



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

CONGRESS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

31st Congress of Graduate Students Internal Affairs Committee October 23, 2023

Call to Order: 6:04 PM

Members Present: Chair Erick Rivers, Vice-Chair Katherine Gui, Madison McCraney, Jack Rowan, Joshua Burns, Susan Rogowski

Members Tardy:

Members Absent: Nella Delva (excused), Frank Velez (excused)

Suspended:

Guests:

Announcements:

- Chair
 - Land Acknowledgement:
 - The Student Government of Florida State University acknowledges that it is located on land that is the ancestral and traditional territory of the Apalachee Nation, the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida, the Muscogee Creek Nation, and the Seminole Tribe of Florida. We pay respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to their descendants and to all Indigenous people. We recognize this land remains scarred by the histories and ongoing legacies of settler-colonial violence, dispossession, and removal. In spite of all this, and with tremendous resilience, these Indigenous Nations have remained deeply connected to this territory, to their families, to their communities, and to their cultural ways of life. We recognize the ongoing relationships of care that these Indigenous Nations maintain with this land and extend our gratitude as we live and work as humble and respectful guests upon their territory. We encourage all to learn about and educate others on the contemporary work of the Indigenous Nations whose land we are on and to endeavor to support Indigenous sovereignty in all the ways that we can.
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- Vice-Chair
 - No announcements
- Members
 - No announcements
- Guests
 - None

Committee Business:

- Business 1: Bill to Reform the Law Student Council
 - Rowan: This reform is a joint effort between Representative Rowan, Vivekka Suppiah, Student Bar Association (SBA), and the college's administration. It is a massive reform of LSC and the law school.
 - Change 1: LSC board.
 - Currently, the present board elects one chair, and that chair elects the rest of the board. However, this is not sustainable. LSC is

looking for a new practice that allows representation from the entire law school. Also a compositional change: moving to a 13 member board (from a 7 member board). Added will be 5 elected members on the spring SBA ballot (run through the administration, thus a university run ballot), 1 chair (elected at large), COGS rep (who is elected after joining COGS, serves on law school council, like on the medical school council), 3 members from SBA (must not be one of the four main officers of SBA).

- Change 2: Budget change
 - Will move LSC onto an annual budgeting process to reallocate the money from organizations that utilize it less to those that utilize it more. This can be done with semi-annual review of the budget in the early spring and late spring. Also an unallocated account where minor allocations can be made throughout the fiscal year. This will allow decrease in the transition time between the point where the allocation request is made and when the funds become available to RSOs. Would like to go straight to purchase request, rather than put in allocation request 30 days in advance, even if it means more work on the front end.
- Up in the air: Can at large seats be used as class representatives? This is difficult because class reps for 2Ls and 3Ls would only be included due to timeline of the elections.

General Questions

- Rogowski: Language in the bill regarding whether the 3 members elected by the SBA should be voting on allocations from the SBA. Where are we on that?
- Rowan: The language on that is in the bill on Section 2, 300.6, subsection D, part 5. Specifically saying SBA members cannot vote on the SBA line items if they sit on the board. This was made to reflect current conflict of interest rule that forbids people sitting in the executive board from voting for the RSOs they are a part of.
- Rogowski: Is it correct that the LSC members who are a part of SBA do not sit on the SBA executive board?
- Rowan: They could. Class reps also sit on SBA: two 3L reps, two 2L reps, and three 1L reps. There is a small area where an SBA member may also be on the LSC board. That is also why rule subsection D part 5 sub a was made: LSC Chair can exercise power to prevent this conflict of interest, subject to the board overruling the decision if they think it's excessive.
- Rogowski: Ok. It says that the COGS reps will be ex officio members. Does that mean they have voting powers on LSC?
- Rowan: Yes, that means that they hold that office by right that they are COGS reps.
- Rogowski: Thank you. Regarding allocations, LSC submits reallocations in the spring. When annual budget is submitted, where does it go? COGS assembly or only signed off by COGS Speaker?

- Rowan: It does include provision where COGS Assembly has to do it. Section 300.6 subsection D part 10 clarifies this. The reallocation goes to the assembly in the form of a bill, and have all the line items that lists all the appropriations/distributions.

