



## 74<sup>th</sup> Student Senate Finance Committee

June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 7:00 PM | <https://fsu.zoom.us/j/91599943939>

### Call to Order: 7:01 PM

**Members Present:** Chair Garner, Vice-Chair Marting, Senator Sabo, Senator Kaminsky, Senator Rivera, Senator Reilly

**Members Tardy:** Senator Pedraja

**Members Absent:**

**Guests:** President Diaz, Chair Rowan, Senator Folwell

### Approval of the Minutes

- Vice Chair Marting moves to approve the minutes from the previous meeting; Senator Rivera seconds

### Land Acknowledgement

- Chair Garner: 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 Garner: For some people this is their first time in committee, or vice chairing, this is a learning lab experience, if you have any questions feel free to ask me or put them in the chat.

### Committee Business:

- Bill 52

### Old Business:

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## New Business:

- **Bill 52 - Sponsored by Senator Rowan**

- Opening Statement:

- I'm happy this is the only bill on your agenda, it's an odd one. We really have three main mechanisms with how we allocate money in SGA. We have the budget that is given to us by the state. We have the system that deals with the leftovers. In the fall we set up a sweeping committee for this. This committee redistributes the money to RSOs on campus, like SGA. Lastly, we have the Central Reserves. The Central Reserves gets its money from a financial estimate of campus activity. This estimate is based off how many credit hours will be taken for the following year. Last year, that estimate was \$14,600,000. If we collect more than that, the extra bit of money goes to the Central Reserves account. This account is supposed to always keep a minimum of \$500,000. If there's too much money, we can reallocate it. Currently we have just a one-line statute, 14.2, which is the only thing governing Central Reserves. Previously, they allocated about \$1,200,000. Of this, about \$1,000,000 to the Union and \$200,000 to RSOs. Due to this, Amy Hecht did a line-item veto. This veto led to a lot of confrontations between senate and the University. In the end, Dr. Hecht backed down. Simply, we have a lot of money that needs to get spent in the fall, but don't have an official process. The intention of this bill is to put a formal process in place. I sent this bill to Dr. Hecht and have received no response back. After giving a weeks' notice I intend to move forward with this bill. In addition, there is wording stating, "The committee shall be comprised of Two (2) senators elected from each standing committee (except the Rules Committee), Three (3) students selected by the Vice President for Student Affairs...". There's no need for us to include this language when she's made it clear she does not want to engage in this. *Time Expires*

- Technical Non-Debatable Questions:

- Vice Chair Marting: When did you begin writing this bill?
- Chair Rowan: I sent it in last Monday night and sent the email to Dr. Hecht's office Tuesday morning.
- Chair Garner: Was anyone else from her office CC'd?
- Chair Rowan: No, we traditionally send it just to her and usually get a response or even an acknowledgement.

- **Vice Chair Marting moves to enter roundtable discussion; Senator Sabo seconds**

- Round-Table Discussion:

- Vice Chair Marting: I feel like there is no need to rush the process, we still have a lot of time left in the summer session until the Fall.
- Chair Rowan: I intended to table this discussion, there are two reasons why I haven't. There's been no communication back about it, also when it comes to finance code, for changes you need to get them in before the start of the fiscal year. And the start of the new fiscal year is July 1<sup>st</sup>. Because of some aspects of this bill, there are some changes to finance code. They're not going to kill the bill, if they don't get in in time, but I'd like to get those in before the start of the new fiscal year.
- Chair Garner: If you could, please explain to me very briefly how exactly this is changing the structure in which how we initiate Central Reserves.

