



**74<sup>th</sup> Student Senate  
Internal Affairs Committee  
September 6th, 2022 at 5:30pm | <https://fsu.zoom.us/j/95508946768>**

**Call to Order: 5:33 pm**

**Members Present:** Chair Diaz, Vice Chair McMahon, Senators Anand, Crocker, Roogow, Vollick

**Members Tardy:**

**Members Absent:** Senators Anderson (AE), Pardee (AU)

**Guests:** Senator Folwell, Candidates Puwalski, Kiely, Greenwood, Aguiar, Bonilla, Schwarz, Turkomer, and Seavers

**Land Acknowledgement – Vice Chair McMahon**

- 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.

**Announcements:**

- **Chair Diaz:** Welcome back to IA! I'm so glad to be starting this semester with you all. We need to enter a motion to readopt our rules and we can talk about amendments later but again I hope you have all read and gone over some of the applications and legislation we have today. We are going to be going in this specific order today because some people have complications, and they have to go first. We're going to be going one by one and each candidate will have three minutes to use towards their opening statements. After that we can ask questions of you and then go into round table debate. Finally, you can have a closing statement using any time you have left from your opening statement. If we forward, you onto senate you will go tomorrow night to be heard in front of all of senate. I am not sure what time you will be heard in senate as President Gabadage will be giving his speech.
- **Vice Chair McMahon:** Welcome back everyone to IA and welcome to all of our candidates.

### **Committee Business:**

- Jason Puwalski – Office of Governmental Affairs, Director (2 applicants)
- Emma Kiely – Office of Governmental Affairs, Assistant Director (1 applicant)
- Spencer Greenwood – Supervisor of Elections (1 applicant)
- Brandon Aguiar – HLSU Secretary (1 applicant)
- Stephanie Bonilla – HLSU Treasurer (1 applicant)
- Joshua Schwarz – VSU Chief Financial Officer (1 applicant)
- Omer Turkomer – Office of Governmental Affairs, Deputy Director (1 applicant)
- Caitlyn Seavers – Director of Accessibility (1 applicant)
- CA #3 – Sponsored by Senator Diaz: Lowering the Constitutional threshold to fill vacated non-elected offices in the Student Government from a 2/3 to majority vote of the Student Senate.

### **Old Business:**

- None

### **New Business:**

- **Candidate for Confirmation:** Jason Puwalski – Office of Governmental Affairs, Director
  - Opening Statement:
    - Thank you, Chair Diaz. Thank you, guys, for accommodating us and trying to move the times around. I'm excited to be here, I'm going for confirmation for the Director of the Office of Governmental affairs. I see a lot of new faces to the Senate so for those of you who don't know me Jason Puwalski and I was the assistant director of the office of governmental affairs last year and prior to that I served in the Senate serving as the vice chair of the Judiciary Committee. I do have experience in the legislative branch as well as in the executive branch. Last year, during elections I also was one of the general counsels for one of the political parties on campus, so I've dealt with I think close to 20 lawsuits. I have a pretty good understanding of how SGA runs in general but more specifically have a good understanding of how OGA specifically runs. I mentioned a lot of this in my application. I think OGA has a lot of untapped potential I think there's been an attitude of let's just do whatever happened last year and let's use that as a guideline. There is nothing wrong with using precedent but what we really need to do is go back to the student by statutes and look at what those say and look at what OGA actually has the power to do and now she has the power to do a lot more than what we've been doing and so this year I want to take full advantage of that because you know I think there's a lot we can do to reconnect to different communities on campus. Another thing I want to do is create OGA committees that can serve as an advisory committee and working with student unions and agencies and what they want to see us advocate for at the state level.
  - Technical Non-Debatable Questions:
    - Chair Diaz moves into general questions.
  - Rounds of Questioning
    - **Senator Anand:** Thank you so much for speaking, my question is you said in your application that one thing you would love to improve that

you're passionate about is building the FSU school spirit again and reviving it do you have any plans on how you can do that?

