



**74th Student Senate
Internal Affairs Committee
October 24th, 2022 at 5:00pm | <https://fsu.zoom.us/j/95508946768>**

Call to Order: 5:01 pm

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

Members Tardy:

Members Absent:

Guests: Director Puwalski, Assistant Director Kiely, and candidates for confirmation

Land Acknowledgement – Senator Crocker

- 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:** We are going to be hearing these candidates today in the specific order, everyone please keep it in mind for the rest of our meeting.
- **Director Puwalski:** Hi everyone, I am the Director of the Office of Governmental Affairs. As I am sure you guys are aware we have nine candidates tonight for the board, up for confirmation tonight. I just want to say me, Emma, and Omer have complete confidence in all these people. When we saw the number of applications we got, I was worried because we have to interview everyone, and it took a long time because we had so many qualified candidates. We have the best of the best here tonight. Of course, we want you to ask all the important questions but I just wanted to say we have complete confidence in our candidates. I want you all to be mindful of the skill set that each nominee brings to the table. We intentionally did not choose nine people that were the exact same. Each of them has different qualifications, which is why we chose them.

Committee Business:

1. Georgina Patient - Office of Governmental Affairs, Board of Directors (9 Applicants)
2. Brayden Harrell - Office of Governmental Affairs, Board of Directors (9 Applicants)
3. Eric Babchin - Office of Governmental Affairs, Board of Directors (9 Applicants)
4. Lauren Hansel – Office of Governmental Affairs, Board of Directors (9 Applicants)
5. Natasha Harwood – Office of Governmental Affairs, Board of Directors (9 Applicants)
6. Melanie Leyva - Office of Governmental Affairs, Board of Directors (9 Applicants)
7. Brayden Sanchez - Office of Governmental Affairs, Board of Directors (9 Applicants)
8. Zorian Tullock - Office of Governmental Affairs, Board of Directors (9 Applicants)
9. Aidan Webster – Pride Student Union Assistant Director (5 Applicants)
10. Alexis Dorman - Office of Governmental Affairs, Board of Directors (9 Applicants)

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- **Candidate for Confirmation:** Georgina Patient - Office of Governmental Affairs (OGA), Board of Directors
 - Opening Statement:
 - Hello and thank you to the internal affairs committee for the time in deciding my feasibility to the board of the Office of Governmental Affairs. I want to start at the beginning as my love for politics has been a long standing one. Being raised in the United Kingdom for 14 years I have fond memories of looking at my parent's ballot back when they were the United States when I was a freshman in high school, I found these systems to be wildly different, I really am learning new things about the American governmental process every day. However, this fuels my desire to get involved. Ultimately, I would say I am a strong candidate for the board. Firstly, I have ample experience in the realm of government and politics. This past summer I spent two months in Washington DC on Capitol Hill with the committee on small business. I think this undoubtedly fueled my knowledge for the American political process. This semester I aided my knowledge in Florida politics working with representative Al Lawson and his Tallahassee office. Through that I do case work, talk with constituents and it's really been a fantastic experience. I am also really lucky to be an intern during the midterms which really gives me an inside look into the world of campaign politics as I aid him in the campaign trail. Within FSU specifically, I am a fellow with the institute of politics. In a bipartisan collaboration with other fellows, we created and executed the why we serve initiative where we interviewed representatives and why they got into politics. With OGA, I personally believe it is one of the most important agencies within FSU student government. Much of the project initiatives coined by the senate are really as effective as the capitol support behind them. With that being said I am really looking forward to working in a bipartisan fashion with other board members to craft next year's legislation agenda. FSU day at the capitol is also something I really want to raise awareness for to show the government we have a fantastic culture here at FSU and we can advocate for ourselves. Overall, I really am excited with the challenges of being a board member and I think I will exceed in the position.
 - Round of Questioning:

