

**UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE
GENERAL MEETING AGENDA**

March 1, 2021 6:30 P.M.

Zoom

<https://oklahoma.zoom.us/j/94328421969?pwd=OTlCRkRlRVNlQTEvU2tCQUUzZUINUT09>

Call to Order: 7:01 pm

Approval of the Minutes: Senator Linsey (7), seconded by Senator Walton (85)

Officer Reports:

- Chair: nothing to report
- Vice-Chair: nothing to report
- Secretary: nothing to report

Committee Reports:

- Academic Affairs: We set our timeline for evaluating outstanding graduate student awards.
- Development & Philanthropy: We're discussing student access to pandemic related resources.
- External Affairs: We finalized our survey regarding adherence to Covid policies and we will be distributing it through public relations soon.
- Human Diversity: We developed a plan to do a mini conference kind of talk and shared resources we found over the last couple weeks.
- Internal Affairs: We're going to see the revised senate elections and selections act, and we're going to need a friendly amendment.
- Public Relations: nothing to report
- Sustainability: We're discussing planning green week
- Ways and Means: The spring grants deadlines are March 19th, 5 pm. The procedures are the same and the main difference will be allowing electronic signatures. We'll be distributing a leaflet to discuss this more. The grading session will be on the 20th. The info session will be after the general meeting on the 7th.

Special Orders:

Old Business:

Motion to move old business to the floor Senator Cone (13) and seconded by Senator Woodward (11)

- GS21-09 An Act Appointing the Chief of Staff of the Executive Branch of 2021
 - Motion to move GS21 -09 to floor by Senator Reynolds (98), seconded by Senator Woodworth's proxy Kellen Lawson (108)
 - Authors Tavana Farzaneh (SGA President) and Alex Gray (SGA Vice President): The purpose of this act shall be to appoint the Chief of Staff of the Farzaneh-Gray Administration within the Executive Branch
 - Yields time for question
 - Senator Mallick (119): Were there interviews for the candidate?
 - Author: No, this was an appointed position by me.
 - Senator Linsey (7): Motion to pass by unanimous consent.

- Seconded by Senator Mallick (119)
- No objections
- Motion passes
- GS21-10 No Spring Break, But Here's an Election Act of 2021
 - Motion to move GS21-10 to floor by Senator Linsey (7), seconded by Senator Reynolds (98)
 - Authors Foster Hillis (Congressional Administration Committee Chair) and Coy Taylor (Congress Associate): The purpose of this act shall be to provide for a Spring Election date, after the OU Administration's cancelation of Spring Break
 - Yields time for question
 - Asks for friendly amendment to move the dates back a week due to the winter storm.
 - Senator Mallick (119): I would like to make that friendly amendment.
 - Author: I accept this amendment.
 - Senator Israel (81): You mentioned the election commissioner hasn't been appointed yet. Can you elaborate on the status of this in congress?
 - Author: Yes, Joy is officially appointed, so he moved up from the board to the commissioner, so his old position is open. He will be appointing someone soon to fill that vacancy.
 - Senator Woodward (11): Motion to pass by unanimous consent.
 - Seconded by Senator Al Ramis (103)
 - No objections
 - Motion passes
 - Rewording for friendly amendment:
 - Section 3: The date of the Spring General Election shall be on April 6th and April 7th, 2021; due to OU Administration canceling Spring Break for the Spring of 2021 academic calendar 2, which date is used for the Spring General Election (Code Annotated § Title VI, Chapter 2, Section 9, Subsection B).
 - Section 4: This bill shall allow the Election Commissioner to use April 6th and April 7th, 2021, as the dates of the Spring General Election, and shall use those aforementioned dates for the other timelines as needed in the Code Annotated § Title VI and others.
- Senator Israel (81): Point of information, are we going over the auxiliary bills?
- Melissa: Due to the winter storm, we aren't seeing those until the next meeting.
- GS21-07 Senate Elections and Selections Act
 - Motion to move GS21 -07 to floor by Senator Hamilton (82), seconded by Senator Hunter (70)
 - Author Dayten Israel (Internal Affairs Chair): The purpose of this Act shall be to amend the Bylaws of the Graduate Student Senate to provide revised policies and procedures affecting representation, extending to membership, senatorial terms, and methods of selection
 - Chairwoman Melissa Maxey also presenting
 - Vice Chair Senator Rafia Mallick (119) presiding
 - Yields time for question
 - Senator Hunter (70): Friendly amendment to bring the revised version to the floor.
 - Friendly amendment accepted by Senator Israel (81).
 - Senator Rocha (53): I'd like to extend time for questions by 15 minutes.
 - Senator Mallick (119): We can do that after we exhaust the initial 10 minutes.
 - Senator Rocha (53): I sent you a long-winded email that you didn't really respond to. So, I'm going to mention that now. Why don't we have some sort of training? That's my first question.
 - Senator Israel (81): I got your email. The bylaws have always been presented at orientation. The biggest thing is trying to figure out when's the best time for orientation. This has been difficult during the past year. We do provide a

parliamentarian motion cheat sheet and the bylaws and pretty good about laying out the procedures. But we are working on putting together a more structured package to send out to people. We also get a lot of people entering into the body mid semester which makes coordinating this more difficult.