- Chair Rowan: I will try to be brief. As the bill stands right now, not including the change I'd like to see made to it by this committee, it puts forward a real setup as to who can call the committee to open. Now it can be either the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Student Senate President, or a majority vote of the Senate. The other main change is now instead of throwing all the surplus money into Central Reserves, we can only put up to \$250,000 per fiscal year. So, all that money doesn't just sit there and we can throw more into sweeping where we regularly use it for RSO's and FSU entities. Before this change that I'm asking for, it also includes three members appointed from the Vice President of Student Affairs. And because of the setup of the fund, this also includes a \$600,000 limit, where it says once you hit \$600,000 in the account, we need to have the committee. Sweepings doesn't have that because it's supposed to take the account down to \$0. Central Reserves can't do that, we must keep the account at \$500,000 at all times.
- Chair Garner: What is the current balance of Central Reserves?
- Chair Rowan: There was \$1,700,000 last summer. I believe about \$400,000, don't quote me. There is a bill on the 73<sup>rd</sup> Senate's page that moves \$400,000 out of it to cover budget issues with the Union. The budget committee couldn't make the numbers work so they had to pull a little bit out of Central Reserves to make it work. It's at least \$1,300,000 in the account plus whatever overages we had the past fiscal year in enrollment. Of that we can use at least \$800,000 of that, if not more.
- Chair Garner: There is no statutory obligation to use whatever is over this \$600,000, we can choose not to spend anything? Yes?
- Chair Rowan: Yes, theoretically we could right now sit on our hands with the account being at, let's just say for the sake of the argument, \$1,300,000. We can sit on our hands and leave it at \$1,300,000 but simply as a point of debate, that's \$800,000 that we're letting sit there with no real need for it to be sitting there. When it could go to things like RSOs, furnishing the Union, ect...
- Vice Chair Marting: So basically, the point is to take the money that is sitting around and actually start allocating it to organizations?
- Chair Rowan: Yes, so that's just the normal mission behind Central Reserves. The problem is it's never been put down in writing and that causes a lot of problems in the last time we opened the committee because there were conflicting interpretations about what this committee is there to do. Senate was in the position that this money was to help all parts of campus. So that included the Union as well as RSOs and other FSU entities. While Dr. Hecht took the opinion, this is a harsh way of putting it but it's the truth, basically that it's a slush fund that would be only used on the Union. In her veto it was clearly stated that all the money that she vetoed she expected the Senate to come right back and go back to the Union. The Senate very quickly said no thanks.
- Chair Garner: So, if you could clarify for me, does this bill reoutline what she has jurisdiction of when it comes to veto?
- Chair Rowan: No, that's not something that we can touch. Her veto comes from two places, especially when it comes to money bills. So, place one, I believe is chapter 4.02. It's about the bill approval process, the Vice President of Student Affairs has veto power over bills should the Student Body President sign it, or if the Student Body President vetoes it.

If the Vice President of Student Affairs vetoes it, then it's done. The veto can't be overridden. The thing with money bills and specifically Central Reserves where they have a hitch, was that in Florida Statutes, and the statutes that set up Student Government and activity on campus, there is a provision that gives the University President 10 days after the passage of any budget bills which the University has interpreted to mean be any money bills, where the University President has a line item veto for those budget bills. This was of course when President Thrasher here, and President Thrasher had signed a power of attorney, basically saying Dr. Hecht, you have control over everything in your domain, and the powers that I have, relating to DSA's work I give to you. Which included that line-item veto power.

- Chair Garner: If this bill passes out of committee and is approved by the full Senate do you have reason to believe Dr. Hecht would veto it?
- Chair Rowan: I don't have reason to believe that she would veto it. I don't think there is reason here to veto it. Because I don't think we're changing much. We are putting in necessary guardrails, one of the guardrails being 421.1B, that point about if the excess is over \$250,000 then the rest goes into sweeping, because there have been accusations in the past that the estimates have been artificially lowered in order to move more money to Central Reserves, which is then earmarked as a Union fund. The other guardrail is D4, no entity may request more than 50% of the total funds available for distribution. That's another guardrail that I think is important. What happened last time is Central Reserves opened with \$1,200,000 to spend, and the Union opened with a request for \$1,300,000. They asked for more than 100% of the funds that the committee had to spend, and the committee said no, and cut them down to a little over 80% of the total funds of the committee. That's another guardrail that I think is important. Also, the full requirement of three quotes. Especially when FSU entities like to come to us to ask for money, they don't think they need three quotes. If they think that rule is different for them, it's not. They need to come in with three quotes for everything they want unless they physically cannot find three quotes. So, putting that in statutes so that makes sure they are following the exact same regulations we put for everyone else. If everyone else is required to give us three quotes, so should they.
- Chair Garner: Is there an intention by yourself to open central reserves this Fall?
- Chair Rowan: I would like to see it open this Fall. Now granted my ability to effect that change will not be there in the fall, I will be hopefully back as the Senates Parliamentarian, so I will not be able to have a vote on opening up the Central Reserves committee. But I would like to see the Central Reserves Committee opened. After the debacle with Dr. Hecht, there was kind of an informal arrangement where the Senate and Dr. Hecht agreed that we wouldn't touch the Central Reserves account until after the Union opened. So the Senate can see what the Union looks like and see if they want to give any money to specific projects within it. I would like to see it open in the Fall, but that's contingent on is the Union actually opens in the Fall.
- Chair Rowan: I would also like to make a point of clarification reupping what I said in opening, that I would be very friendly to an amendment

striking the three students appointed by the Vice President of Student Affairs if the committee so wishes.

