

The University of Texas at Tyler

Student Government Association

General Assembly Meeting

Thursday, January 17th, 2023

I.	Call to Order 5:30pm	
II. III.	Roll Call	
111.	Approval of the Minutes Name	Absent
	President Smith	Absent
	Vice President Bennett	
	Secretary Dix Treasurer Luna	
	Chief of Staff Peters	
	Adan Govea Amelia McCain	A (approved)
	Amber McAdams	
	Ashlyn Mattern	
	Bee Black	
	Ben Buchanan	
	JJ Rojas	
	Jorian Khan	A (approved)
	Justin Vargas	
	Kyna Holman	
	Lisa Tran	A (approved)
	Macie Kirkby	
	Maggie Manning	
	McKenna Waller	
	Tanner King	Α
	Valerie McNamara	
	Anayeli Campo	
	Perpetual Kyei	
	Emma Owulebaja	
	Angelina Lezama	
	Ronald Carnes III	
	Erica Santee	
	Macy Reed	
	Alexis Minick	
	Peace Okeke	
	Kelsey Niette	



Emma Harlan		
SaMoan Brown		
Rina Bhatia		
Shelby Kipp		
Al Anderson		
David Templeton		
Elaina Gonzalez		
Chloe Burleson: Chief Justice		

Let the record show that the minutes from the January 10th, SGA General Assembly meeting were voted in approval by the Senate.

IV. <u>Open Forum</u>

a. NONE

V. <u>Speaker's Podium</u> Dean of Students, Andy Pettee, and Executive Director of University Communities, Joe Berthiaume

Andy Pettee: Good evening everybody. So we are like almost a month in to the spring semester already which feels a little crazy. Rocking and rolling is always excellent well I'm Andy for those of you who I haven't met I see new faces in the room I'm the Dean of students and assistant vice president for student success I'm the Co AVP to Mr. needs in the back of the room and so I oversee most of our student support offices and one particular office that we're going to talk about this evening which is housing and residence life but first we have a fantastic human being who comes to campus but 30 years of residential life and housing experience he brings in a wealth of expertise and we're looking forward to him but I wanted him to have an opportunity to introduce himself and talk a little bit about his plan for the first few weeks of the semester.

Joe Berthiaume: So as you said as you said my name is Joe Berthiaume is pronounced birth like childbirth, and then like perfume. I just moved here from California only been on campus here for about a week or so I'm just still getting acclimated still meeting people so if you see me out on the side of walk walking around or something stop by and introduce yourself and tell me your name and that you're with the SGA here and he'll let me get to know you major things like that if you live on campus you know I'm responsible for housing and residential life and I'm also now responsible for the university center so if you guys are the reasons that we are here as a university with that one of the things I want to do over the next couple of weeks and I'm going to go on to what I call listening to it since I'm new I could be totally objective and be a sounding board for you guys have thoughts somewhere you live on campus some of you don't live on campus but all of you I think you see university center at times I want to hear from you from you the students what's working what's not working how can tell me the good tell me the bad you know tell me



whatever you want to share with it because I want to start making some differences and do some strategic planning so I'm going to set up time I'm going to go to every residential community and I'm going to meet with students in those communities I'm going to do it without any staff we many staff members have I'm also going to go to like the for example the housing staff are going to go to the university center staff and I'm going to ask them their opinions and their thoughts while they're supervisors are not present and I want it again I want to hear the good and the bad any thoughts that you have I want to accumulate and I'm not going to use it as a like a discussion where I want to discuss with you guys I'm just going to go and listen and I'm going to take notes and then I'm going to come back and I'm going to compile all the notes and everything in and objective manner that's confidential so if you say something that's not going to go back to somebody else to where you feel like you're going to get some backlash or if you ended up so when I share information with my team we're going to use it for strategic planning as we look to the future and things like that and grow and that's certainly want student voice to be a part of our growth pattern in the future with that so if you see the advertisements that go out and the e-mail messages that go out through community for those of you that live on campus you know take the time to encourage other students to come out and talk to me during those particular times we could be in early evenings like between 5:00 and 7:00 o'clock or 7:30 something like that because I want to not conflict with your class schedules and things like that as much as possible with that and we'll have just a variety of different opportunities there of course you're always welcome to stop by my office and talk to me or catch me on campus somewhere else I want to eat on campus a lot to you may see me down there to the dining areas things I want to experience with your experience and so I can have a firsthand view of things I'm currently living on campus living over at liberty landing in one of the apartments and doing that on temporary basis while they look for a house but equally for it so I could see an experience where students are going through first as I transition to the campus here so I'm glad to be here.