- Melissa: We did have a basic parliamentarian training at the beginning of last semester. Our advisor has a great presentation I would love for him to give, but attendance doesn't count in the first 2 meetings of the semester, so we didn't want to give it too soon. As far as people coming in mid semester, there's not much we can do about that.
- Senator Israel (81): I know its common practice for many departments to send first year students.
- Senator Rocha (53): Another concern is what it says about eligibility requirements, doesn't that go against FERPA, you accessing my grades? Maybe I misinterpreted that.
- Melissa: We will never see your grades or any of that. In the bylaws, senators have to be in good standing with their department. So, this requests that the graduate contact makes sure their representatives are in good standing, we won't have any info on GPAs or anything like that. We either hear that they are in good standing or not.
- Senator Israel (81): It says it consults with the grad contact, good standing is a 2.0 or higher.
- Melissa: George and Mary already do these checks.
- Senator Waterman (78): How does this parallel current practice in state senate? And part 2, can we please see a problem statement this is addressing, and then as a body can we see if this is a problem worth addressing?
- Senator Israel (81): I won't address the first part of this because I don't see the relevance. This mirrors other aspects of SGA, we're trying to keep it uniform throughout the university. As for the next part, the issue is at its core. There are many voices that are not being represented, and appointments have become the norm.
- Motion to extend question time by Senator Rocha (53). Seconded by Senator Cone (13)
- Senator Waterman (78): Follow up question: I understand the problem as presented. I just wondering if the problem is only in a few departments and we're making a university wide response. I just want to see some empirical evidence.
- Melissa: As chair I do contact each department about if they have representation, and looking at the roster, there's about 20 departments that do not currently have representation. I ask the contacts to please ask graduate students to find a representative or if they want to continue sending the current ones. When the department sends the representative form, they're supposed to show how they were selected but this often doesn't happen. And I've had emails from people asking how they could get involved, and sometimes there department still doesn't have representation for one reason for another.
- Senator Waterman (78): I think it would be helpful to have a motion to see if the body thinks this is an issue.
- Senator Israel (81): I don't think this is a necessary step because GSS leadership may have access to info that the body doesn't. This would just be a foundation to encourage elections so grad students can be voted in by other grad students.
- Senator Cone (13): So, the bill mentions the vacancies and filings will be communicated to the department. How is that communicated?
- Senator Israel (81): Most likely it will be through the graduate contact, and then also an OUMM to all graduate students.

- Senator Rocha (53): In the current bill, it says the sole authority to come up with the date time and methodology is up to the chair. Why are we making more barriers for the departments?
- Senator Israel (81): It's not the senate chair it's the election commission. And this comprises of 6 members of this body's leadership. So, I don't really get the concern. I don't think that these procedures are a hurdle to students or a burden.
- Senator Cone (13): Follow up to the department communications. You said there were multiple methods, but this was up to the commission. Most of my department aren't full time students. Are there contingencies in place to make sure that the communication is still reaching these nontraditional students? And to make sure new students are getting on their dept distribution lists?
- Senator Israel (81): Yeah, I didn't codify any of these methods in the bill for the reasons you just mentioned. That's why its up to the discretion of the commission, and the publicity chair can help reach more students. And now that we have the associateships set up, the commission will have the whole summer to discuss any logistic issues. As for special elections we're notifying the graduate contacts like normal, but this will be more targeted to those particular departments.
- Friendly amendment from Senator Cone (13) that the commission directly contacts the department if they haven't submitted a candidate.
- Senator Israel (81): We do have 1 month following the general election, they can have a special election if they didn't participate in the general. So, do you want before the special, just some more leeway?
- Senator Cone (13): Yeah, that first semester for me I played catch up for a while because I wasn't appointed at the very beginning.
- Senator Israel (81): Because of the 1-month thing, we can have up to 3 orientation periods to account for people coming in.
- Senator Cone (13): So, coming in from a special election, does the department miss the first two meetings and run out of absences?
- Senator Israel (81): So, the first 2 are normally waived, so that would be lost.
- Melissa: The bylaws say they can miss the first 2, and then the wording after is a little vague. We've interpreted it generously. After the first 2 meetings, you can still miss one more each semester with a proxy without consequences.
- Senator Israel (81): And we did discuss getting rid of that 2-week blanket because that's really jut in place to accommodate for the forms and stuff which will already be complete as soon as you finish filling for election. So, the first meeting would be after the general election.
- Melissa: Any bylaws being changed would have to be voted on, just like this.
- Senator Mallick (119): We're really past 15 minutes, we need to either extend time or go into debate.
- Senator Rocha (53): Motion to move it to a debate.
- Senator Israel (81): There's nothing to debate, that's for amendments. We could suspend the rules and have a motion to extend time.
- Senator Waterman (78): Object to debate and ask for a motion to table this and have a committee look at this.
- Senator Israel (81): Now we need a roll call vote about if we want a debate.
- Senator Rocha (53): I revoke my motion to have a debate.
- Senator Chesbro (60): Motion to suspend the rules and extend time by 15 minutes.
- Seconded by Senator Rocha (53)
- Senator Israel (81): So, regarding the absences, that would be dealt with separately.
- Senator Waterman (78): Restating my motion, I would like to make a motion to table the current bill. To look at the actual problem.

