



74th Student Senate
Internal Affairs Committee
October 17th, 2022 at 5:00pm | <https://fsu.zoom.us/j/95508946768>

Call to Order: 5:02 pm

Members Present: Chair Diaz, Vice Chair McMahon, Senators Anand, Crocker, Rainey, Schindler, Vollick

Members Tardy:

Members Absent: Senators Anderson (AU), Roogow (AU)

Guests: Attorney General Thorpe, Chief of Staff England, and Director Russell

Land Acknowledgement – Senator Anand

- 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, everyone, to Internal Affairs, and welcome, Senator Rainey, to the committee! Today, I have invited some guests to discuss potential changes to the format and questions of the SGA Application! We also have one piece of legislation that I will be presenting to the committee.

Committee Business:

- Committee Discussion on Potential Changes to the SGA Application
- Bill 81 – Sponsored by Senator Diaz (P) Anand, Crocker, Kariher, McMahon, Rivers, Roogow, Schindler, Vollick (Co): Formally granting the Student Body President and Agency and Bureau leadership the right to forward candidates for different positions from those that candidates applied for.

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- **Bill 81 – Sponsored by Senator Diaz (P)**
 - Opening Statement:
 - This is about the candidate screening process. To give the executive branch some more leeway to forward candidates for different positions than what candidates applied for. In many cases, people apply for wrong positions. This power is not explicitly given to the executive branch to move candidates around. It also allows the student body president and agency and bureau leaders the ability to switch people's positions. So for example if I applied for something for HLSU Director and they said they liked me but think I would be better elsewhere, they would have the power to switch and forward me for Assistant Director, for example, which the Executive Branch does not currently have the power to do. I thank you for your time and look forward to any questions you may have.
 - Round of Questioning:
 - None
 - Deliberations:
 - Chief of Staff England: Does this bill require that I consult the Senate President when switching senate candidates' seats they are applying for?
 - Chair Diaz: No, the Executive Branch is only required to seek the consent of other entities in cases where an internal selection process for leadership positions take place. In the case of students applying for Senate seats, the process is internally handled by the Executive Branch.
 - Senator Crocker: I think this bill is logical. We just saw an example of someone choosing the wrong position and so I think this is necessary.
 - Senator Vollick: Yeah I think this is a great bill, I think we all know it very well so I think we should pass it tonight.
 - **Senator Vollick moves to call the question; Senator Crocker seconds**
 - Closing Statement:
 - Sponsor waives closing.
 - Vote:
 - Yes: 4 - Senators Anand, Crocker, Rainey, Vollick
 - No: 0
 - Abstain: 0
 - **RESULT: BILL 81 PASSES**
- Senator Vollick moves to suspend the Rules to allow all non-senators the ability to speak, Senator Crocker seconds
 - No objections
 - **Motion to suspend the Rules is ADOPTED.**
- Discussions Pertaining to Changes to the SGA Application
 - *Chair Diaz invited the Attorney General, Chief of Staff, SGA Director of Student Affairs, and the Student Senate Program Assistant to the discussion, to comply with Student Body Statute 307.3(C). Additional SGA officers were also invited.*
 - Roundtable Discussion
 - **Chair Diaz:** I wish Jacklyn could be here today, but she will be here next Monday to give us a demo for what a non-Qualtrics application could look like. Does

anyone have any thoughts, comments, or ideas about moving away from Qualtrics?