- **Candidate Puwalski:** Thank you, Senator. I Didn't spend my freshman year on campus, and I know that was the case for a lot of people and then those of us who were here before COVID happened. A big chunk of our time here got kind of taken away with that and as a result I really think that there's a disconnect between a lot of people and the campus culture and school spirit and what it means to be a student at Florida State. For example, you look at convocation which I went to this year as a junior year because this is the first time it's happened in three years and traditionally that's something you do as a freshman and so it's good to see those things coming back. I think different organizations on campus like the Nole zone which I'm a part of you know making sure that we have you know some athletic component there making sure that we're cheering on our teams because you know their students but one thing that I want to do with OGA is really embracing our school's history. For example you know we see a lot of names on campus like the dorms that we live in are named after people but you know no one actually looks into that no one no one really knows the significance of that and so I want to provide a resource to students so that they can have a better understanding of what our campuses and have a greater appreciation for it I mean I'm lucky and I know several you know many of. We have a lot to be grateful for being at this university and so I think we should take full advantage of that and really recognize you know the opportunities that we have here in the history of our campus
- **Senator Folwell:** Do you have any overarching goal from the lobbying side of things, and can you share a little bit about that?
  - **Candidate Puwalski:** We talked to a lot of legislators and lobbyists to get funding for textbooks last year and so we advocated for a free market approach for OER (Open Education Resources) and we got a lot of money to do that. This year, I have not been confirmed yet and neither has any of the other applicants and so I'm hesitant to say what our goals are without the twelve-member board. I will say having an appreciation for campus culture is big for me. Another goal is to have FSU to become the number one school in the state.
- **Senator Folwell:** If you were with the board and pushed legislation that went against your own personal politics can you tell us how you would reconcile that is both an executive and a person in a very political part of SGA?
  - **Candidate Puwalski:** I've gotten a lot of practice with questions like that. I did it last year and I will do it again this year. Here at Florida State, we are a republic and my views will reflect the student body as they have a say in picking. I am going to do the best I can and with the rest of the board. As director, there are statutes allow me to do certain things and I will work with the rest of the board.

- **Senator Crocker moves to enter round-table discussion; Vice Chair McMahon seconds**
    - Deliberations: none
  - **Senator Crocker moves to call the question; Senator Vollick seconds**
  - Closing Statement:
    - No time left to use in closing statement.
  - Vote:
    - Yes: 5 - Vice Chair McMahon, Senators Anand, Crocker, Roogow, Vollick
    - No: 0
    - Abstain: 0
  - **RESULT: Candidate JASON PUWALSKI PASSES**
- **Candidate for Confirmation:** Emma Kiely – Office of Governmental Affairs, Assistant Director
    - Opening Statement:
      - Good afternoon, everyone, for those of you who do not know me my name is Emma Kiely and I'm a senior this year. I'm a dual degree student pursuing bachelor's in international affairs and media/communication studies. I've been a part of OG for a while now I join as a student in 2020 during the height of the pandemic. I got to experience the way that Jason kind of mentioned in the past a little bit more disconnected and a virtual setting. Despite the virtual setting I still gain so much from that experience as a student, so I decided to pursue the position of director of net the following year. Just this past year I taught a class on state and local politics through OGA and it was just so fulfilling because I got to mentor some of the brightest professional or young professional students here at Florida State. Beyond that I've had a lot of political experience around the capital by working at Bascom communications and consulting which is a political Consulting Group and that that's probably the highlight of my time here at FSU is just being a part of that consulting firm and learning all about state politics public relations and the intersection between the two. Beyond I'm here right now showing a lot of enthusiasm and excitement for OGA and hoping to become the next assistant director. I think that all my experiences together really make me the best candidate for this position just because I was able to experience a side of politics state politics that one doesn't normally see which is that public relations communications side. Going into this year and my potential position I'm looking to increase strategic communication strategies that way we can make policies that were lobbying for more digestible and accessible for students to understand and engage with so that's kind of one of my main goals this year and beyond that really I'm here to assist my deputy and executive director and whatever that they need to do I'm really just trying to leave a lasting impact on this school as I enter my last year and I think this is the best way to do that, thank you.
    - Technical Non-Debatable Questions:
      - Chair Diaz moves into general questioning.
    - Rounds of Questioning
      - **Vice Chair McMahon:** In your application you created curriculum based on current session legislation and I was wondering if you could tell me more about what that curriculum looked like?





