



LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

UCF Student Government
Elections & Appointments (E&A) Meeting
Charge on Chamber
05/28/2025

MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to Order: 3:07 PM
2. Roll Call & Verification of Quorum: 8/14 (8)

Name	Email	Initial	Final
Chair Escobar	sga_ea@ucf.edu	P	P
Vice Chair Chau	sgacie1@ucf.edu	E	E
Senator Rodriguez	sgachps4@ucf.edu	P	P
Senator Matthews	sga_sci7@ucf.edu	E (P @ 4:22)	P
Senator Rickett	sga_grst4@ucf.edu	A	A
Senator Roehrkas	sgaecs10@ucf.edu	P	P
Senator Beneche	sga_sci2@ucf.edu	P	P
Senator Kapinos	sga_ba4@ucf.edu	P	P
Senator Candiloro	sga_sci3@ucf.edu	P	P
Senator Trejo-Hernandez	sgaecs13@ucf.edu	P	P
Senator Gaudio	sga_ecs3@ucf.edu	P	P
Senator Metellus	sgaecs8@ucf.edu	E	E
Senator Lipner	sga_ugst1@ucf.edu	E (P@ 3:55)	P

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Chair Escobar: sga_ea@ucf.edu



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Senator Reed	sga_cah2@ucf.edu	E (P@ 4:27)	P
Pro Tempore Representative Hameed	sga_pro@ucf.edu	E (P@ 3:17)	P

3. Approval of the Minutes: [05.22.25](#)
4. Approval of the Agenda:
5. Announcements from the Chair
 - a. Escobar: Good afternoon. We have six confirmations today, so we should be efficient and effective in our questions and debate. I am recommending three questions per person and of course be respectful and germane.
[E&A Questioning Diary](#)
6. Announcements from the Vice Chair
 - a. Chau: Reminder to be germane and ask questions that pertain to their position! Also do not abstain unless there is a conflict of interest.
7. Announcements from Committee Members
 - a. None.
8. Announcements from Non-Committee Members
 - a. None.
9. Old Business
10. New Business
 - a. Confirmations – [Materials](#)
 - i. Director of Student Affairs: Carly Berthiaume
 1. Speech
 - a. Good afternoon! My name is Carly Berthiaume, and I’m incredibly honored to stand before you all today. I believe the work you all do is truly the essential first step of making a positive impact on our Student Body, and I am beyond elated for the opportunity to join you all in that mission. I’m a proud UCF alum, having graduated in 2024 with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Marketing. Today, I’m continuing my journey here as a Master student in Communication, focusing on Corporate Social Responsibility and Business Communication. I also work as the Graduate Coordinator for Student Staff Selection in UCF Housing, where I lead large-scale hiring processes and support our incredible student leaders.

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Outside of work and school, I love playing pickleball, writing, or curating way too many Spotify playlists. During my undergraduate journey here at UCF, I served as an Associate Justice within the Judicial Branch. That experience first introduced me to the impactful work of Student Government, and it's what lit the spark that brings me back today with a passion for the role of Director of Student Affairs. I first chose UCF because of the diversity, innovation, and energy I saw here. But being here for four years has shown me that the student body is more than I ever expected; it's resilient, dynamic, and truly one-of-a-kind. I knew in my first week here that I would be remiss if I hadn't gotten as engaged as humanly possible. Through my time here, I've had the privilege of being deeply involved across campus as an intern with UCF Athletics, an Agent in Student Government, A student leader in Housing and Residence Life, A volunteer at Greek Park Cleanups, and most proudly, a student. Each of these roles has taught me that meaningful change doesn't happen in silos; It happens when you build bridges and listen. That's truly the heart of why I'm pursuing this role. I have witnessed our most active of students, the ones who are front and center at each event, but I have also known what it was like to be one of the more hard-to-reach populations. In this role, I hope to define our department as one that serves all students, from FTICs, to transfers, to the furthest of commuters. It can be easy to fall into the habit of catering to our most accessible groups, but it is my goal to expand our impact beyond this. My three-year background in campus event planning and management will absolutely be put to the test as I look ahead to two of the most cherished traditions here at UCF: Universal Knights and Winter Wonderland. I've had the joy of attending these events every year as a student, and now, with my team, and my firsthand knowledge of what it's like to wait six hours in the sun for theme park tickets, I'm committed to making these experiences even more unforgettable, accessible, and rewarding for every student. I want to build on the strong foundation laid by my predecessor and elevate these events in ways that are both innovative and inclusive. At the core of all this lies teamwork. The Director of Student Affairs has

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the opportunity to oversee five amazing chairs and student leaders who are already doing transformative work. My commitment to them is simple: to show up, to support, and to ask, how can I help you succeed? I want to empower each of them to elevate their voices and their initiatives, and to ensure Student Government is a true reflection of the student body it serves. Thank you all so much for allowing me the space to share my story and vision. It's truly an honor to be here again, and with that, I respectfully yield my time and welcome any questions you may have.