- **Chief of Staff England:** I would strongly advise against moving away from Qualtrics. If anyone is familiar with Nole Central, it is an extremely nonuser friendly platform. Personally, I think it is really dated for even an RSO data base, which is its primary function. If anyone has submitted a purchase request or event request it is just so complicated. I think much of this application can be revamped and taken out to make it more accessible. It is already difficult for us to get people involved in student government. Accessibility is what we need to focus on and make things easy to get involved. I've never liked Nole Central, and I think it is more complex than it needs to be.
- **Senator Schindler:** I agree with Chief of Staff England about Nole Central. As an RSO officer I've had to use it and it is even worse than Qualtrics to work with. I think the application needs to be reworked but I think Qualtrics, or another option is better than Nole Central.
- **Chair Diaz:** Do you have any other suggestions of alternative platforms we could use? I like google forms, but I am not sure about the logistics of that.
- **Senator Schindler:** Quentin, how do you feel about google forms?
- **Chief of Staff England:** I think it is fine, I do believe Qualtrics is a bit more secure. Google forms is free and accessible, and the university pays for Qualtrics. It is a premium product, and it provides more intricate features, it is a million times more powerful than google forms. Qualtrics allows for skip logic, something not available on google forms.
- **Senator Schindler:** Why are we wanting to move away from Qualtrics?
- **Chief of Staff England:** I don't believe there are specific cons to Qualtrics, Jacklyn suggests that if there is a time to move away from Qualtrics now would be that time with this committee reviewing the application.
- **Chair Diaz:** I just want to clarify a bit, I have personally heard complaints from folks who applied and the only annoying thing Qualtrics does is it will submit a form even if you are not done with it. Even if you are not done with it, it will submit it. I am not sure if it is fixable or not.
- **Senator Crocker:** I was going to say the same thing as you. But, some people associate Qualtrics with the bad and controversial questions when it has nothing to do with Qualtrics.
- **Chief of Staff England:** I believe you can change that timing out. For SGA I believe it is 24 hours. I think we should start fresh with Qualtrics if we make changes to the application. It needs to be reworked not only with the questions but with the form itself and we need to make a whole new form.
- **Attorney General Thorpe:** I just want to make sure I am understanding this correctly. So, I applied to my position on the SGA website is that the form you are talking about?
- **Chair Diaz:** Yes.
- **Attorney General Thorpe:** I agree with everyone that the application should stay on Qualtrics. I think as a matter of efficiency I think it makes sense to have the application on the page. When I went to USF, the application was under the jobs database. If we were thinking about moving the application, we could move it there. You can save drafts and save information so that you don't have to resubmit all your information. With the administration account, you can go right in and look at the application. I hate Nole Central it is outdated and hard to navigate.

- **Chair Diaz:** I have a question to anyone who can answer it. How often do you guys look at recommendation letters, resumes, and things like that? Is that taken into account often?
- **Attorney General Thorpe:** I don't have any experience in the executive branch. But typically, recommendation letters and resumes are more important than cover letters. I think asking for cover letters for non-paid positions is ridiculous. I take it all with a grain of salt. When looking for a good fit, you look to the recommendation and if their capable on their resume.
- **Director Russell:** In my experience, everyone who applies is granted an interview and that's just how we do it. Quentin and I came up with a list of questions to keep things fair and it's not questions about the application, that's more of what you guys do. I'll look over the application to see if they took the time to answer the questions to the best of their ability and if they have a recommender and resume, half the time I cannot access those documents.
- **Chief of Staff England:** I don't think for some positions you don't need a recommender. I make decisions based on what you write and what you have on your resume. What we can do is summarize the options in the drop-down menu to clarify things, so for major positions it could ask for a letter of recommendation. Not all non-major positions need a cover letter or recommendation.
- **Chair Diaz:** The only reason I asked this question is because you folks, Quentin and Katie, have been in IA and know we can't see recommendation letters or resumes or anything like that. All of that is a waste of time for us and them, if in the executive branch they don't even look at them it doesn't make any sense.
- **Senator Crocker:** I've said this before, when we're interviewing candidates for positions letters of recommendation aren't necessary anyway. Candidates' letters will obviously be biased and in their favor.
- **Chief of Staff England:** When we get confirmations it is forwarded in email format. I clicked those links, and it downloaded straight to my computer, so on our end we have access to these documents. I am not sure what is going on and why you guys cannot access those. Let's see how the next forwarding letter goes, I believe Director Russell is putting one together tomorrow, if we have issues still, we can try and identify what is going on.
- **Chair Diaz:** I think we have talked enough about the actual format of the application, now let's talk about the actual questions on the application.
- **Senator Anand:** I personally think that the questions about what inspires you and how you describe your leadership still are repetitive, if we are going to ask what FSU motto do you identify with the most. I feel like those two questions lead into that motto question.
- **Attorney General Thorpe:** I don't know how committed you are to the FSU torches question. In an application, I feel there has to be a wrong answer and in this case, I don't think picking any of the three torches or mottos is a wrong answer. Many people, myself included, don't know these things so look them up and decide which to write about. As far as the application goes, I don't really like it.
- **Senator Rainey:** I agree. When I was filling out this application, I feel like I was repeating what I was saying in a different way. We either get rid of the two questions or the three torches question.
- **Senator Crocker:** I think that the two questions, one about describe an area or project and goals, are very similar. I think when people apply, they often relate these two questions so I don't think it is necessary to have both of these on the application.