Andy Pettee: Thank you, Joe. During the interview process you constantly talked about wanting to hear from students great experience this is also his second time in Texas he wanted to come back he loves the state he's worked in Texas previously at Texas women's university I'm an injury connected down here so we're very lucky to have him again he's new in a week so make sure we give him a little bit of time before we ask him some of those critical questions that you might ask me this evening but he's here for you he wants to hear your feedback he wants to help we are continually working on process improvement in all of our departments and so it's important that doctor birthday and get that opportunity to hear from you how we can continue to improve right so off to a good start we went through housing selection if all of you remember how many of you are not freshmen raised sophomore junior senior how many have you tried to sign up for housing last year how many of us remember the sad software system crash alright so I say today it was money well spent the last time I spoke with you all we talked about bumping up the capacity in our new system no crashes in the software system things went smoothly so the new software systems rocking and rolling and we have made some changes that we talked with SGA about we talked to some students about in terms of our nursing community for second year live on requirement so we did implement those this is the second year where we fulfill our live on requirement for first and second year students which does limit some of the space for juniors and seniors initial room selection and so the one thing I want to share with you all is the same thing that I've said time and time again if you want to live on campus you will live on campus if you don't have a bed or a constituent of your team or in your college does not have an assignment and they are on the waiting list you can tell them I guarantee it you will have a bed



here I've rented out floors of hotels before add students temporarily stay there and then we work them back onto campus that is unfortunately where we are right now in terms of demand with housing it's not the most ideal situation but I know that our team my settle in all of you are being as patient as possible and we will continue to serve each and every one of you with the highest level possible which is my commitment that if you need a bit you want to bet you want to live on campus we will make it happen so I want everyone to know that if there's anxiety about being on the wait list I get it we work through it every year and anyone who needs or wants a bed gets one I joked last semester and I said if it's Liberty Landing or nothing it might be nothing but I will get you a bed then you will live on campus if you want to live because I believe it's very important because I believe it's very that's why we have a freshman sophomore live on the requirements where students who are welcoming to campus are right there and there and I wanted juniors and seniors to live campus Joe when I was talking to him about housing crunch said we want our juniors and seniors on campus and I said absolute if I had enough beds to put you in the exact assignment that you wanted and the exact building would do it in a heartbeat and as soon as we get some more housing develop which we are continuing that conversation and moving forward we will continue to advocate to get more beds to support you all because I love and continue to love that you all want to work on or if you want to live on campus with us I think it's a great service I think we do a pretty gosh darn good job there are some challenges as there will be with any service but I want you on campus with us if you want to live on campus you have my guarantee that I will find your spot OK and that's just really important I have heard some anxiety from students and so my goal at this exact moment is to quell that if you are worried about having a bed you will have OK meaning I always make promises so it's good I promise trust me my word I see some head nods but that's important I want us not to be anxious about where are we going to live you will have a bed it may be the exact assignment you want but I'm going to reiterate you will have a bed if there is a student that you're talking to super worried about it send him to Joe and in future just Joe just kidding but really we work together as a team we will work with each student we will make sure that we take care of our students that is my priority and that is my promise to all of you that we will take care of and you will have that OK that was all I really wanted to say and I know there's some questions some feedback I want to hear and so at this point I'll just open up the floor to questions that you have it could be about housing could be about the university center could be about the counseling center could be about anything under my purview we would be happy I'd be happy to answer those questions.

Senator Vargas: I just want to say thank you, Andy, for always looking out for students and staff, my question is more of like a hypothetical one. So, the housing assignments that they're working on building is going to take quite a while right, like a few years?