2. Question

- a. Trejo-Hernandez: You mentioned wanting to create a queue for Universal Knights. Have you investigated how you plan on doing this, considering the poor wi-fi on university campus?
 - i. I am a big football fan so I saw firsthand how Ticketmaster can be a mess, so my current plan is through Ticketmaster to release about a week in advance, each day, four different event tickets. What you can do is create multiple ticket types, such as at different times, and what would happen is students would be able to log into Ticketmaster using their student account and not just be able to register but also pick their specific time slot they would enter the queue for to help spread out people entering the queue. This would also set the order for people to receive those tickets and would save people cutting in line or waiting hours to receive their tickets.
- b. Beneche: I understand your role is to foster student participation in events and you mentioned lesser heard students such as transfer students, what about graduate students? How do you plan to cater events for graduate students?
 - i. As a graduate student myself, I do have the privilege of living on main campus, but all of my classes are on Downtown campus, and I believe a lot of graduate students are in a similar boat. Some of the students in these classes are in their 30s-40s and think "This event isn't for me!" and they are, so I believe it starts with the promotion and catering some events to be more suitable for them.

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Remember, some of these students have families or full-time jobs outside of their courses. Their courses are usually from 6 to 9 at night because of this, and we need to cater around that.

- c. Kapinos: I see in your proposal that you wanted to “invigorate memory mall through engagement,” this is something that is really interesting to me. I know that back in the 90s they had a lot of people in Memory Mall as that hub, and so I wanted to know if you could expand on that and some of your ideas.
 - i. That’s where my idea came from, especially compared to now, while you do see people playing volleyball, there is a high barrier to skill. I think a good first step is reoccurring that culture ourselves through events that are accessible and setting up events like canjam or spike-ball, just setting up this culture of “If you don’t have anything to do, walk past Memory Mall because there’s usually something going on there.” We do have to keep in mind the grass there can be a little silly sometime and does need care, so maintenance does need to have attention paid to it, but I think a good starting point is activities saying “We have hammocks! We have spike-ball!” Also, promoting reservation and rental systems where if you don’t have those games, you can go rent them.
 - d. Gaudio: As a graduate student, grad students are focused on research, how do you plan to accommodate for their time commitments?
 - i. It is essential to identify these populations and their needs, ensuring that we have an event that caters to them, students who have research should be catered to by being reached out to for their research possibly a resource fair for their field, segmenting the populations and understanding them as different groups and entities.
 - e. Trejo-Hernandez: MTD
3. Debate
- a. Beneche: So, I will be voting in favor of this candidate, I had the honor of working with the candidate as an RHA and we even

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attended a conference together. I can really see her commitment to campus life and making things successful, I really hope that if this candidate does get confirmed then she will go forward with her proposals. I am a little iffy on the Ticketmaster idea, but otherwise I think she would be a perfect candidate to fill the now-vice president's former shoes.

b. Gaudio: MTV

4. Vote

a. **9-0-0, candidate is approved by E&A**

ii. Academic Affairs Coordinator: Shivani Vakharia

1. Speech

a. Good afternoon, E&A, my name is Shivani, and I'm incredibly honored to be standing before you as the appointee for Academic Affairs Coordinator. I'm a transfer student here at UCF, double majoring in Political Science and Industrial-Organizational Psychology, with aspirations of pursuing a legal career focused on education reformation. At the heart of everything I do-both in and out of the classroom-is a deep and enduring passion for education. For me, education is more than a steppingstone; it's a powerful tool for equity, growth, and transformation. It's the reason I want to pursue law-not only to understand the structures that shape our education system, but to help reform them in ways that ensure every student, regardless of background, has access to meaningful learning opportunities. That passion is what ultimately led me to apply to the role of Academic Affairs Coordinator. I see this position as an opportunity to help students unlock their academic and professional potential, and to help bridge the gap between institutional resources and individual needs. I've had the privilege of supporting students directly as a writing consultant, where I meet one-on-one with peers navigating everything from freshman composition to graduate-level research. These conversations go far beyond grammar and structure-they're about confidence, clarity, and connection. Through this role, I've gained an internal perspective on what students truly need to succeed, and how we, as academic leaders, can better advocate for them. My work is backed by ongoing, semester-long training that has sharpened my ability to

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communicate across learning styles and academic disciplines. In addition to my campus role, I founded Scripted Futures Foundation, a literacy initiative committed to expanding access to books and educational materials in underserved communities. To date, we've collected and donated over 4,000 books, and I've implemented an online cataloging system so donors can transparently track where and how their contributions are making an impact. Leading this nonprofit has taught me that sustainable change doesn't come from one person-it comes from teams who share a vision and are willing to work together to achieve it. Whether in a consulting session or a nonprofit strategy call, I approach every opportunity with the same mindset: to listen carefully, act intentionally, and lead collaboratively. My leadership journey at UCF began with the Student Government Leadership Council, where I gained firsthand insight into how student government operates and the kind of discipline, organization, and communication it demands. That experience led me to the Executive Leadership Council, where I've had the opportunity to shadow and learn from some of UCF's most dedicated and inspiring leaders. These roles taught me how to lead with humility, work across diverse teams, and uphold the values of student representation with integrity. Joining UCF as a transfer student, I know firsthand how important it is to feel supported academically, socially, and emotionally. That perspective continues to shape how I engage with my peers, and why I'm so committed to making academic resources more accessible and effective for every student on this campus. As your appointed Academic Affairs Coordinator, I will work to strengthen our academic community, listen to the concerns of our student body, with reliability, transparency, and heart. Thank you so much for your time and consideration. I now yield my time for further questioning or comments.