Dominican background. there is like a Central American and Dominican student association here on campus but being from both I didn't really fill at home in either, so HLSU was sort of the umbrella organization. But I feel like I can put my time into and specifically this position I work with director Eric and the assistant director Yessenia and I feel like in this position enables me to do the most I can on campus which would include really creating a space for the ever growing identity of being Hispanic such that next and really making sure that it's a space that anybody no matter what nationality race even ethnicity you identify as you feel welcome.

- Technical Non-Debatable Questions:
  - Chair Diaz moves into general questioning
- Rounds of Questioning:
  - **Senator Crocker:** I'm reading your goals, do you mind elaborating when you say that you plan on recording and collecting all possible data from town halls in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of the issues that HLSU may face.
    - **Candidate Aguiar:** Previously when I was being interviewed by the director and assistant director, they went on to say how secretary has been a sort of behind-the-scenes position. I'm not trying to change the role of secretary, but I also feel like there is a lot more that someone in this position can do in terms of not only recording but using that data to see where weaknesses are. So an example of that would be our numbers for this type of event and what goes into that may be the difference between things and how we can keep involvement up.
  - **Chair Diaz:** Are you familiar with the statutes and rules that HLSU has about its meetings having to be open to the public, and the fact that we have to take minutes for them?
    - **Candidate Aguiar:** I am loosely familiar with the rules, and that's part of what I meant in "keeping the data, and keeping the information open." We should know what we have discussed in the past to know and set quantifiable goals for where we're going.
  - **Vice Chair McMahon:** In your application you discuss how your leadership style is authoritative and concise, can you talk about a time where you had to adopt that leadership style?
    - **Candidate Aguiar:** So, I would say the best example that would actually be back in high school. I was a part of this mock court volunteer experience at the South Dade Justice Center in Miami-Dade Florida and it was a volunteer experience that would be sort of like a like a mock court but it was with real cases. So it would be like juvenile criminals who had taken like juvenile detention for things like petty theft and maybe possession of like low tier drugs and they would allow the students to act as like a lawyer in in these situations in exchange for those juveniles giving up their like real legal rights. And in turn they get no threat of actual detention time. I came into that space very like kind of unaware of the dynamic that would be there because in my in my mind it was the students would be one thing and then you'd be under the judge and you'd just be sort of a collaborative thing but it ended up being that everybody was kind of there for their own reasons, even

though you had to work together. So when I say authoritative and concise is that I'm there for a reason I have my own goals but I also realized that these goals cannot be reached without working in a collaborative environment because there's no you know there's no I in team you need everybody to be working together even if your exact goals aren't in line with others.