Round Table Debate

- Rogowski: Regarding process of allocating funds, I like the idea of the bill coming to the floor as a consent resolution like PAC and RTAC in the senate. I think LSC should have full authority when allocating to law school RSOs, but also have the authority to sweep money that is not used by RSOs and shift things between categories if needed. Maybe this can be written in the form of a resolution because this is looser than a bill. What do you think?
- Rowan: LSC in the past has not used category system. Mainly use only 1 category, which is food. This can be changed internally without it necessarily having to move to COGS. Example, unallocated amount would just need the Speaker's approval, so similarly transfers between RSO would only need the Speaker's approval. That's why when putting together the annual budget, needs to go to the assembly. We also talked about dividing fall line item and spring line item, which is why we suggested budget review for sweepings for the RSOs in the early spring. Regarding consent resolution: I do not believe there is a substantial difference between the two. The reason senate needs consent resolution process is because they hear PAC and RTAC every week. These budget bills, however, are only done once a year. Could put it to consent resolution system, but this would be another process for legislation to go through for something that happens only once a year.
- Rogowski: I understand now. Recap: plan is to compile an annual budget to allocate all the funds to all the LSC RSOs. When is the budget check in?
- Rowan: Budget check in should be in the beginning of spring. Benefit is this would allow RSOs to present their information before the LSC board turns over for the next school year.
- Rogowski: So this is to allocate the remaining funds sitting in the unallocated pile?
- Rowan: No, all the monies leftover from the fall would be swept up and reallocated funds from the end of fall can be then swept up and redistributed for the spring semester.
- Rogowski: Where is that explained?
- Rowan: Part 7. The annual budget is still for the entire year, and the mini budget review in the early spring is supplemental. The Spring is when the law school has most of their activities, so we plan to reevaluate after the fall semester to provide to other RSOs that would need greater funds for the spring semester versus RSOs that did not utilize as many funds.
- Rogowski: Isn't that contradictory to say you are doing an annual budget bill, then all the money is swept in the fall?
- Rowan: Just the money not utilized by the end of fall will be re-budgeted for the spring. For example, if the budget for the FSU Child Care center is 160k, then

80k is presumed to be spent in the fall and 80k in the spring. In LSC, it is not split so evenly, so say 70k is spent in the fall, then the 10k would come back. They still have the 80k in the spring, but if they find that they need more, they can come back and request the extra money for the spring allocations.

- Rogowski: Ok I see so you will have two separate columns with fall and spring. The only problem I see with this is potentially administratively with accounting. In Nole Central, the money is all living in one pot. Might be hard for Laurel to parce that out. May recommend speaking with Laurel to see if she may offer suggestions.
- Rowan: That's a fair point. My only concern is if it is a problem on the accounting side, then that may call into question whether the entire bi-annual evaluation is workable. If we get to the point where it is cumbersome on Laurel, at that point, could consider moving a straight annual budget instead.
- Rogowski: We can have a conversation about this with laurel. It is a large document, and we want to understand everything correctly. Theoretically she could create two pots of money. I like the idea, just don't know administratively splitting it and how that would go.
- Rowan: Maybe one way it can be done is creating two accounts, one for fall and one for spring. We will need to speak to Laurel about that.
- Burns: Clarification. They would have their first annual bill at the end of this spring 2024. Then the biannual rechecks would start in spring of 2025.
- Rogowski: Timeline is iffy for next spring. Could we shift this conversation to next summer?
- Rowan: We do not normally convene over the summer. We could schedule a meeting in the beginning of summer if needed.
- Rogowski: Like senate, we meet in the summer. But ideally we want to avoid it. When LSC submits their request to COGS, they should already have in mind the suballocation is going to look like because total number is required. I wonder if total request can be prepared before coming to COGS, like how MSC does it.
- Rowan: I think that can be a possibility, though 2 primary concerns. Would have to require a pre-budget from the previous outgoing LSC board, prior to the new board coming on. Also, this first year moving to the annual budget cycle, so it will be a new process that they have not experienced before. Currently there is no budgeting process. There is currently no budgeting process for the money that goes to the law school itself, which comes out of donations from alumni via our annual Fund-a-thon.
- Rogowski: Good getting all this together. What is next?
- Chair Rivers: Can motion to vote or motion to table it.
- Rogowski: I think it's ready for the assembly. Nothing language-wise that needs to be changed. Anything long term is beyond the voting in the assembly.
- Rogowski: May need to amend something in the Assembly as far as the administrative side.
- Rowan: I can have an addendum pre-written with language on the administrative side or a draft of the already amended bill.

- Rogowski: Let's first figure out with Laurel the administrative piece of it. Motion to vote.
- Rowan: Second.