Andy Pettee: Many of you are probably aware, since Covid, there has been a significant supply chain and labor shortage. Those are the biggest hindrances to our timeline.

Senator Vargas: So, the question follows is just more as we grow in our population numbers, what happens if we get to the point where we can't fit like we can't trickle in the students into housing because people are leaving? What if we just don't have the space for that anymore?

Joe Berthiaume: So, first thing I want to say and reiterate to you is, I have a slogan or a model I believe in, and I fully believe in and I fully believe from my heart is I want to provide, and it's going to be the objective or the goal of



housing. Residential life is a quality living experience that complements academic success. It's not just about providing Okay. So, as I As I was saying, we want to provide you with a quality living experience that complements academic success. You're going to school here as a student, and we want you to be very successful as a student but you're also living here. We want you to have fun. We want you to enjoy your time while you're here. We want you to create memories while you here, so that 20 years from now or 30 years from now, when you're grey hairs like me, and such. You could think back upon your college days, and remember the date time that you spent in the residence halls and on campus housing and in your student activities and events that you go into the Sta activities. Those are the memories that are going to last forever. I still, when I think back, that's what I remember, and that's why I want to do for you is to make sure that we work together to create those positive memories and things, and also build you up to where, when you leave this campus you can hit the ground running and be successful, whatever career you do for the future. But we're glad to look high and low throughout this Tyler community for housing opportunities. If we start running tight on space, then we are going to look at alternative options for housing so we could, as Andy was saying that we can provide housing for any student that needs it. It may not be your first preference for where you want to be, or the closest to the academic building you want to be, but we are going to try to get space and get you situated to where you can have that quality experience in and really achieve the success both academically and through your living environment. With that I have had some experience in an overcrowding situation, one of the campuses that I worked at in the past was at the point where we were 450 people over capacity housing. We found ways to provide housing for all those students at that time, and it worked out, and it was a good experience for everybody. It takes time, it takes patience, it takes cooperation. But we can get there, and we will do it, too. You're correct, it will take, if we get approval to build new residence halls, a new cap housing it will take some time to go through the approval processes and all the steps; then to get the funding forward, and then to get the actual construction and the planning done, and in the open them that'll take little time but the end result is going to be well worth it, and it takes leadership with you guys to have that vision and that support, it's not just about administrators doing it. We've got to have the support and cooperation from the student leadership as well as with it, to work together to make it happen for the future. You can make a difference in the lives of the students. They're going to be here 3 years, 4 years down the road and you know 10/15 years down the road just through your leadership so keep that in your mind, as well.

Senator Vargas: Can I ask what some of those like ways that you were able to provide for those students? Because you were saying that you had some alternative means, and I was just kind of curious.

Joe Berthiaume: Over my career, I've seen different campuses use different methods with it. As Andy mentioned, renting out a hotel space and having students stay in a hotel on a temporary basis with that one of the things that we would call master leasing apartment complexes off campus. If there is something available what not. I've seen it, I did not work with it but I heard of a university, I think they were here in Texas, actually down on the coast who rented out a cruise ship one time because they were in need of housing. There's all kinds of possibilities that exist, we just have to look for possibilities of what's available to us in the Tyler community and within the resources of the campus, and we have to look for ways to find what I call a win-win situation where it can be a win for our students and for our program, and we work towards the betterment of the University.



Senator Holman: I had someone mention to me that they did not see anything in the Student Handbook about having a newborn child, or maybe their young child living with them in the dorms, and I looked, and I didn't see anything about it as well so I'm not sure if maybe we could discuss that or if they are not allowed to live with their child on campus.

Andy Pettee: Yeah so I have a lot of thoughts about that and so typically I would encourage any student in a similar scenario to come and talk with me so that we can navigate how to how to support that student. On campus housing is not the environment we would want an infant to be right, there is a lot going on. If someone had a younger sibling come and stay with them, they would follow the policies for a guest. So, you are bringing up a really good point about the future of housing that we want to explore, and we do want to explore family housing in the future. Please send them to me so I can talk with them and make sure they have the support if the university and faculty and everyone they are going to be working with at that time.