2. Question

- a. I had a question about your midterm grade policy, I was wondering how you plan to execute this and how you would approach it if it could not be executed by Fall.

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- i. This policy is actually an initiative from the Administration and that representation on my proposal is how I would aid them in going about that initiative. Of course, given my newly appointed position, it is hard to say how I will go about this exactly. I think it is important for students to have timelines prioritized and that academic success is partially contingent on professor responsiveness.
- b. Trejo-Hernandez: Regarding your AI course creation, how do you plan on going about it?
 - i. The AI training course was an idea I had in regards to mediating the subject of AI with regards to student academic affairs here at UCF, I have come to the understanding that I will have to work with the faculty senate as well as students wanting to give their input on how AI is affecting their academics. For example, prior to including this on my proposal, my former colleague from the Writing Center talked with me about AI and got me thinking about how this is something that should be addressed and the standard on its use here at UCF.
- c. Trejo-Hernandez: How would you consider with all the updates of these platforms that the webcourse stays up to date?
 - i. One of Jarib and Luci's initiatives that I am very excited for would be their revamp of the myUCF webcourses page, and with that I think that working with points of contact I have yet to be introduced to can help get that collaboration going and making sure those updates are constantly kept up with and the initiatives are easily accessible.
- d. Kapinos: I had a quick question on what you think the most pressing academic concerns students might be facing right now are?
 - i. In regard to an academic issue, I would consider UCF's graduation rate to be a pressing matter. I believe that because UCF has so many students, I think that keeping students on track and getting them to graduate on time can be relatively difficult as the number of students in the student body can have problems finding a point of contact

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for them to help create a plan and get them to graduate on time.

e. Gaudio: MTD

3. Debate

a. Gaudio: I will be voting in favor of this candidate, although I do have some concerns with what was said during the speech as well as during questioning, there wasn't really anything hard that was laid down, it was all very "We'll cross that bridge when we get there," and very broad ideas, I'm not sure how much I like that but I don't think it's that big of an issue.

b. Kapinos: I'll be voting in favor of this candidate, I have had the pleasure of working alongside Shivani in SGLC, I've really seen her passion for SG and wanting to get things done in this environment. Looking through her proposal, I think she has a lot of great ideas and while they can come off as ambitious, I think that is the idea that we need to push the boundaries and find new ways to connect with students. The TED nights I think are really clever things I never would've thought of. While she doesn't have all the details, she's listed out countless details about how she plans to go about it.

4. Vote

a. **8-0-0, candidate is approved by E&A**

iii. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator: Noor Alaraj

1. Speech

a. Hello everyone,

b. Thank you for your time this evening, and I'm excited to be standing here in front of you today. My name is Noor Alaraj. I am a rising senior majoring in health sciences on the pre-med track, and I am the appointed diversity equity and inclusion coordinator. As an Arab American of 2 immigrant parents, a visibly Muslim woman, AND the middle child of six, I've spent much of my life searching for a sense of belonging. Growing up, I moved across three different countries. At 16, I began living with my older siblings, which meant navigating life largely on my own. It was scary, overwhelming, and at times, deeply isolating. I've been in rooms where I was the only one who looked like me. Where my name felt unfamiliar. Where I

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felt the need to constantly explain who I was, what I wore, and what I Believed. But those experiences shaped me. They taught me resilience, and they inspired me to create the kind of spaces I once longed for. Spaces where no one feels like they need to shrink themselves to fit in. Spaces where being different isn't just accepted, it's celebrated. When I came to UCF, I felt hopeful. I saw a community that made change feel possible. I joined the Muslim Student Association and served for two years, first as a committee member, engaging with students from all backgrounds at tabling events, and later as Treasurer, where I gained firsthand experience with Student Government. Even within MSA, I met people from a range of cultures and beliefs. That experience sparked a deeper interest in building community beyond just religion or culture. So, I joined KORT (Knights of the Round Table) where I worked one-on-one with students looking to get involved or start new RSOs. I learned that even with over 620 RSOs on campus, many students still felt like they didn't belong, or didn't even know those spaces existed. While I was working as a Knight Quest consultant, I also had the chance to intern with the Biomedical College at UCF in collaboration with AdventHealth. On paper, it was about learning surgical techniques and exploring anatomy—but what really stuck with me was the human side of medicine. I learned how important it is to truly listen to patients, to understand where they're coming from, and to meet them with empathy. That experience helped shape the kind of physician I hope to become—someone who sees the whole person, not just the illness. And I think that mindset would translate perfectly with the role of a DEI coordinator. It's about making sure everyone feels heard, valued, and supported, no matter their background. If selected, I'd bring my empathy, open-mindedness, and a genuine desire to learn and uplift others to everything I do. That's what drives me. That's why I care so deeply about this work. I want to bridge that gap—not just between people and organizations, but between students and their sense of belonging. Everyone deserves to feel like UCF is their home. Like they matter. Like their presence makes a difference. Aside from continuing what the previous DEI coordinators have worked on like