- Senator Israel (81): In order to establish a committee, that would be up to Melissa. Or it can go back to its committee, internal affairs.
- Senator Linsey (7): I would suggest making a special committee to review it. If it goes back to the one that made it, it won't let other senators see if this is the best way to address the problem.
- Senator Israel (81): What do you believe is the problem?
- Senator Waterman (78): I don't know it's not clear. And if we can get a committee to look at which departments aren't providing members. So, we could write a 20-page bill, or we can see if those particular departments can send someone. I'm not comfortable with the powers this bill includes.
- Senator Israel (81): So, we can create an ad hoc committee. Explains the steps to do that.
- Senator Waterman (78) makes a motion to create an ad hoc committee, seconded by Senator Rocha (53).
- Senator Israel (81) and Senator Hunter (70) object.
- Senator Israel (81): I think this is a separate issue than what this legislation is addressing.
- Debate:
- Senator Waterman (78) I think there's a lot of good work that's going into this. And we've already heard that some questions are irrelevant. There's no data presented other than people's word. So, the problem seems to be that some departments aren't sending representation, and there may be other ways to do this, but this bill has a lot of buried power, and I don't think all of this is even enforceable. And I'm not saying this to be critical. But I think there's other ways to handle this.
- Senator Rocha (53): The elections would be a popularity contest and newer cohorts may not be able to have a voice. I think there's an accessibility issue. And the elections would be a way to make a carbon copy of ourselves. There's a feasibility issue, we don't all have time to have debates in our departments. I think this is disenfranchising to departments that can't achieve this.
- Rebuttal: Senator Hunter (70): The purpose of this legislation is to encourage elections and not appointments, so it should be getting rid of barriers.
- Senator Israel (81): If a department doesn't participate in a general election they can have a special election. There's nothing about campaigning and there's no additional penalty to not participating beyond what's already happening. We just want to create an electoral system to better serve the student body as this works in other branches of SGA.
- Senator Waterman (78): I agree on the election, I'm concerned about generating a new approach to handling the departments that don't send someone. And I think there are better approaches to engage departments rather than writing legislation that may not have any traction.
- Senator Rocha (53): And if one of your goals is to get publicity for GSS, we can talk to Dr. Rodney Bates to publicize all that were doing.
- Senator Israel (81): I don't think this would add more barriers. I think there are valid suggestions regarding the publicity. But this bill is to address the appointments and volunteerism. And we aren't trying to make massively regulated elections.
- Senator Burch (54): If the concern is about how students are being appointed or selected, I don't think this will resolve this. We can't assume everyone's going to vote, or if grad liaisons want to just appoint someone. I know we're trying to do something similar to congress, but the election concerns and the PR concerns are so interconnected, we can't ignore one without the other.