Senator Mattern: I had a friend move out of Victory this past semester in December and her 3 roommates. So it left a full 4 bedroom 4 bathroom open but we're charged with the \$1,000 fee for breaking the lease which I guess makes sense but at the same time if we need housing so bad why are we still having a cancelation fee?

Andy Pettee: That's a good question, so when you book your apartment that means it is your apartment for the year. So, we don't have leases we have contracts. They're a little bit different, same feel. But essentially at the end of the day they held a space from someone and we need that revenue. One of the things that I was gonna mention towards the end was we are looking to do another large projects in Liberty Landing and to fund that into forecast. We have to be able to count on students being here when they sign the contract. They are welcome to come talk to me and they can challenge the cancellation fee because there are valid reasons to do so.

Senator Minick: This may not be possible but have you guys considered forming some kind of partnership with the Foundry apartments or I think it is Deerbrook because I know there is a lot of safety concerns with that apartment complex?

Andy Pettee: Okay so how many of you live off campus? How hard was it to find an apartment off campus? Pretty hard. So when we approach what we could use the Foundry as an example if we approach them and they are sitting at 100% occupancy they don't need our partnership. We are kind of seeing that in the community right now. The other thing I will be very transparent with you lately when we attempted those apartment complexes they know they've got us and they want an outrageous amount for that apartment probably 3 or 4 times what everyone else is paying and not that we wouldn't do that if we had to. We do the hotels because they are flexible and we had no challenge transitioning students back to campus.

Vice President Bennett: I'm going to ask about the nitty gritty part of it all, so UT Tyler has its own strategic plan as well and within the UT Tyler one they are wanting to grow by 50% or 5,000 students so do you all follow that metric to meet that demand on your own strategic plan and if so what is that metric to follow?

Andy Pettee: Yeah, So that's a good question. So I would say in terms of housing, do we have a strategic plan? Yes, it's an operational strategic plan. Everything that housing does



follows the university strategic plans and goals. So when we talk about growing to 15,000 by 2027 that comes in a lot of different ways. It can come from online students. It can come from transfer students. It can come from first year students, traditional students, right? It just you know. When we look at that, I'm gonna tell you that's not 5,000 first year students. It's not 5,000 residential students. So, what we do is we work with our partners and enrollment management, who are responsible for making the projections. as we create our next housing plan. In conjunction with our University partners, we look at those metrics. And so, if you ask me how many beds I needed last fall it's more this fall. And so what we're hoping to do is get ahead of that with our first iteration of housing right? I think I told you all last semester. I need 700 beds Pretty pretty soon to help us just cover the demand. If we had 700 beds more we could accommodate that.

Joe Berthiaume: One of the things to do for you to keep in mind here. It's very important if we we just went through the room selection process and especially for those of you that are juniors and seniors. If you have not in your attention to be on campus for housing, if you have not already so applied or signed up for housing please log on and get yourself on the waiting list. Okay because we need to know the numbers of who's interested. If we don't know your interest in housing, this can be hard for us to plan appropriately for the numbers. We need to know what our demand really and truly is, and is accurate, so it's important that there's a lot of students. I know right now that have, said I'm interested in housing, but everything is full right now so we need your name on the waitlist.

Andy Pettee: Since Joe wasn't here last summer, I will be very transparent and Joe will talk with the operations team and get an answer on the contractual date where you can cancel with no penalty. We went up to June first last year. We lost a little bit of time and assessing the demand and finding that apartment complex or that hotel or making those agreements so I will tell you we will get back to you on a specific date. I don't believe we charged any, I actually think we even went into July 1st. If you are going to cancel do it by this date we told everyone.

Senator O: My question was about like athletes not being able to room with non-athletes specifically a Liberty. That was something that came up when applying for housing for next semester and I was wondering if there was an exception made what so ever.

Andy Pettee: There is a lot of influences on that one and so that's more of a let's talk about it, figure out what you're looking for, and we'll go from there.

Senator Ocampo: What is the purpose of having the housing communities, what is the end goal for that?