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cultural fusion fest, women's empowerment conference and SG Cactus takeover, if confirmed, these are some things I would like to do. 1. 2. 3. Collaborate with Creative school for children: It's important to recognize that at UCF, being both a student and a parent is not only acknowledged but deeply respected. By supporting spaces like the Creative School for Children, we help student-parents feel seen in every part of their identity—and when people are fully seen, they're empowered to thrive. Say my name is an event that talks about identity. Names are powerful. They carry history, culture, and identity. Yet many are changed or shortened for convenience. "Say My Name" is about reclaiming that space—sharing the meaning, pronunciation, and even phrases that make sense in one's culture but can't be translated to English. It's a step toward deeper respect and understanding. Art has the ability to express what words often fail to capture. Through intersectional art, UCF students can explore layered identities—race, gender, class, ability—and create space for stories that are often unheard. It's not just expression; it's evidence of lived experience, and a call for empathy. And I'll continue to do everything I can to help build a campus community where no one feels like they are too much or not enough. A place where every voice is heard, and every identity is honored. Thank you for listening. I now yield my time.

2. Question

- a. Hameed: About your reflection room expansion, how do you intend on executing this initiative?
 - i. This actually is very important to me, as I mentioned being from the MSA, we do use the Reflection Room a lot and while I noticed that primarily Muslims use it, a lot of people also go there but feel like they do not belong there because they do not see people that look like them or only see Muslim people there, so I want to make sure people know this is a resource for all of them. I do know the SU is going to undergo renovations, so I do want to be in contact with Rick Falco to give him that idea and push for the importance of why we want that expansion and that it is a

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thing we are willing to work on, as well as seeking out suggestions.

- b. Hameed: Could you also elaborate on commuter lounge, it's an idea that's been pursued for a while so how do you plan on executing this?
 - i. This was one of the administration's initiatives, I think the most important thing for us to know is where it could be located? I know the 4th floor of the library is undergoing renovation, so if confirmed, I feel it would be important for us to know what spaces we can use or renovate. I know that it can be difficult right now for me to find spaces we can use, but I believe that advertisement is very important. I do not really use social media myself, but I think marketing is very important through posters, flyers, letting people know especially to commuters that they know about this. Advertising is very important and letting people know this is a resource they can use.
- c. Kapinos: With regards to the "Themed LLC" and working in conjunction with UCF Housing, however as far as I know there are only 4 Living Learning Communities at UCF and all of them are academically based rather than culturally based. I was wondering if there were any strategies to have a more culturally based LLC and to work around the academic communities UCF has focused on in the past?
 - i. I think it is very important to collaborate with the Academic Coordinator, but what I meant in the proposal was more of an "event" rather than a center in collaboration with RAs in communities. What I originally intended on doing was doing an event as its important for everyone to know that UCF has a diverse culture and a lot of people in Housing are from different areas, so the event I was planning on doing was talking about these cultures and talking about them in the housing communities. I think that going to the housing centers and knowing the cultures as they share those space and to help people feel like they belong especially because they not only live but share that space.

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- d. Trejo-Hernandez: How do you plan on working with caucuses and encouraging executive branch to get involved with them?
 - i. I really look forward to working with the caucuses if confirmed, the first thing I would do is reach out to the President & Vice President of the caucuses. There are 10 caucuses, and each one has their own specific element, being very diverse. I think it's very important they know I am a person of contact and available, making sure I go to their meetings. I plan on going bimonthly to their meetings and going there, making sure I support them, if they have any events planned then that I'm there and a set of support. Talking to the cabinet if there's an event we can all go to, as it's important for people to show up and show that support as every caucus works very hard for their communities and I do believe it's part of my role.
 - e. Gaudio: MTD
3. Debate
- a. Gaudio: These sorts of initiatives aren't my cup of tea but this confirmee has a lot of initiatives, I can really tell how much is going on in that head and that she's struggling to put it all into words. One that stuck out to me is the say-my-name one, as someone who does the roll-call for Senate meetings, there are names where I don't know how to say and being able to say them is important. I will absolutely be in favor.
 - b. Rodriguez: As someone who's worked with this appointee before, and how quickly she's taken what she learned in KoRT or these agencies, it takes so much work to do this and so I will say that she is so effective and cannot wait to see how she would do if appointed.
 - c. Kapinos: I also will be voting in favor, I believe she is very qualified. As the others have said, I really like her initiatives and that some of them are smaller, some of them are bigger, and sometimes it does take smaller steps. I think a real change can be made through this, and with that, MTV
4. Vote
- a. **9-0-0, appointee is approved by E&A**

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iv. Sustainability, Wellness, and Innovation Coordinator: Ava Hendricks