- **Senator Crocker moves to enter round-table discussion; Vice Chair McMahon seconds**
  - Deliberations: None
  - **Vice Chair McMahon moves to call the question; Senator Crocker seconds**
  - Closing Statement:
    - Thank you, first I want to say thank you for your time for giving me the opportunity. I just wanted to say that for this specific roll it is more than just involvement for me and I really am passionate about advancing this space on campus because it's something that I know without would have made my college experience a lot worse.
  - Vote:
    - Yes: 5 - Vice Chair McMahon, Senators Anand, Crocker, Roogow, Vollick
    - No: 0
    - Abstain: 0
  - **RESULT: Candidate BRANDON AGUIAR PASSES**
- **Candidate for Confirmation:** Stephanie Bonilla – HLSU Treasurer
    - Opening Statement:
      - First off I would like to thank the Senate for having me here today to speak. My name is Stephanie Bonilla my pronouns are she/her, I am here as a second year student majoring in finance. I am the candidate for this for the physician of treasurer for HLSU or known as Hispanic student Hispanic Latinx student union. I am a CARE student, I am a member of women in business and I would like to say that I am excel stratified I have experience with QuickBooks which is a those who don't know a financial planning software that helps with budgeting. I would like to just say that in high school I wasn't very social and I feel like actually HLSU has brought me to become more social I've made many friends attending these events in the past. I hope to expand HS you to this community more as treasurer by managing the budget well to have more events for those people who cannot like attend many of them. I know that a lot of my attendance was due to the conflicting like commitments I had prior so I tried my best to go and I did that towards the end of the at the academic year. They made more events so I was glad to attend many of those. The end goal as my term as treasurer is to have like greater attendance in many events and identify the different identities within the Hispanic community and highlight the customs traditions dialects and mannerisms. I know I am Honduran and Salvadoran and there's not a lot of events I've seen us do on those but as being Hispanic in general it has brought me closer to my community and allowed me to meet more people within my community thank you.
    - Technical Non-Debatable Questions
      - **Chair Diaz:** Have you taken the financial certification exam?
        - **Candidate Bonilla:** Yes, I took it in August.



- Rounds of Questioning:
    - **Senator Crocker:** I'm just reading application where you're discussing a project that you previously worked on you said you had the opportunity to work with students helping Honduras and you helped organize fundraisers to raise funds. Can you just allow berate how exactly you help to raise funds for the materials and mission trips.  
**Candidate Bonilla:** Yeah fundraisers like our virtual fundraisers we had already an ongoing fundraiser that the organization had already started was called One Cup of coffee. Basically what it did was I would advocate for them through Instagram or just social media in general and they say please join One Cup of coffee. What it did was take \$5 a month out of your bank account when you joined and it basically was the same amount as coffee so that's why I was called 1 cup of coffee. It's just to help fund different the mission trips or just different materials that they would need in general. Such as they would need pencils, books, all that. Students helping Honduras in general had a school in within a community that was kind of a private school in Honduras. To have enough funds to make public schools great so this was a private school that children of that community could attend for free and help them with their guidance into higher education. So, One Cup of coffee it does what it did I had a pretty good turn out on that had multiple with my friends join I've multiple people that I didn't even know on social media join.
  - **Senator Crocker moves to enter round-table discussion; Vice Chair McMahan seconds**
  - Deliberations:
    - **Senator McMahan:** I just wanted to speak in pro of this candidate, I don't know her personally but after reading through her application and hearing her interview I think she has a true passion for this and will do an excellent job.
  - **Vice Chair McMahan moves to call the question; Senator Crocker seconds**
  - Closing Statement:
    - Thank you all for giving me the time to speak today and I hope to continue supporting the Hispanic Latinx community on Florida State's campus and potentially expand it to all of Tallahassee community. And I also would like to thank for the comment in my favor I really appreciate that.
  - Vote:
    - Yes: 5 - Vice Chair McMahan, Senators Anand, Crocker, Roogow, Vollick
    - No: 0
    - Abstain: 0
  - **RESULT: Candidate STEPHANIE BONILLA PASSES**
- **Candidate for Confirmation:** Joshua Schwarz – VSU Chief Financial Officer
    - Opening Statement:
      - Thank you, chairman Diaz. Good evening senators, my name is Joshua Schwartz. I'm United States Air Force veteran and senior business management student here as well as a first-generation student. I'm up for consideration as the chief financial officer for the veteran student union. Being a student veteran I've faced some unique challenges returning and finishing my education and I've had the support of the veteran student

union and the student veterans center my entire time at Florida State. And I just wanted to give back and help support on coming and the student veteran population on campus I hope to help grow the presence of the veteran student union on campus as well as Tallahassee and the surrounding area and continue to make Florida State the friendliest veteran campus in the United States, thank you.