- Yes: 8 - Vice Chair McMahon, Senators Anand, Anderson, Crocker, Rainey, Roogow, Schindler, and Vollick
 - No: 0
 - Abstain: 0
 - **RESULT: CANDIDATE PATIENT PASSES**
- **Candidate for Confirmation:** Brayden Harrell - OGA, Board of Directors
 - Opening Statement:
 - Good evening IA, it is great to be back. For those of you that don't know me my name is Brayden Harrell I served back in summer senate and as Vice Chair of the IA committee. A little bit about me as a rising senior in the college of social science majoring in political science and a minor in economics. I am pursuing a board seat withing the office of governmental affairs. When it comes to my career experience, I have served as a regional representative for a US Senator in four rural counties in which I had to work with constituents, political parties, and other voters to make sure of our messaging and campaign tactics. I also became very knowledgeable about Senator Marco Rubio's policies including his protection plan which was implemented during the Covid-19 crisis. Why is this important in campaigns? Whenever you're pitching something to a voter, you always need to know about the policies that you're representing. The same thing can be said when we are working with constituents here at the student body. So, I intend to use my knowledge on policy to be able to reflect that of the student body here at Florida State. I also ran my own campaign as a campaign manager for a state house race, which was a non-partisan race. That brings an interesting mindset to the table. I have worked with my fellow people in order to get things done. I have worked with different agencies and lobbyist groups to make sure we were getting across the policies we wanted to with my candidate. I have worked with notable black lobbyists here in Tallahassee who is very active within that community, I have also worked with the NRA and organizations such as Young Americans for Liberty. Polar opposite places but we were able to come together and find compromise and that is important when on a campus like Florida State. I want to ensure that everyone has an equitable share in the conversation when we talk about what the office of governmental affairs will do for the student body. As a campaign manager, I became very fluent with Instagram, Facebook, etc. and being able to monitor and manage social media is not an easy task. I also served as the president of my fraternity so I am very familiar with going out into the community and greeting people and having those real conversations. I want to thank Jason, Emma, and Omer and their faith in me.
 - Round of Questioning:
 - **Vice Chair McMahon:** In your application, you talked about examining policies on ANS fees and DEI institutes, can you expand on this?
 - **Candidate Harrell:** So a long standing thing in senate is we want to see ANS fees be reestablished, it has been I think five years since we've seen the state establish new ANS fees. So I want to work with the student body to see what they want and what their needs are. A lot of students don't take advantage of things we

have on campus such as the mental health council, counseling in psychology and services, athletics program. We need to reevaluate not only how students are taking advantage of these things but all these organizations that are receiving money and things like that. So, I want to ensure we are doing all of that. When it comes to DEI, I want to see DEI expanded to a little more into the lives of students. I just attended the Fraternity and Sorority Life converge, where we learned a little bit more about Dei in the Greek community and I want to see students get involved in that. So, we are going to ensure that these things are talked about and this isn't just a sole decision on my part, but a global conversation between senate, the executive branch, and all the people involved.

- **Senator Crocker:** How exactly do you plan to jumpstart those conversations?

- **Candidate Harrell:** As a summer senator, I have a lot of connections in senate. I am going to be very proactive when it comes to serving OGA, not only in an official capacity but as a representative of that. So coordinating with those senators and asking "what do you need to see?" and asking them what their constituents want and need. The role is to being representative of students at all levels of government and I believe even here at the Florida State level. I think working with you guys to make sure things get done in the most fair, equitable way is the best. Starting those conversations is number one. As I stated, I have experience with social media so we can start those conversations there so we can make good, equitable decisions.

- Deliberations:

- **Senator Crocker:** I just want to express my support, they have extensive experience, so this candidate has my support.
- **Vice Chair McMahon:** I also just wanted to express my support, I think this candidate has amazing experience and he talked a lot about his bi-partisan work and I know when we confirmed Director Puwalski, that was a big thing.
- **Senator Anand:** I also want to support this candidate, working with this candidate during summer senate I know he is super passionate about his goals and I think he will do great things.

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- **Senator Crocker moves to call the question; Senator Anand seconds**

- Closing Statement:

- Thank you so much for hearing me out, I hope I have all of your support.

- Vote:

- Yes: 8 - Vice Chair McMahon, Senators Anand, Anderson, Crocker, Rainey, Roogow, Schindler, and Vollick
- No: 0
- Abstain: 0

- **RESULT: CANDIDATE HARRELL PASSES**

- **Candidate for Confirmation:** Eric Babchin - OGA, Board of Directors
 - Opening Statement:

fully financially supported by the university, which has also been an amazing experience where I have met so many amazing people. Outside of Florida State's campus, I worked in a PR firm in Tallahassee, Bascom communications and consulting, where we worked for political figures as well as other companies such as Publix and FPL. I want to use my communications experience to make OGA a bigger name on campus, as well as get students involved and knowledgeable about OGA and all the benefits it has to offer. I am super excited to see what I could potentially do, with your vote. Thank you.

