



**74th Student Senate
Internal Affairs Committee
April 4th, 2022 at 6:30pm | <https://fsu.zoom.us/j/95903818319>**

Call to Order: 6:30pm

Members Present: Chair Russell, Vice Chair Diaz, Senators Suarez, Hautrive, Barberis, Downing, Drackley, Lessard, Pfeuffer-Ferguson, Williams

Members Tardy: Senator Wells

Members Absent: Senator Fronczak (E)

Guests: Chair DuChêne, Senator Rivers

Land Acknowledgement – Chair Russell

- 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:

- Vice Chair Diaz: Because of how unstructured bureau review was this year, with very unclear guidelines about how to proceed with it, I think we as a committee should consider drafting legislation to guide future committees as to how to go about this very important process. I don't know if that is statute revisions or changing the Senate Rules of Procedure, but I do think something needs to change and the process needs to be more clear.
 - Chair Russell: I agree, it may be worth it to delineate what needs to be evaluated in the bureau review process.
- Senator Lessard: I agree that I think we should have some more clarification as to the bureau review process and its guidelines. I think it would make deliberations go smoother, as we could have more clear-cut details as to what we should be discussing. For example, bureaus are budgeted, and I think we should discuss things like that for all bureaus.

Committee Business:

- Bill 41 – Sponsored by Senator Wang and others: Allowing seats without sworn-in senators to become vacant.

Old Business: None

Chair Russell relinquishes the Chair to Senator Lessard.

New Business:

- **Bill # 41 - Sponsored by Senator Wang (P) Senators DuChêne, Bettley, Gonzalez, Rivers, Little (Co)**
 - Opening Statement:
 - Chair DuChêne: This bill allows for the release of senators' seats if they have not been sworn in after their 3rd Senate meeting after inauguration. You can miss inauguration, miss the 1st Senate meeting, miss the 2nd Senate meeting, miss the 3rd meeting, and at that point, if you have not been sworn in as a senator, this bill assumes that you are probably not going to take the position as seriously as we would hope, so we would release that seat to be filled through the appointments process, which this committee knows very well..
 - **Vice Chair Diaz moves to enter roundtable discussion, Senator Pfeuffer-Ferguson seconds.**
 - Roundtable Discussion:
 - Vice Chair Diaz: I like this bill and its intent. I just have slight concerns that if someone may have a medical reason or other reasonable excuse for why they cannot take their seat, that this bill would force them out a seat they were duly elected to under circumstances that might not be fair. Do the sponsors have any concerns about that or is there anything the sponsors would like to amend as it relates to the bill text? What's your response to that?
 - Chair DuChêne: I understand where the concern comes from. I share it – it's an extreme circumstance, but of course, extreme circumstances can happen. If an amendment is brought up to require due notice of correspondence or something like that, I may find that friendly.
 - Senator Pfeuffer-Ferguson: We can have a mechanism through which we can waive the rules – maybe the person will reach out.
 - Chair DuChêne: I, and the primary sponsor, Senator Wang, would be open to an amendment to provide due notice or informing the Senate of their circumstances. If you're missing 3 Senate meetings, those are meetings that the Senate can waive the rule on your behalf. I don't know what the best amendment would be to close this loophole.
 - Senator Pfeuffer-Ferguson: I think we could add a provision to just waive the rules if they reach out to the Senate President or Pro Tempore.
 - Vice Chair Diaz: As a counter-proposal, I think we could make the vacating of the seat subject to a 2/3 vote of the Senate and/or the Rules committee. How would you feel about that?
 - Chair DuChêne: I am not the primary sponsor, though they sit on the Judiciary committee. As a general sense of the primary

sponsor, I think they may be friendly to a Rules committee vote, but pushing it to the full Senate is pretty extreme or unnecessary. If the Senator has not come to Inauguration or 3 Senate meetings, it means that no one in the Senate has ever seen them or may not even know them. Maybe including the Rules committee is fine. I think it may be preferred to simply stipulate that the seat become vacant if the senator has not provided proper notice of why they have not taken their seat. If you put up a smart amendment, I'll find it friendly, and Judiciary can look at it further.