- Technical Non-Debatable Questions:
  - **Chair Diaz:** Have you taken the financial certification exam?
    - **Candidate Schwarz:** I have, I took it July 26.
- Rounds of Questioning:
  - **Vice Chair McMahon:** So I'm just looking at your application here and I see that when you talked about some goals you have for this potential role you say gaining participation and involvement with other student veterans is a major goal and I just want to know how you plan about going about that?
    - **Candidate Schwarz:** Yeah so currently we have about 1600 student veterans on campus right now. We hold a monthly, first-Friday feast where we get together and we only have about two-dozen veterans that show up. So working alongside the veterans center I want to go through a questionnaire for veterans asking what they would like to see and how they could be better involved and how we can help them.
  - **Senator Crocker:** Reading off the section that Vice Chair McMahon was reading from when you talk about using your veteran status to advocate for the needs of veteran students on campus are there any specific needs you can think of off the top of your head that you would like to advocate for that you can think of?
    - **Candidate Schwarz:** I talked about this and working with the the other members of the VSU in transitioning from the military to college and then back into the workforce. As a veteran and meeting with other veterans who were in the military and went back to school and then joined back the workforce and seeing what they did being we will share our knowledge and being able to help prepare our students.
- **Senator Crocker moves to enter round-table discussion; Vice Chair McMahon seconds**
- Deliberations:
  - **Vice Chair McMahon:** I just wanted to speak in pro of the candidate. Having family that have kind of gone down the same path of military to college to the normal workplace, I know it can be a very difficult time and it can be hard for our veterans to adjust to this new life, and I think the candidate will do an excellent job in helping our veterans adjust to that.
  - **Senator Crocker:** I really liked the candidate's application and promising and I like who he can relate to students on campus.
- **Senator Crocker moves to call the question; Senator Roogow seconds**
- Closing Statement:
  - I just want to say thank you to the committee for hearing me out and I just wanted to say if confirmed I would be the only student veteran on the executive board of veteran student units fired I appreciate your time, thank you very much.
- Vote:

- Yes: 5 - Vice Chair McMahon, Senators Anand, Crocker, Roogow, Vollick
    - No: 0
    - Abstain: 0
  - **RESULT: Candidate JOSHUA SCHWARZ PASSES**
- **Candidate for Confirmation:** Omer Turkomer – Office of Governmental Affairs, Deputy Director
  - Opening Statement:
    - I want to start off by thanking all of you for being here, I know this has been a long meeting. A little bit about me my name is Omer Turk Omer, I'm a double major in political science and international affairs. So, in regard to OGA, especially like mentioned prior I've been sort of on the OGA journey with Emma and Jason I was a participant in MEP and then I was also a part of the board of directors for OGA. I was the director of legislative affairs and legislative research. So, with that I gained a lot of experience about like not only how OGA functions but also some ways in which I consider OGA potentially could improve upon. So, in regard to student government until my confirmation I was a member of the student Senate. So, I obviously kind of have some you know knowledge in regard to how that functions and sort of how OGA would interact with that. Like I mentioned before, since I was also part of last semester, I also got to witness first-hand how OGA directly interacts with SGA as a whole. Also, in regard to OGA's involvement with the government itself you know I played a big part in our lobbying efforts, I was there at the day at the capitol two times and i got to know interview and lobby legislatures so i could gain a lot of experience on how to do that ways in which we can improve. Thank you.
  - Technical Non-Debatable Questions:
    - Chair Diaz moves onto General Questioning
  - Rounds of Questioning:
    - **Senator Crocker:** In your application you talked about in increasing voter turnout in spreading digestible and accessible information on how students can contact legislators. Can you talk about what you mean by digestible and accessible?
      - **Candidate Turkomer:** I mean content material that's impactful. So, I think whenever we sort of talk about legislative affairs or getting people to be involved in the political process, we have a lot of big sorts of bulky discussions but I think having just little Flyers, quick snippets, about like how students being involved in politics is help you know students themselves how OGA was able to help them. And how they can be involved with OJ in sort of lobbying efforts and all that sort of stuff. My idea was OGA creating information to allow the students to understand how why they should vote you know why I should care at all. So, with that I think with youth voter turnout being a historically a low figure I thought OGA would be able to help in the fight against.
  - **Senator Roogow moves to enter round-table discussion; Senator Crocker seconds**
  - Deliberations:



**Candidate Seavers:** Some ramps on campus are in an L shape, whereas the ramp by Strozier is a spiral and that is very difficult for wheelchairs to navigate. I want to look at the ramps themselves and talk to students in wheelchairs to make things more accessible for them.

- **Senator Crocker:** One of your goals you mention having the golfcarts being replaced with wheelchair accessible vans. Are you looking to have all golf carts replaced or only a few?

**Candidate Seavers:** I am not looking to replace all golfcarts because some students have temporary disabilities use them for classes and transportation. I have only seen a handful of vans and I would like to increase that; I will have to look at statics to do that.

- **Senator Crocker moves to enter round-table discussion; Vice Chair McMahon seconds**
- Deliberations:
  - **Senator Crocker:** I am also in the College of education, and I ran with miss Seavers. I don't know her personally, but I do know how passionate she is just from her campaign and just hearing about her I know that she's really passionate about what she's pushing for in her goals, so I fully trust and I really do think that she's going to try to push her goals.
- **Vice Chair McMahon moves to call the question; Senator Crocker seconds**
- Closing Statement:
  - Thank you. I hope after hearing what I had to say today and looking at my application, that you decide to forward me to the entire Senate for confirmation. I've always been an advocate for individuals with disabilities and honestly it starts with my younger brother who has Williams syndrome. Ever since I found out, I have been pushing and advocating and being an ally for this community and I hope to continue doing so in the role of director of accessibility, thank you.
- Vote:
  - Yes: 5 - Vice Chair McMahon, Senators Anand, Crocker, Roogow, Vollick
  - No: 0
  - Abstain: 0
- **RESULT: Candidate CAITLYN SEEVERS PASSES**
- **Constitutional Amendment # 3 - Sponsored by Senator Diaz (P)**
  - Opening Statement:
    - Thank you so much Chair McMahon. Sorry to the candidates I have to get this done like right now so that judiciary can consider it right after. But this is a quick amendment to our constitution so that it just clears some things up about confirmations, I highly suggest that you consider the current text of it. It's a little bit confusing but these are the powers of the Senate, it says Senate shall confirm appointments of the student body president by a 2/3 vote for appointments to fill vacated office and by a majority vote for other appointments. I think that that is a mouthful, I think it's really confusing, and it makes it so that if a position is vacant you have to fill it by a 2/3 vote and if there is somebody currently in the position it's a majority vote. I don't really think that that's fair because for example the HLSU director position becomes vacant, if somebody new wants to apply to it then they need to face a 2/3 vote. Whereas if somebody again is in the position it's only a majority vote. I don't think it's fair that the same

candidate for the same position having two different standards of being confirmed when it's the same position.

- Technical Non-Debatable Questions:
  - Chair McMahon moves into general questioning
- Rounds of Questioning:
- **Senator Crocker moves to enter round-table discussion; Senator Roogow seconds**
- Deliberations:
- **Senator Crocker moves to call the question; Senator Vollick seconds**
- Closing Statement:
  - I'm sure judiciary will be more considerate but thank you for your consideration and time. I just want to make confirmations as easy as possible while I am in IA.
- Vote:
  - Yes: 5 - Vice Chair McMahon, Senators Anand, Crocker, Roogow, Vollick
  - No: 0
  - Abstain: 0
- **RESULT: CA #3 PASSES**

**Unfinished Business:**

- None

**Closing Announcements:**

- None

**Next Meeting:** September 12th, 2022 at 5:00pm

**Adjourned: 7:05 pm**



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**Signature of Chair Samuel Diaz**