○ Round of Questioning:

- **Vice Chair McMahon:** In your application, you talk about expanding students' knowledge on OGA and its benefits to them. As I am sure that you are aware, most students aren't even aware of OGA's existence, do you have any specific plans or ideas on how you would inform the student body, if confirmed.
 - **Candidate Hansel:** Working with other organizations on campus is something that could be very beneficial, maybe things such as hosting events. I have connections in the Greek life community, but in boosters a lot of people aren't knowledgeable about senate just because it is a different audience so getting them involved as well. I think doing events with organizations that aren't our direct target audience is something I would love to do and I think it would get a lot of great exposure.
- **Senator Anand:** Why OGA? What made you want to apply?
 - **Candidate Hansel:** As I said, I am an advertising major in the College of Communication, so it is very different. I have always loved and had a passion for politics. I love understanding the mindset of everyone when it comes to politics. Being a voice for the students is something I would love to do and having a nonpartisan opinion is important and it is something that interests me much more. Having a non-biased opinion but getting exposure from the student body is something that is super exciting and I can't wait to do it, if confirmed.
- **Senator Schindler:** Reading over your application, I see you want to advocate for the real project, how do you plan to do that in your role?
 - **Candidate Hansel:** For those that don't know what it is, the real project is a project here on campus that gives the student body exposure on not abusing alcohol, which is a problem here on campus. We see it in all aspects of campus, I think it is something super important. I would love to be able to partner with them and having events is important. So gaining exposure and creating opportunity on campus that doesn't have to do with alcohol. This is something I have worked on in my advertising strategy class, working closer with the real project and a middle school in a different county. It has been really rewarding and I would love to bring in and make it bigger on FSU's campus.
- **Senator Schindler:** What is one legislative way you can work with the State Legislator to bring raise awareness about that idea?
 - **Candidate Hansel:** Like I said, I haven't been exposed to a lot of that legislator on FSU. If I was exposed to that, I would be able to give you a better answer but as this point I can't answer.

align with the Office of Governmental Affairs initiatives. Not only do I believe I will excel in this role, I also find that passion and devotion can go a long way. Being immersed in the role of director of events, allowed for me to grow this passion and learn the ins and outs of OGA functions, as well as how we can improve in the future. Along with this, I feel as my past internships at two non-profits have created a strong foundation of skills that I can apply to a new year in OGA. More specifically, over the summer I was able to work in outreach and connect with a multitude of organization across the Charleston tri-county area. While you may be questioning how this non-political experience can assist in my work in OGA, I can ensure you that the scale of recruiting people or organization while creating long lasting relationships that prove beneficial to the future, while only uplift the efforts of OGA. My work with victim services, I had first-hand experience talking with everyday people and communicating their needs to help raise awareness. This is just the core of OGA's work. The plentiful opportunities for student advocacy due to our proximity to the capitol is endless. I would like nothing more than to continue to advocate for the student body and be the liaison between our campus and our capitol.

○ Round of Questioning:

■ **Vice Chair McMahon:** You said that you had previously served on the board of directors as the director of events within the office of governmental affairs, are there any challenges that you may have faced last year that will allow you to be a better board member this year, if confirmed.

- **Candidate Harwood:** Truthfully, there were a lot of goals we wanted to get done that we didn't. Something we were talking about was FSU day at city hall, a sort of scaled back to the city government so we could focus on that as well. Obviously, that did not come to fruition and that is something that I would love to see happen this year. I feel as though I have perfected time management and organization so that we can get everything we want to get done, within our budget.

○ Deliberations:

■ **Vice Chair McMahon:** I just wanted to express my support, she has already served on the board and after reading her application and hearing her answers, I think she will be even better this time around.

○ **Senator Crocker moves to call the question; Vice Chair McMahon seconds**

○ Closing Statement:

■ I just want to say thank you. I appreciate your time to evaluate my candidacy, I know it is precious. I am very grateful.

○ Vote:

- Yes: 6 - Vice Chair McMahon, Senators Crocker, Rainey, Roogow, Schindler, and Vollick
- No: 0
- Abstain: 0

○ **RESULT: CANDIDATE HARWOOD PASSES**

- **Candidate for Confirmation:** Melanie Leyva - OGA, Board of Directors

○ Opening Statement:

- Abstain: 0
- **RESULT: CANDIDATE LEYVA PASSES**

- **Candidate for Confirmation:** Brayden Sanchez - OGA, Board of Directors
 - Opening Statement:
 - Good evening members of the student senate internal affairs committee, my name is Brayden Sanchez. I am a sophomore from Miami, Florida currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in political philosophy on a pre-law track. For as long as I can remember, I have been deeply passionate about politics. Since arriving at Florida State, my passion for politics has included all the politics and policy that affects our student body. Particularly regarding issues such as food insecurity, student veterans, and bright futures funding, among others. Regarding political experience, I was a student in the Noles Engaged in Politics program, a current fellow in the institute of politics, lobbying on behalf of Florida State at the capitol, and working on campaigns of several elected officials including congresswoman Maria Vita Salazar, Commissioner Joe G, and Senator Rubio, and others. Beyond that, I am actively involved with several organizations on campus including the Cuban Americans Association, Surge FSU, and others. All things considered, I believe I am qualified to serve on the board of OGA directors and I believe I bring a lot to the table, and I hope to be confirmed.
 - Round of Questioning:
 - **Senator Crocker:** Looking at your application, you briefly mentioned that you want to oversee and expand programs on campus to the best of your abilities, such as Noles Engaged in Politics, and FSU day at the capitol. Can you expand on that?
 - **Candidate Sanchez:** I think both programs are extremely important. As an alumnus of Noles Engaged in Politics, that is my real brainchild. While I think Emma did a great job, there is always room for improvement. Personally, I would've liked more networking and social interactions between the members, considering it is geared towards undergraduate students with similar interests so more networking would've been nice. I would also like to see an expansion of the program, in terms of the actual number of members. I would also like to see even more invited guest speakers and experiences such as last year when we met the mayor and lobbyists.
 - **Vice Chair McMahon:** Building off what Senator Crocker just asked, you talked about increasing networking and expanding the program, do you have any specific plans or ideas on how to go about this?
 - **Candidate Sanchez:** In order to increase networking, I think a great way to do that would be things such as a mentor/mentee program, small groups, and other things of that nature that really bring the members closer together. I feel like Noles engaged in politics didn't have so much of that. We left the program with a lot of formative experiences in terms of career development, we didn't do so much networking.
 - Deliberations:

Tallahassee to see what they want and see advocating for people to switch their voting registration to vote here. It is important to connect with all types of voters, democrat or republican.

- Deliberations:
 - **Vice Chair McMahon:** I just want to express my support for the candidate, I think she touched on something that is so important but so overlooked and that is helping the Tallahassee community. I really liked that, and I hope to see her pass.
 - **Senator Crocker:** I want to reemphasize everything that Vice Chair McMahon just said as well as, saying I think it is important that this candidate advocating for updating voter registration, so she has my support.
- **Vice Chair McMahon moves to call the question; Senator Crocker seconds**
- Closing Statement:
 - Once again, I would like to thank you all for the time and kind words. I am excited to have this opportunity to advocate for students and Tallahassee. Emma is not here but I want to praise her for NIP and allowing me to be here today.
- Vote:
 - Yes: 6 - Vice Chair McMahon, Senators Anderson, Crocker, Roogow, Schindler, and Vollick
 - No: 0
 - Abstain: 0
- **RESULT: CANDIDATE TULLOCK PASSES**

- **Candidate for Confirmation:** Aidan Webster – Pride Student Union Assistant Director
 - Opening Statement:
 - Good evening, everyone, my name is Aidan Webster and I use they/them and he/him pronouns. I am a fourth year here at Florida State pursuing a dual degree in accounting and international affairs. I am honored to come before you today to be heard and hopefully confirmed for the assistant director position for the Pride Student Union. I am interested in this position because as someone who is a part of the LGBTQIA+ community, I struggled to find support growing up and now I have found my support system here at Florida State. I would like to give back to that community as much as possible and advocate for our rights as a whole. I have experience as an orientation leader and team leader, creating lesson plans and facilitating small groups, making presentations, and receiving positive feedback. I also have experience as a student coordinator for the center of student leadership and change, planning events and reaching out to affiliates at the university. I believe I am qualified with my past experiences that have allowed me to be a leader and advocate for the LGBTQIA+ community on a smaller scale and I am ready and determined to do my best and bring it to a larger scale, that is Assistant Director of the Pride Student Union.
 - Round of Questioning:
 - **Vice Chair McMahon:** In your application, you described your leadership style as transformational, can you tell us about a time that required you to be a transformational leader?

Closing Announcements:

- Chair Diaz: We may be hearing candidate Dorman in IA as a Whole on Wednesday, we will see what the committee thinks. I think it would be beneficial to clear up our agenda for next meeting, as we are expecting to meet with Jacalyn to further discuss the SGA Application, along with discussing any other candidates that may get sent our way.
- The committee discussed changing the date of the next meeting to Tuesday, so as to not have the committee meet on Halloween.
- Vice Chair McMahon: We definitely slayed today.

Next Meeting: November 1st, 2022 at 5:00pm

Adjourned: 6:19 pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Samuel Diaz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S".

Signature of Chair Samuel Diaz