1. Speech

- a. Hello, and good evening, Senate. I'd like to begin by thanking you all for your time and allow me to introduce myself. My name is Ava Hendricks; I am a rising senior studying Geoscience and Geographic Information Systems. I am from Venice Florida, the shark tooth capital of the world. When I first told my parents that I wanted to dedicate the rest of my life to environmental stewardship, I don't know if they entirely believed me at first. That was until they were helping me pack my car to move across the country for three months and serve alongside the United States Forest Service, living in a tent while rebuilding six hundred miles of historic scenic trail along the Continental Divide in Colorado. It was during my service in the Southwest branch of the Conservation Corps that I learned the intrinsic value of environmental sustainability and gained an unbeatable work ethic working in the field day in and day out miles from civilization and immersed in our country's natural beauty. I summited mountains, crossed rivers, and ate so many cans of baked beans, and all the while gained invaluable knowledge in invasive management, wildlife ecology, and a plethora of certifications in everything from wilderness first aid to chainsaw felling. Not only did I gain knowledge that will carry me into a lifelong career in environment stewardship, but also practical skills such as the value of teamwork and my own personal leadership style, which I first developed in SGLC and ELC as a freshman. I knew that this kind of grueling work was not for everyone, but that's exactly why it excited me. What I was more excited about was the privilege to bring these skills to my beloved campus back home at the UCF Arboretum. For the last three semesters I believe I have bolstered myself as a keystone member of our Land Management team. Our team of eight students are the sole governing body of the 850 acres of natural land on the UCF campus. The UCF Arboretum has truly become my refuge as well as my workspace, as I complete daily monitoring and maintenance, and share this information through guided tours to our student body as well as the greater Orlando community. Beyond that, I founded

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and acted as President of the Knight's Paleontological Society as well as treasurer for the Herpetological Society, which this previous spring semester earned an impact award for sustainability. What I am most proud of, however, would be my recent acceptance into the UDIE lab, a group of undergraduate researchers studying the effects of urbanization, disease, and invasives on native lizards, snakes, and amphibians. My sustained involvement and close relationship with the Natural Resources team on campus provides me with a unique perspective on my initiatives. namely, my e-waste collection bins. As a campus on the cutting edge of engineering, we produce a significant amount of e-waste, which has a devastating effect when disposed of improperly. Disposable batteries combust in transit to landfills and leach chemicals like lead and mercury when deposited into the earth. Coincidentally, as I was drafting my initial proposal, an Orange County garbage truck caught fire due to combustion of improperly disposed batteries. I would like to not only educate students on the dangers of e-waste but provide a marked collection bin to streamline UCF Environmental Health and Safety's job of collecting electronic waste to properly dispose. Currently, EHS' collection system is appointment based, and I believe a marked bin located in the Student Union, and Engineering Center marked for batteries, printer toner, and even old cell phones would provide a centralized drop off and collection space. As someone pursuing a career in land management, I am all about setting achievable goals for myself if appointed to this position. Three goals I will hold myself to for the duration of the year are the removal of at least 5 of our most invasive plant species on campus, massively crack down on the use of plastic confetti in our wetlands and renew interest and passion in the UCF Prescribed Burn team. I'd be happy to answer any additional questions the Senate may have regarding these three goals. I will take ANY chance I get to discuss the necessity of prescribed burns in our natural lands. As someone who works 3 invasive removal shifts a week through my Arboretum internship, I can confidently say that through proper allocation of volunteer shifts open to the student body, I will see the complete removal of these invasive plants by the end of my term. I would work

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feverishly to expand the ecofetti program, making it more accessible through on-site pickup stations, but also by posting increased signage and even an art installation using recycled confetti collected from the cypress dome. A fundamental edict in sustainability, wellness, and innovation is collaboration. If appointed I intend to work hand in hand with the sustainability caucus to truly bolster UCF as a campus which considers our environmental impact before anything else. I would work with our safety and transportation coordinator to revamp The Pegasus Express, our intra-campus shuttle to reduce on campus traffic and gas consumption, side- walk bike lanes, as well as provide mid- day programming more accessible to commuter students. Finally, I would work with our Diversity Equity and Inclusion board to further the importance of wellness to marginalized communities that may have disproportionate access to lifesaving therapeutic treatment through CAPS. With access to some of the most beautiful living laboratory and green space in the country, I hope to see our campus rise to be a leader in sustainability, fostering an air of connectivity between our massive and diverse student population, with my appointment as Sustainability and innovation coordinator. Thank you, I yield my time.

2. Question

- a. Hameed: Can you explain more on your animal-resistant trash can initiative and how you plan to implement it?
 - i. Our nature pavilion is currently the only place on campus with animal-resistant trash cans. They're pretty easy to use, but animals without opposable thumbs can't use them. I think a lot of issues with our wildlife population happens near the Cypress Dome particularly with our raccoons, so I believe that this initiative would discourage the socialization with animals on campus.
- b. Kapinos: With regards to the e-waste disposals, I was wondering if you had any ideas of expanding trash can availability into other parts of campuses, particularly in the garages?
 - i. As campus continues to grow, our trash receptacles must also grow. I believe that with more regular maintenance and

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having more trash cans near the garages would help support that. I believe our trash and e-waste situations are ones I would love to expand on once I can consider budget.

c. Lipner: I was curious to know where your priorities would lie in regard to certain initiatives.

i. I believe a lot of my initiatives such as invasive removal can be done without money but rather through collaboration, as we already have volunteers at the arboretum. It also fosters an air of connectivity and lets students meet a tangible goal to be proud of, so I believe that my budget would be put towards the trash can installation and e-waste disposal.

d. Lipner: MTD

3. Debate

a. Lipner: If you don't know me, I was the former chair of the Sustainability Caucus and I am a huge fan of this candidate. I believe this candidate has every qualification and I think that this individual has no reason to be said no to. MTV