- **Chair Diaz:** For time's sake, let's talk about those other questions first and then we can move on.
- **Senator Anand:** I was going to say the same thing as Attorney General Thorpe. When I filled out this application the three torches question was really question and it tied back to me saying all three and it just got really confusing. IF we were to pick from what inspires you or what is your leadership style, I think that would be much better.
- **Senator Vollick:** This is just an idea, I agree with the three torches question. The question could be pick three that your characteristics go with and something that ties in the torches but ties in in a better way.
- **Chief of Staff England:** This might be an unpopular opinion, but I think all these questions could be removed. I think competition is good. But we have to think about accessibility, many questions like this have no relevance and drive people away from student government. So how can we get more people involved and hold people accountable? We need to reach a point where the application is not the hardest barrier but rather the interview is. Many of these questions could be merged or thrown out all together to improve this application.
- **Attorney General Thorpe:** Going back to what the chief of staff said, with USF all you submitted was a resume and a cover letter. That decided if you got an interview. At the interview you have to come with initiatives and make PowerPoints showing what you will be doing in the position. I think we should require some of those initiatives
- **Senator Schindler:** I want to agree with Quentin, I think that those questions stop people from applying. I didn't join SGA earlier because of these types of questions. I think we should rely more on the interview to determine the strength of the candidate.
- **Chair Diaz:** This is my own personal opinion, I read a couple applications. Rarely did I ever read their answers to the torches questions or decide on the candidate based on that question.
- **Senator Rainey:** When I filled out the application, the three torches question really threw me off. I like the spirit of the question, but it is very confusing for people. It can turn away a lot of people. I agree with merging the other questions into one question.
- **Chair Diaz:** Taking everything we've heard; I think there is consensus on the three torches question and that we should strike them.
- **Senator Crocker:** I say we strike the leadership style question next, I think that this question is outdated and people end up putting the same thing on every application. I think asking it in an interview would be a better way of going about it.
- **Chief of Staff England:** I completely agree, these questions are better asked in an interview. I promise we will get better and more honest responses. I think we could strike this and the question about an area or project.
- **Senator Rainey:** I agree and disagree, I feel like if we move more towards interviews, we should strike those questions. But we the amount of people we interview, for time's sake it might make more sense to keep them.
- **Vice Chair McMahon:** I agree with what Senator Crocker said about relying more on the interview and asking questions like the leadership style in an interview. But I think the question about what inspires you, is the most redundant question on the application, most people just end up putting their mom or their dad or their family and it doesn't really add a lot of substance to the application itself.