- Vice Chair Marting: What is the benefit of proposing that amendment?
- Chair Rowan: I think that we should be taking the approach of, we talk a lot about how senators need to communicate. This is a two-way street. There needs to be communication on both sides, and if the VPSA doesn't want to engage in the process of what I think is a very needed change here, and a needed formal clarification of our process, then I don't think there's any need to give the office any special treatment. What that line is now is special treatment. I'm okay with it if there was engagement in the process, but there hasn't been. The senate shouldn't be rewarding that failure to communicate.
- Chair Garner: Where is that located in the Bill?
- Chair Rowan: It's line B2.
- Chair Garner: And you were looking to an amendment to the effect of what exactly?
- Chair Rowan: To strike the subsection.
- Vice Chair Marting: I don't think we should strike it, I think that it is a good point, if they are not going to communicate with us then why should we, but someone's got to make the first move so why not try and at least play nice?
- Chair Garner: I'm on the same approach as Vice Chair Marting, I have a sneaking suspicion that Dr. Hecht will not find some parts friendly, so I think that could be an area in which she's like, okay others may be able to influence Central Reserves better than previous, but you know, I can still have three students. I would like for it to stay. I'm not sure if anyone else would like to make a motion to that effect.
- Vice Chair Marting: Just a random question, if some makes a motion to something you don't agree with, what's the correct process? Is it just an objection?
- Chair Rowan: Yes, the proper thing to do procedurally is to object to the motion. The chair will ask for the second and say, are there any objections. If you object, if they don't withdrawal, there is debate on whatever the motion was, unless it's non-debatable.
- Vice Chair Marting: Thank you.
- **Vice Chair Marting moves to call the question; Senator Rivera seconds**
- Closing Statement:
  - Time Expired in Opening Statement

Vote:

- Yes: (5) Vice Chair Marting, Senator Sabo, Senator Kaminsky, Senator Rivera, Senator Realilly
- No: (0)
- Abstain: (0)
- **RESULT: BILL 52 PASSES**

**Unfinished Business:**

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**Closing Announcements:**

- Chair Garner: This is only my second time chairing the Senate Finance Committee and will most likely be my last time. I am up for nomination in the cabinet. I'll have to step

away from Senate unfortunately. But that doesn't mean all of you can't rely on me for advice, or if you just want to get lunch at the Sweet Shop, I'm always down for that. Obviously, there will be new elections chair and vice chair. I would encourage all of you to become as involved as possible. Whatever you put into Senate is definitely what you're going to get out of it. Although I've only been in Senate since October of last year, I've definitely gained a lot from the experience.

- President Diaz: I just wanted to stop in and say hi! That was a great meeting, that's a classic example of what should be happening in committee meetings. You guys asked a lot of good questions, there was even an amendment, can't recall if it passed. Having great conversations is what the Senate should be doing in these committee meetings. Congratulations to Chair Garner on being nominated, I know you will do great work if confirmed to the executive branch. I just wanted to say, job well done chairing this meeting and being a great member of finance.
- Vice Chair Marting: I thought today went really well just for having a few new guys, and thanks for working with me in the things I screwed up on a little bit!
- Chair Rowan: First of all, come out to IA tomorrow night, watch Chair Garner get roasted by our committee. Come with the hardest questions you can, the most personally invasive possible, leave no stone unturned I want to know this mans life story. I'm kidding, I truly don't. As a reminder, next Wednesday the board of trustees will be meeting to hear the proposed parking regulations. Please come out to speak against it, I will try to be there, I have some stuff going on. Also, there is a poll on the MYFSU page put together by the Student Body President asking people what their thoughts are on the parking amendment. Please go vote that you hate it and tell all your friends to go vote that they hate it. Because we need to show as much as possible how terrible this plan is for the student body, and that no matter what context that they try to bring in it's still a terrible idea.
- Senator Kaminsky: I don't know if we should be telling people how to vote on things.
- Chair Rowan: I suggest it.
- Chair Garner: This is the best committee there is, you can make it as fun as you want to. Spend that money! Spend that money!

**Next Meeting:** TBD

**Adjourned:** 7:36PM

*Joshua Marting*

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**Signature of Chair Marting**