4. Vote

10-0-0, appointee is approved by E&A

v. Digital Media Coordinator: Gabriella Parra

1. Speech

a. Good afternoon, E&A committee. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to be able to speak with you all today. My name is Gabriella Parra, I am a proud south Florida from Weston Florida, and I am honored to have been appointed as the Digital Media Coordinator for the upcoming school year under the Blanco-Benitez administration. I am a rising sophomore majoring in Media Production and Management on the Sports track and a minor in Event Management. The Media has always been a central part of my life. Due to my family being part of the Latin American television industry and growing up around sets with cameras, producers, directors, talent, and even an audience made me develop a deeper appreciation for storytelling and behind the scenes production. This early exposure inspired me to pursue content creation professionally and has shaped the path I am on today. In

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high school, I joined the TV Production program at my school where I was able to create weekly news packages and competed in many national competitions with one of our projects even receiving an Emmy nomination. That experience helped me build technical skills in editing, camera operation, lighting, and sound, while also learning how to collaborate with a diverse team and learn how to meet tight deadlines. I also served as the Director of Communications for the Interior Design Club and Marketing Manager for Latinos in Action, where I managed communications and created engaging social media content to keep members not only informed but also involved. When I arrived at UCF, I knew I wanted to stay involved in my community. Joining the Student Government Leadership Council (SGLC) allowed me to do just that. I was elected as External Vice Chair for the SGLC Marketing Committee, where I created visual content, took event photos, and helped coordinate communication efforts. Later, I joined the Executive Leadership Council (ELC), where I deepened my understanding of how the executive branch operates and Student Government functions as a whole. Based on these experiences, I've developed several initiatives that I believe will enhance outreach and student engagement. One is to ensure that students without social media still receive important updates. Through a dedicated section on myUCF where we could update on a weekly basis on the events Sg would be holding. I also plan to use Instagram Live during these events to give students realtime access to what is happening on campus and encourage participation. Another plan I hope to peruse, once appointed, is to be able to create hype videos for the reoccurring events that happen throughout the year. I believe that having a visual representation with captions will boost the student body's attendance and help create an understanding of our missions and goals. If confirmed, I will be committed to highlighting all branches of Student Government through consistent, high-quality content and establishing monthly check-ins with each branch to align our media goals and maintain communication. I also plan to be the right-hand man to our director of communication and graphic design coordinator to make sure that

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the division can be the best of its ability and meet our expectations. Video production and photography are more than just passions for me. They are the foundation of my career and the lens through which I hope to tell meaningful stories. With the skills I've developed, the leadership I've demonstrated, and a deep commitment to elevating student voices, I am ready to serve as a dynamic and driven Digital Media Coordinator. I'm not just here to create content, but to build connection, boost visibility, and showcase the incredible impact our organization has on campus life. I look forward to the opportunity to turn that vision into reality. Thank you so much for having me today, I now yield my time.

2. Question

- a. Gaudio: Do you have a prior professional relation with the current Director of Communications?
 - i. I have not, but I have gotten to know him and am super excited to work with him and develop that relationship with open-door communication. That communication should be our strength, and I am looking forward to working with him.
- b. Lipner: What are the expectations for this position in your words?
 - i. I believe the expectations are to build a visual representation of what SG and put it out to the student body, be it through the videos I mentioned, it's that middle ground between the student body and our organization so that we can really come together and have the best of our ability to go out there and communicate with them.
- c. Lipner: If you are seeing a dip in attendance or engagement on your posts, what are some things you would do to resolve this or get that engagement back?
 - i. I believe that doing research and really seeing on other social media platforms what they're doing to get that engagement with the student body. In past projects, I had to come up with ideas on projects where I would need to do that research, I believe going through the statistics to see what has worked in the past and what may work in the future is really important.

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- d. Lipner: What are your opinions on AI personally and how do you plan on using it if confirmed?
 - i. My opinion on AI is very neutral in that I plan on using it for captions to aid in time management. While we do have to go through it to make sure it's not mistranslated, I do not see it for the negative side of how it may be used.
- e. Lipner: MTD
- 3. Debate
 - a. Lipner: I will be honest, I am torn on this, I want to hear your thoughts and opinions. I was quite frankly disappointed with what I saw in the portfolio as there were a lot of AI-generated captions on videos already shot and lacked that professional touch I'm looking for. On the other hand, I do think this candidate has the potential. A portfolio is a candidate's best work, and if this is their best work, I am a bit concerned but would like to hear more.
 - b. Kapinos: In terms of this candidate, I think she is very qualified, I have had the honor of being in the same SGLC class as her and to see her dedication in a group setting. She had to put together the end-of-year video with a bunch of other people, and as the Vice Chair of the Marketing Committee I know that must have been a lot of work, but to see those videos I think this candidate has a lot of great potential as seen in the shots she has filmed. Even though there may be some videos that are a little worse in her portfolio, I think she definitely has the qualities needed to fulfill this role.
 - c. Gaudio: I am personally of the opinion that this is a role that can be grown into and even if there is concern about the initial foot that's being put forward, I think that making sure that if this candidate is confirmed that they really match up with those expectations would be more an expectation for the Director of Communications in my opinion so while I do hear the concerns, I am of the opinion that I won't give too much thought to them.
 - d. Hameed: MTV
- 4. Vote
 - a. 10-0-0, appointee is approved by E&A
- vi. Attorney General: Jorge Altuna
 - 1. Speech