Andy Pettee: So if you are not a nursing student you may not know, they need year round housing. They go fall, summer, and spring. What this means is housing has to inconvenience you to transition each time and I agreed every time a student said I can't move because of a final or a clinical, these are valid things. Our students were suffering, so that's why particularly in the nursing community they need year round housing. We are looking to having more living learning communities to stop those frustrations.



Senator Ocampo: Have you tried to expand to other campuses because I know there are a lot of students wanting to leave housing because they are having to commute to other areas and right now they are looking at getting AirBNB's and luckily the people they are renting from give them discounts.

Andy Pettee: We have a Houston Engineering center, we have a campus at Longview, Palestine, Health Science Center here in Tyler, and we have this campus. So we look if there is place for development and enough demand to expand to those locations, some of you may not know the nursing program is exploding, it's a great program. There is no reason that isn't something we would consider. My door is always open, and I want students to know that is really important, housing is important.

Senator McNamara: For example, I'm taking an extra semester, as a nursing student I have no choice but to sign up for the one year contract. How do I go in and cancel the 3 semesters I'm not staying?

Joe Berthiaume: At some point for whatever reason if you are not a student you fill out the contract appeal form and/ or cancellation form and just submit that. You're not going to get charged a fee or anything as long as you are not a student.

Senator Buchanan: I'm not a nursing student but I just had one question about nursing so I know they all have the now one year contract, but what about students who want to live with their friends that are maybe pre nursing and not in the nursing program yet but want to live with their friends for all four years?

Andy Pettee: If there is a specific student who wishes to speak more about that I'm all ears. We are just not wanting to inconvenience the nursing students any more than we have to with their housing situations.

Senator McCain: If I wanted to make a roommate group, could I do so as long as it was all nursing students?

Andy Pettee: Yes. Thank you all for letting me come talk to you, this group is fantastic and it is a pleasure to come and talk to you guys. It's always a pleasure to hear y'alls questions, they are good questions and we always have a professional and great conversation about it and I am thankful for this group and the way you advocate for students, so thank you.

Joe Berthiaume: I would also like to thank you for allowing me to come and meet you today. I have always been a and will always will be a strong advocate for SGA and student leadership across campus.

Officer Reports:

President Smith

Alright, so this past week actually, yesterday I had the chance to go up to the Health Science Center and meet with some of the Vice Chancellors of UT System. I think it was a very productive meeting. Some of the discussions included questions about the biotech program



actually dorms for all of the campuses, distance campuses included to help support our health care programs micro credentialing of course and a few other topics so I think it was a very fruitful conversation if any of you all got to see the groundbreaking for the new Med School, that was pretty exciting. They had a bunch of heavy hitters out there including the Chancellor himself, and the Governor so that was a pretty cool experience and this next week we are going to be doing some Senator training just so that way we can get everybody on the same page, and of course we are going to be continuing to work more on the upcoming events that are going to be happening that Robert will be speaking about shortly.

a. Vice-President Bennett

So I have been working closely with Landry and Beverly and the rest of Events Committee to make sure that we have a bit of events coming up, and don't worry I'll be getting to it. We are getting the final ruffles and Midnight Breakfast. So, yeah that's pretty much been my week.

b. Secretary Dix

Hello everyone, I am trying to finalize the headshots for the Instagram posts so if you have not sent it to me, please, please, please do. That goes for our zoom attendees and distance campuses and the Judicial Board, as well. So if you really just don't have a picture, you can stay after and I'll take one for you and I just need you to message me why you are in SGA, please.

c. Treasurer Luna

Hello, so this past week I've really just been working on the budget presentation that I am going to be doing later today. Then I really want to emphasize on like attending those events that we fund through SGAC, and now that my classes are online, and I don't really have anything to do during the day, I'm gonna put that on myself to go to the events anyways, so I'm excited for that. Then, just like Robert said, just trying to get everything ahead so we know what to get for all those events and stuff down the line.

d. Chief of Staff Peters

I've been a little sick this past week, so I've mainly been focusing on recovering but other than that I have been working on some of our projects for Rules Committee.