Vote

- **Vote: 5-0-0**
- Chair Rivers: Congratulations. We will be hearing this bill at the general assembly. No other bills or resolutions. Any additional business anyone would like to talk about?
- Rogowski: Want to mention dissertation grant to get done before the end of the 31st COGS. These grants are budgeted within the COGS budget for the graduate school, intended to help grad students write their dissertations. There has been concerns about this. The best thing to do, with Andy's recommendation, is to have the grants codified. This is not present in the COGS code, even though it has been a line item on the budget since 2016. It should be codified to protect the funds. Contacted Erick regarding this, and he sent a draft to have this on the COGS code. The dissertation Grant was proposed by the graduate school, BUT it is a separate budgetary number, so it is sent to a different pot of money compared to the graduate school pot. So, with the money sitting there, it looks like the dissertation monies are unused. This is likely due to some miscommunication, so I am doing research on this. Trying to set up a meeting with the person who administers the grants. Admin vs policy: We could put the policy in place before bringing it up to the administration. But in case the administration brings up policy issues, perhaps we should hold off. Thoughts?
- Rowan: Is there criteria being set up for these grants within the bill?
- Rogowski: Yes.
- Rivers: Shares screen with the Amendment explaining how the funds are distributed amongst themselves. A lot of this info is based on the graduate school and how they distribute the funds themselves.
- Rowan: If this is coming off of the restrictions on the graduate school, I don't think we need this. If we do need this, it should not be done in this Congress. My argument for why we don't need this: First baseline argument is that we do not need this bill. It is duplicating policies within the graduate school. Can simply do a budget transfer from dissertation grants to the graduate school with a proviso language saying Proviso: "this money can only be used in furtherance of the dissertation grants program administered by the graduate school", and also state within the proviso xx amount of moneys going to the dissertation grants rather than putting a code to do that. But in the case we do need it, I think it shouldn't be presented in this format.
- Rivers: I disagree. Easier within code to have something written down instead of proviso. Proviso is tricky. It can work one year and a shift in leadership the next year may not know how to do it. Having written down in code will make it easier for future years.
- Rogowski: Want to add why it was advised to be put into the code. Dissertation grants are in a grey area as far as where statutes go – awards or something not

- available to all students. Recommended that we codify it to make clear that it is something separate from a reward, and not threatened to be taken away.
- Burns: Clarification, is it similar to COGS conference grant based on eligibility? First come first serve?
 - Rogowski: This is the conversation we need to have with the woman who administers it. We need to first determine whether the student is eligible. It is a semesterly grant. There is some criteria, i.e. merit, when it comes to choosing who is eligible. Not necessarily first come first serve. Not everyone will qualify. Most people who are eligible are those in the STEM field who need to by particular lab equipment or money to do some sort of survey. E.g. would not be allowed to simply use it to purchase a laptop.
 - Rowan: need some time to process all this. May need to hold until next congress. The bill doesn't actually say the money goes to the graduate school, so that leaves the money to be in the limbo land. Beyond that, there is concern about the "free and open" portion up to 10 grants that would warrant further discussion.
 - Rogowski: every student doing a dissertation can apply as long as they meet the criteria. We can hold off while I try to do some more research. I want this to be completed before our budget process.
 - Chair Rivers: Did the person get back to you today about this?
 - Rogowski: They are out of office. Will be sending a follow up email.
 - Chair Rivers: Next general assembly on Nov 6th, then inauguration on the 15th. Want to have another meeting on Nov 13th to discuss newsletter to have something before elections.
 - Rowan: Two more thing. Had a good talk with Frank after the assembly meeting last week. He will double back with SOI to try to figure what the issue is if they could point him to the right direction. In general discussion on IROP, reformatted the rules with more structure. I am thinking of presenting it in front of the next congress, and before that want to prep this at our next internal affairs meeting.
 - Rogowski: Sounds good.
 - Chair Rivers: Moving onto closing announcements.

Final Announcements:

- Chair
 - Election day is on Wednesday. Please make sure you do your research and vote! Next meeting on the 13th to discuss rules letter, internal rules, and procedures for the next congress, and dabble on the dissertation bill.
- Vice-Chair
 - Plan to have minutes done by tomorrow.
- Members
 - None.
- Guests
 - N/a

Date and Time of Next Meeting: 11/13/23 at 6:00pm

Adjourned at 7:00 pm