: N/A

New Business:

Resolution #4: A&S Fee Increase

I will try to be fast because it affects all of us. There has been a proposal to increase the A&S fee that funds SGA. If it is passed by the Board of Governors, it will help COGS increase the budget by \$70,000. It will help us fund organizations. I do understand that it will increase the amount paid by students. I think it's good to let the Board of Governors know that we support this.

Question -

Ebuara - I do wonder how the resolution will impact the process.

Rowan - I think it will bring in the voice of graduate students on this rather than just the voice of SGA leadership. It could be impactful to show a united front from both undergraduates and graduates.

Pakdehi - Is this increase for everyone?

Rowan - Yes, it's across the board. It will impact most students.

Pakdehi - So with that, the congress will get more money, but the students might not want this increase.

Rowan - This allows us to talk about the root of funding. It is an individual question for each of us. Our different experiences is what will inform us.

Pakdehi - motion to extend; 2nd - Risler

Pakdehi - there has been a lot of work for graduate students to decrease fees and this is asking to increase the fee, what does that do to the work graduate students have done?

Rowan - I think this is a small price to pay. \$.65 per credit is the increase or about \$7 per semester. I think it is justifiable.

Balogun - I think this increase is going to happen, but this might be a way to show things in favor of graduate students.

Rowan - This is not a foregone conclusion. It might not be passed or presented.

Pros -

Savoya - I understand where you are coming from, but there is some inequity based on credit hours. I am in favor of the bill.

Rowan - This is based on Florida statutes on the per-credit basis.

Burns - I am in favor because we have inflation and it is more expensive for organizations to put on events. This is a way to counter those increases.

Rowan - point of information - this increase will help to keep student jobs that are funded by SGA.

Cons -

Solmaz - What bothers me about this bill is that students should be getting more benefits. There are many fights for graduate students to get services in the first place. If you put our name on this bill, then it needs to benefit the graduate students. Of course, we want more funding, but not enough graduate students know they can get funding. We need to fight to get more awareness and access out there.

Ebuara - If we have our funding increased, how many students will benefit from it. I joined COGS to help increase funding, but this seems like a back track of the work that has been done to lower costs.

Joyner - extend the time; 2nd - Salimi

Joyner - I did some number checking and it's taking away the work of the GAU to decrease fees. I no longer support this.

Salimi - I'm a little for it, but as a medical student representative, none of the medical students can take part in events who are not on campus and I cannot support it on their behalf. They aren't getting the benefits of these fees in the first place.

Joyner - There are people getting the minimum stipend and this is bad.

Solmaz - At UGA, they give fee relief for students who don't use the services being offered on campus. FSU doesn't do this.

Rowan - Call to question; 2nd - Risler

Closing Statement - I'm happy we had this conversation. While I support this, I'm okay if it does not pass. I'm glad we are getting to talk about this as a whole.

Many good points have been raised here about A&S fees. I thank you all and maybe we should use this as a jumping off point to make A&S fees more equitable. There are many conversations to have moving forward.

Vote: 2-10-3

Resolution #5: Support of Graduate Student Veterans

The university has a policy where full time for graduate students is 12 credits. Most programs have full time as 9 credits and some have 6 hours as full time. Those using the GI Bill are getting their funds pro-rated based on what FSU's considers full time. FSU's policy says full time is 12 credits which means many students are losing GI Bill funding. Some people are losing out on as much as \$1,500 a month. We want to pass this resolution to encourage FSU to change their policy. Billy Francis said that FSU is the only institution in Florida with this 12 hour policy. FSU is in the minority for this policy and this policy needs to be changed to support our veterans.

Questions -

Rowan - Does the faculty senate play a part in making these changes? Yes.

Rowan - Have you talked to the faculty about this? Not yet, but Billy Francis will be meeting with several decision makers tomorrow including members of Faculty Senate.

Burns - Is there any language that you would like to change? Yes, because of the different parts of the GI Bill, we need to adjust the language "this costs several hundred dollars" to a "significant amount" or "several thousand over a semester".

Rowan - extinguish time; Salimi - 2nd.

Pros:

Joyner - I am for this bill and I am for making an amendment to the language. It is important for us to work towards more equity for veteran students.

Risler - I think this is one of those issues that slip through the cracks and COGS is well suited to bringing attention to it.

Ebuara - For FSU to shortchange veterans is contrary to what FSU says. It is punishing students and this resolution is important.

Solmaz - I can see not only veterans, but international graduate students can also benefit because we must be enrolled as full time students.

Cons:

Risler - extinguish the time; 2nd - Rowan

Pros:

Rowan - Move to amend and add **Ms. Bridget Birmingham, Faculty Senate President to the resolution.** 2nd - Ebuara

Vote on the amendment: 15-0-0

Rowan- After the 3rd whereas, I motion to remove "by several hundred dollars" and replace with "by a significant amount". 2nd - Ebuara

Vote on the amendment: 15-0-0

Pros:

Ebuara - motion to extinguish; Joyner - 2nd

Cons:

Rowan - call to question; Balogun - 2nd

Closing statements - Thank you to the Student Advocacy Committee as well as Laura and everyone for their help with this. This is a show of unified force and will be helpful.

Vote: 17-0-0

Round Table:

Adjournment: 8:17pm

Next Meeting: November 6, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in the Senate Chambers