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- a. Good afternoon, Chair Escobar, Vice Chair Chau, and members of the Elections and Appointments Committee, thank you for allowing me to appear before you again. Last week, you challenged me, and so I went back to the statutes. I spent time reviewing Robert's Rules of Order, 12th Edition. And I reflected—not just on what you said, but also on how to strengthen my approach. Let me begin by rearming my view of the role. The Attorney General doesn't campaign. Doesn't advocate. Doesn't chase headlines. This role isn't about pushing a vision—it's about upholding structure. And that's exactly how I intend to serve. I'm not coming in with an agenda. I'm coming in with discipline. I'm asking for responsibility and accountability. If confirmed, the priority I am most eager to launch is accessible Sunshine Law training for SG agents, in partnership with the Office of the General Counsel, Student Legal Services, the Florida Ethics Institute, and community legal professionals. As part of my commitment to serve this office with clarity and ethical responsibility, I have already enrolled myself in the Florida Ethics & Open Government Master Class offered by the Florida Ethics Institute. This course satisfies the state's official ethics training requirement, and I will be certified for the 2025-2026 school year under the Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees. Public notice, open meetings, records access—these aren't minor details. They're the backbone of a transparent government. I will make sure we follow them, teach them, and publish clear accessible guidelines. I will also complete training through the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity and consistently meet the statutory requirement of updating the SG Statutes within five business days of receiving legislation codified by you. Because that's what this office should be about: making sure that people know the rules—and that the rules are applied fairly. Now, I understand that impartiality is more than a promise—it must be a pattern. So, allow me to explain my record: When I served as Student Advisor to the Broward County School Board, I regularly engaged with confidential, high-stakes cases, dealing with expulsions, closed-door budget conversations, and safety protocols. I never inserted my personal opinion. I followed my fiduciary duty.

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I represented the student body of the sixth-largest school district in the nation with discretion, neutrality, and care. That same commitment applies directly to the responsibilities of the Attorney General and Judicial Advisor. The ability to support a student—often in a vulnerable moment—requires deep respect for confidentiality. I have lived that responsibility, and I’m prepared to carry it into this office. As an Orientation Leader, I guided hundreds of students and families through Title IX, FERPA, and student conduct policies. I served as a mandated reporter and helped students navigate their rights—and their 1st interaction with our beloved campus. That’s what the Judicial Advisor must do: meet students where they are, provide clarity when the system feels overwhelming, and stand beside them when it matters most. As a Legislative Scholar, I spent the last semester in Tallahassee writing weekly nonpartisan, statutory, and objective reports for the Orange County Commission and Mayor. I tracked legislation, analyzed amendments, and evaluated statutory impacts—not through a personal lens, but through the lens of the local government that encompasses our main campus. That experience taught me how to interpret statutes, remain impartial, and communicate clearly with decision-makers. This is exactly what the Attorney General and Judicial Advisor must do. I’ve already practiced separating personal beliefs from institutional responsibility. I know how to take emotion out of the equation, work under pressure, and provide objective, accurate guidance. I don’t just understand how to do the work—I’ve done it all throughout my professional and educational career. And now, I stand before you ready to do the same—at an even higher standard. After our last meeting, I didn’t just revise my proposal—I revised my framework. I clarified my priorities. I learned to lead with a sharper focus. This office doesn’t just demand knowledge. It demands judgment. It demands patience. And it demands the ability to step back, stay neutral, and speak with care—even when things get political, tense, or personal. That’s what I’m offering you. And that’s what I will deliver. I can unequivocally promise that I will be someone who listens, learns, and leads with intention. Today, I ask for your vote because I bring not just experience, but also judgment,

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discipline, and a commitment to impartiality. I ask for your trust and support as a vote of confidence—one that I will honor with fairness and clarity. Thank you. I yield the remaining balance of my time and welcome any questions you may have.

2. Question

- a. Gaudio: Hypothetical situation: Say a committee chair wants to meet at another time outside of the set committee time, what steps would the chair have to go through to accomplish that?
 - i. The chair would have to abide by the Sunshine Law and have the meeting posted on the Student Government website 24 hours before as well as what business would be seen at that meeting. The chair would also have to notify the committee and work with their time, as well as get permission from the Senate President.
- b. Reed: How will you ensure you are prepared for reviews?
 - i. I will engage in as much training as possible offered by the Office of Student Conduct & Academic Integrity as well as with the future Chief Justice to ensure I am not only at my best, but that I can rely on my professional experience. I had to advise school boards with regards to situations such as expulsions or disciplinary proceedings which were very specific. I also want to participate in as much cooperative training as possible to really drive home.
- c. Lipner: Seeing as you cannot abstain from any of your positions and must often be the bearer of bad news, how do you plan on doing so without wrecking relationships around you?
 - i. I have had to work on a plethora of teams, be it SLC, on school boards, where I had to deal with sensitive topics or sensitive news to individuals that may have been difficult. My guiding star will always be impartiality and neutrality, not only would I speak to chairs and stakeholders or the judicial council, but also statutorily I am upholding everything in your legislative intent.
- d. Lipner: What would your personal opinions be if someone came to you for off-the-record advising?