- Senator Chesbro (60): If there are senators that think this bill is fatally flawed, we should take it to a vote. I think we have 2 sides talking past each other and talking about different points.
- Senator Israel (81): I can see the concerns that are being brought up, but this bill is supposed to be one step of many to overhaul GSS. This is part of the process to update our bylaws. This is just one step to cure the issues.
- Senator Waterman (78): I'll go ahead and retract the motion to make a new committee. And what we just said was this is a PR problem, not legislative.
- Senator Mallick (119): You can't retract the motion.
- Senator Wright (5): I think elections will add stability
- Senator Chesbro (60): I would like to move that we return to the previous question. Seconded by Senator Woodward (11).
- Senator Mallick (119): So, we can go back to the previous question. Do we need a motion to extend time? We had 4 minutes remaining
- Voting on the motion to make an ad hoc committee
 - YES: Senator Rocha (53), Senator Waterman (78), Senator Burch (54), Senator Nabhan (44), Senator Woodworth (108), Senator Covarrubias Vargas (19), Senator Nihad (74), Senator Shpeer (22), Senator Xu (49), Senator Woodward (11), Senator Bonine (107), and Senator Cone (13): TOTAL 12
 - NO: Senator Chesbro (60), Senator Walton (85), Senator Jarvis (39), Senator Hamilton (82), Senator Jones (6), Senator Hunter (70), Senator Israel (81), Senator Milburn (64), Senator Wright (5), Senator Wheaton (43), Mondal (4), Senator Delafield (111), Senator Woods (20), Senator Schwartz (117), Senator Linsey (7), Senator Al Ramis (103), Senator Machette (21), Senator Newcombe (59), Senator Dawson (86), and Senator Hakizimana (3). TOTAL 20
 - ABSTAIN: Senator Jenkin (72), Senator Glidewell (10), Senator Ferraro (120), Senator Black (109), and Senator Mallick (119). TOTAL 5
- The motion does not pass so we go back to the main legislation and we have 4 minutes left.
- Motion to extend time by Senator Chesbro (60).
- Senator Chesbro (60): Point of clarification, can we still use those 4 minutes even if we do not extend time?
- Senator Mallick (119): Point of clarification, can we do a roll call vote on the whole legislation?
- Senator Israel (81): Yeah, someone just has to make a motion.
- Senator Chesbro (60): On the eligibility criteria, it says it is just a 2.0, for my department we need a 3.0 or were on academic probation.
- Melissa: The bylaws specify they have to be good standing in their department, but this is just the lowest standard we are aware of. We just do not want to make it more stringent than any other department.
- Senator Israel (81): If the department has a higher standard that would be the one used. And you can make a friendly amendment to make that clearer.
- Senator Walton (85): I have a question about the election process. Let's say someone files, and no one in the department votes. Then what?
- Senator Israel (81): That is an uncontested election, so we have a requirement for 10% of the department's votes. But the commission can always figure that out case by case when certifying the results.
- Senator Walton (85): I'm asking because the departments I've been in, have low student involvement.

- Senator Israel (81): And we discussed this in the executive committee so that's why it's up to the discretion of the commission. And there's no stability with what we currently have.
- Senator Woodward (11): Why is it 10% of the department and not just the majority of their departments votes?
- Senator Israel (81): I believe that is the requirement is the majority. This is just the minimum of people participating. We can make a friendly amendment about the majority of those who voted/
- Senator Woodward (11): Yes, I'd like to make that.
- Senator Mallick (119): does anyone want to extend time?
- Senator Chesbro (60): I want to make a motion to go to roll call vote on the bill. Seconded by Senator Cone (13).
- Roll call to pass the bill and accept the election system, or no to fail the bill
 - YES: Senator Hunter (70), Senator Glidewell (10), Senator Jones (6), Senator Wright (5), Senator Al Ramis (103), Senator Jarvis (39), Senator Woods (20), Senator Milburn (64), Senator Wheaton (43), Senator Griffith (27), Senator Delafield (111), Senator Hamilton (82), Senator Xu (49), Senator Machette (21), Senator Cilali (67), Senator Walton (85), and Senator Mallick (119). TOTAL 17
 - NO: Senator Waterman (78), Senator Rocha (53), Senator Woodworth (108), Senator Bonine (107), Senator Chesbro (60), Senator Cone (13), Senator Covarrubias Vargas (19), Senator Burch (54), Senator Nabhan (44), Senator Shpeer (22), Senator Woodward (11), Senator Nihad (74), Senator Hakizimana (3), and Senator Dawson (86). TOTAL 14
 - ABSTAIN: Senator Jenkin (72), Senator Newcombe (59), Senator Linsey (7), Senator Ferraro (120), Senator Schwartz (117), Senator Ogbonnaya (104), and Senator Chen (112). TOTAL 7
- This bill did not pass because it did not achieve a 2/3 majority.

New Business:

Announcements:

Senator Israel (81): I would encourage those who raised concerns about involvement, I would encourage you to write a bill to create an ad hoc committee.

Melissa: And if you need help doing that, Senator Israel (81) could help.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Senator Mallick (119), seconded by Senator Israel (81).

Adjournment:

Time: 8:55 PM