- **Chair Diaz:** It sounds like there is consensus for striking both questions about leadership styles and values. Now what about the questions about what goals there are and what area or project are you passionate about?
- **Senator Crocker:** I definitely want to keep these questions to some extent. I always end up asking the candidates to elaborate on what they put under these questions. But I don't think it needs to be super extensive on the application. Maybe we could make it a shorter response so that it doesn't feel like you have to respond with a full essay. I think we could combine these questions and keep what it is asking.
- **Attorney General Thorpe:** I think we can keep the question about goals, I think it encapsulates all of those things. We could reword it to combine both. I think a lot of what these questions are asking is the same, it is just not very clear.
- **Vice Chair McMahon:** I think that these two questions and the why are you applying question are three ways to say almost the exact same thing. I feel like if you're applying to a position, it is because you have goals that you are passionate about and you are passionate about a project that you would like to accomplish while in the role. Honestly, I think that we could combine these three questions into one.
- **Chair Diaz:** I will challenge that a little bit. I think people apply sometimes just because they want to get involved and sometimes it is just a resume thing. I think they do sound similar but sometimes have different answers.
- **Vice Chair McMahon:** Like the attorney general said, sometimes the questions just aren't clear so maybe we could combine these three questions and come up with a way for them to be clear and more straightforward.
- **Chief of Staff England:** Going off Vice Chair McMahon's recommendations, I think asking "what are your reasons for applying to this position and what are your goals" would be a good combination.
- **Chair Diaz:** What do we think about this question about an area or project you're passionate about?
- **Chief of Staff England:** I think that this question doesn't apply to everything that people might be applying for. I think for senate it is a great question, but for director of appointments it doesn't make much sense. I think this question would be much better in an interview.
- **Attorney General Thorpe:** I think even with a senator, that question is not necessary. I think they would answer that in their goals. Those are things they will advocate for in their position. I don't think that it is a bad question for someone with special roles. I think the question is not necessary at all.
- **Chair Diaz:** Alright so it looks like there is consensus on striking this question.
- **Chief of Staff England:** I want to recommend some rephrasing. Instead of "write the position you are applying for below" it could be written as "What is the title of position you are applying for". The experience question could also be rewritten.
- **Attorney General Thorpe:** Is this application word for word? I know you copied the questions off the application.
- **Senator Crocker:** I don't remember the exact word used but I think things need to be taken out and rewritten. The word relevant should be taken out because obviously the experience is relevant to the position.
- **Chief of Staff England:** I think "What experience do you have that make you a strong candidate for this position?" is a good rewording of the question.
- **Vice Chair McMahon:** I am not really sure of how exactly we would go about doing this, but we could add a section for non-debatable questions such as "are you financially certified" and other questions like that.

- **Senator Crocker:** I completely agree with what Vice Chair McMahon had to say. Chair Diaz always makes a point to ask about financial certification, so I think that adding that to the application would say time.
- **Chair Diaz:** Would you add it to this question or make it its own question?
- **Senator Crocker:** I would make it its own question but just a simple yes or no.
- **Chair Diaz:** Just for clarification, not every position requires financial certification.
- **Senator Crocker:** I know that, but would it be possible to only be added to certain applications?
- **Chair Diaz:** Yeah, I know Quentin talked about it. It is one of many features Qualtrics has that we haven't used. Maybe at the beginning when they select their position, it drops down.
- **Senator Rainey:** If we stick with Qualtrics, we should do that. If we move away from Qualtrics we can use it as an example in one of the questions about experience.

Unfinished Business:

- None

Closing Announcements:

- Chair Diaz: We did good, productive work on the SGA Application. I want to thank the Chief of Staff, the Attorney General, and Director Russell for showing up. I don't necessarily know what the next steps are, but Jacalyn should be here next week to show us potential demos for a non-Qualtrics application. I can send the Chief of Staff and everyone else I invited an email to come next week, to hear what she has to say.
- Vice Chair McMahon: I want to thank all of our guests for choosing to spend their time with us.

Next Meeting: October 24th, 2022 at 5:00pm

Adjourned: 6:21pm



Signature of Chair Samuel Diaz

Zoom Recording Link:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AesMf8F0w5oIBD7krmExXpxAtBV_LxUb/view?usp=sharing