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- i. If they would like to formally request my opinion, it would need to be through written request, otherwise they would have to be referred by the Chief Justice or Student Affairs Officer. If someone wanted off-the-record advice, I would refrain from it and be very hesitant to comment on any proceedings due to my own role to play in this.
- e. Rodriguez: You mentioned many trainings that you have done or will be doing, but what have you already done that will help you excel in this role?
 - i. The reason I re-enrolled in that ethics course was because the certification is only good for one year, and so I want to make sure it is valid all throughout my tenure. As a Legislative Scholar, I had to deal with many aspects regarding Sunshine Law as the bodies I had to deal with fell under them, such as the Broward County Schools and refusing to discuss topics that would go in front of the board off the record. I have also taken many courses on ethics and compliance, and as Orientation Leader I had the opportunity to learn more about the Golden Rule and how to interact with tough situations that may arise.
- f. Lipner: How did you use AI to prepare for this hearing and your proposal, and how do you plan on using it if confirmed?
 - i. After our meeting last week, I definitely went back and reviewed the policies on AI. While I am not as versed as I would like, I would like to refer to the Golden Rule before making any claims. I want to make sure that the Golden Rule is upheld and that AI is only used as a tool. I do know UCF is hosting the third annual meeting on use of AI in instruction today, and personally to prepare I used AI to develop mock questions you may ask me today. I would refrain from its use with regards to personal writing or opinions, while I would use resources to help with grammar, I would not use AI for any formatting or documents which may be drafted under my tenure.

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- g. Hameed: Do you have a plan on what you would do, if confirmed, if you had to act as both the Attorney General and the Judicial Advisor had to be a separate person?
 - i. If the role was devolved into another position, I would collaborate with that person to ensure that any questions they may have could be answered. Under Statutes, the Chief Justice is partially involved, and I would be very happy to work with that individual and the Justices.
 - h. Gaudio: I would like to expand on that question. How would you approach a situation where there is a conflict of interest between the Senate and the Executive?
 - i. In the case of a conflict of interest, not only would I bring this up to the Senate, President, and Chief Justice, I would recuse myself from the position of the Judicial Advisor. That role can be devolved elsewhere if needed and would make sure that all of these decisions go through the Chair of the LJR Committee and partners in the Senate to ensure that not only am I in compliance with Statutes but that all of my decisions are collaborative.
 - i. Lipner: Seeing as you have a great background in advocacy, do you have any plans to join caucuses and if so, which?
 - i. I would be very happy to participate and collaborate with any of the caucuses, I would be remiss if I did not say I would refrain from anything that may compromise my impartiality, my identity is a very important part of my life but in order to maintain that professional impartiality when casting an opinion, I would make sure that these biases are removed. If allowed though, I would love to join the Sustainability, LGBTQ, and Latinx Caucuses.
 - j. Trejo-Hernandez: Can you name all of our Statutes and describe what they do?
 - i. He named them all and gave a satisfactory description of each.
3. Debate
- a. Gaudio: I am conflicted and want to hear what everyone else has to say, while the candidate did go and review as he claimed, his

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knowledge definitely seems stronger, he answered that there would need to be consent from the Senate President to move a meeting time, you would not, it is up to the committee, but also there was no mention of Title XII. Title XII goes beyond Sunshine Law, and it is important to remember that we have certain areas where our Statutes go beyond that, and so I question the attention to detail and working knowledge of Statutes in their entirety.

- b. Reed: I want to give a kudos to the candidate for coming back and giving that research, adjusting the proposal, I see that as an admiral trait. With that being said, I think it's very thorough and think that Mr. Altuna did a great job going back, listening to concerns, and reviewing. I think that's a lot to say and that overall based on his experience that he answered the questions thoroughly and expanded further on many things. The fact that he is willing to go in and do training that is not necessary. I will definitely be voting yes as I did the first time, I think he is a great candidate and will continue to expand his knowledge.
 - c. Lipner: I want to echo a lot of what Senator Reed, I do not think we should be holding what happened in the previous hearing against this candidate. I believe he did the necessary work, did the reading, and came out on the other end with the right motives. I would be more concerned with our Student Body President who allowed this candidate to come in with these misunderstandings rather than the candidate himself. I will be voting in favor.
 - d. Hameed: I will be echoing the sentiments of the previous two senators, I think it takes a lot to get denied, take the week to go about concerns, and then come back. I really do appreciate his dedication to being non-biased, especially in this role. I think it will help him a lot, especially in his role as a Legislative Scholar.
 - e. Kapinos: MTV
4. Vote
- a. 11-0-0, appointee is approved by E&A.

11. Member Discussion

- a. None

12. Miscellaneous Business

- a. None

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13. Final Roll Call: 11/14

14. Adjournment: 4:50 PM

Key:

P - Present

A - Absent

MTD - Move to Debate

MTV - Move to Vote

MTA- Move to Amend

PP - Postpone

PPI - Postpone Indefinitely

GC - General Consent

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