- Senator Suarez: I like this bill and I think that it does open up a way for people who may not want to serve in Senate, or who didn't know what they were signing up for, to have their seat freed up. I think it's a good bill and in the most recent fall election, there were several senators not showing up to inauguration or their meetings. I do like this bill and will be in full support and allows people who really want to serve, to fill a vacant seat.
- **Vice Chair Diaz moves to amend, Chair Russell seconds. Chair DuChêne does not find amendment friendly, Vice Chair Diaz withdraws.**
 - Vice Chair Diaz: I would like to add the words "subject to a 2/3 vote of the Rules committee" after the word "appointment."
 - Chair DuChêne: After speaking with the primary sponsor, the amendment is not friendly.
 - Vice Chair Diaz: For the sake of time and knowing that the primary sponsor is in Judiciary, I am fine with withdrawing and passing the bill as-is, and having these conversations in the next committee.
- Back in Roundtable Discussion:
 - Senator Pfeuffer-Ferguson: How do you think this will impact summer Senate sessions for those senators?
 - Chair DuChêne: A senator who is elected in the spring and does not indicate whether or not they will be taking a summer leave of absence may have their seat vacated if they do not show up for summer Senate. There is ample opportunity, however, to communicate with leadership or show up to one of the first 3 Senate meetings after inauguration.
- **Senator Pfeuffer-Ferguson moves to call the question; Senator Suarez seconds**
- Closing Statement:
 - Chair DuChêne: Thank you, IA! I support the sentiments of this bill and I encourage you to bring up the concerns you have with this bill in Judiciary tomorrow as a guest or on the Senate floor. Freeing up these seats to encourage active participation makes the Senate a more open place for those wanting to get involved, and it's a positive thing.
- Vote:
 - Yes: 10 – Senators Russell, Suarez, Hautrive, Barberis, Downing, Drackley, Pfeuffer-Ferguson, Wells, Williams, Vice Chair Diaz
 - No: 0
 - Abstain: 1 – Senator Lessard (presiding)
- **RESULT: BILL #41 PASSES**

Senator Lessard relinquishes the Chair back to Chair Russell.

Unfinished Business:

- None

Closing Announcements:

- Chair Russell: To our terming-out senators: Thank you, Senator Lessard for always coming and participating, and for never being afraid to cause some drama in the Senate chambers. Thank you for your dedication to the Senate even after switching colleges – it's really important that each college is represented. To Senator Pfeuffer-Ferguson, one of my best friends, I'm so lucky to know you and to get to work with you in all the ways that I do. I love you both (including former President Harmon). You, like Senator Lessard, are not afraid to say anything about anyone that comes through IA or Senate, and I admire that. We need more free thinkers like the both of you. I never thought I'd be a chair in Senate, but here I am – it's been amazing to get to stay in IA for a year-and-a-half now and finally be Chair. Thank you for being such a great committee and for giving me grace in this role.
- Senator Pfeuffer-Ferguson: It's our plan for this to be one of Chair Russell's last committee meetings, so if you've seen the calendar for tonight and plan on showing up, look at the names for the Hall of Fame resolutions – she's one of them. It requires a 2/3 vote to be adopted. She's one of the first IA chairs to have done her job with bureau review in a long time. Please show up tonight and feel free to support that resolution for a hardworking senator such as Chair Russell.
- Senator Lessard: I've served on every Senate committee since Budget, and I will say that IA was my favorite. This has been a really fun time, and it is still my favorite and it's been a fun time. It feels sad to be leaving Senate, but it has been fun serving with you all. I will be back in the fall, so maybe see you in the 75th Senate! I can't wait to watch you all do great things.
- Vice Chair Diaz: I also wanted to commend Chair Russell for everything and for her leadership and amazing stewardship of this committee – I hope to see her come back after inauguration as our chair for however long she stays here.
- Chair Russell: Please show up to special session tonight to see me be Pro Temp tonight!

Next Meeting: Upon call of the chair, refer to SGA website.

Adjourned: 7:01pm



Signature of Chair Samuel Diaz
Signed April 13, 2022