Committee Reports

a. Events

We met today and I will be saving the rest for New Business.

b. Communications

Did not meet.

c. SGAC

So SGAC met last week to discuss the changes for the budget like I said I will tell you later, and I also want to go over what we spent the money on so you guys aren't just in the dark so that will be exciting, too. We haven't gotten any responses for this week, so possibly not meeting this week, I'll let you guys know. So, to keep your eyes peeled then, if you guys are interested in joining SGAC it is still on Wednesday's at 4.

e. Rules

We met yesterday at 1Pm in the Student Engagement Conference Room, and we talked about sort of the timeline for the projects we are working on this semester.

f. ESC

So, we had our first meeting earlier today and we think we are going to do the Earth Day thing again so planning that out and making it bigger.



g. GSA Did not meet.

VI. <u>Student Voice Reports: Student Body at Large</u>

a. Freshman

Senator O: Yeah so the Freshman are pretty much excited to be back and I think most people have a hang of this semester more than they did last semester, so that's pretty good, and most people are just really excited for the spring.

b. Sophomore

Senator Carnes: Apart from the complaints about housing, overall, I've also seen in our General Assemblies, complaints about tickets. I am also on the Ticket Appeal Committee, and a lot of people don't know that if you have a car, you need a parking permit, regardless if you stay on campus housing, whatever you need a parking permit, that is the majority of why people get tickets.

c. Junior

Senator Santee: Okay, so everyone's like just getting settled in so far, they are excited that they have one more spring semester before Senior year. For like most premed Juniors, they are getting ready to take the MCAT if they haven't already, and a couple of people have told me they want more water dispensers in the RBN, and RBS buildings.

d. Senior

Senator Reed: I think the only thing I have heard is getting graduation applications in which are due I think on March first, so yeah that's the only thing I've heard.

e. Graduate

Nothing to report.

Old Business

Nothing to add.

<u>New Business</u>

a. Senator Nominations

Let the record show that Patrick Templeton, Al Anderson, Elaina Gonzalez, and Shelby Kipp were voted and sworn into the Senate.

b. Budget Presentation

Let the record show that Treasurer Luna presented the budget to the Senate.

c. SGA Calendar

Let the record show that VP Bennett went over the events on the SGA Calendar. Advisor Comments

Advisor Neaves: I want to compliment y'all, you guys did a really good job asking questions for both our Dean and our New Executive Director. Y'all were pretty heated last week, and pretty upset, and so to see y'all ask really great questions of them respectfully. Now, just remember to make sure to take that back and share with the students that you've talked with, as it relates to those concerns. Of course, Chloe does a really great job of getting the minutes up and the recordings up and so you can always encourage them to listen to today's recording so that way we can hear and they can hear you know what they had to share. I was also really happy with a question regarding our distance campuses, as those campuses continue to grow I think that's going to be a good question to ask as to what housing is going to look like for them. So really



great overall, going through the reports, I do want to remind everybody, you know especially when we're asking questions of speaker's podium, and given our student voice reports make sure that you are providing updates as it relates to your group, not individually and so I know we have a lot of new senators today so that's a big thing that you're not sharing your problems, you're sharing your constituent's problems. I was telling Camry, this is one of the largest student groups, one of the largest student governments we have had in a really long time. It's important to make sure that we have representation across every college and every campus, and it just makes my heart happy to see y'all interested and passionate to represent your peers. Beverly, I am beyond proud, that budget presentation was one of the best budget presentations that I have seen in 7 years being presented to the Senate, and I mean that. It is awesome to see the breakdown to explain to you all you need to be informed how you as an organization are spending student fees. You are student fee funded and so to see that money go back to the students is important, and to see how you appropriately adjusted is awesome. I do want the senate to be aware that yes we budgeted for the new office and there was a lot of exciting opportunities to move the Student Government office downstairs to the main floor, and they didn't have computers to be able to operate so we got that taken care of. So that way you didn't have to use your personal equipment. Everything else has been on track and Beverly has done a great job and when we do meet we match up. I am excited to hear abou the events that y'all will plan and I will keep you all updated on Midnight Breakfast. Next week, we have Dr. Calhoun so be in your best behavior. Mrs. Camry Tharp is our assistant director of Student Engagement and she will be taking my place when I am gone.

Announcements

President Smith: Send y'alls headshots to Chloe. Please try to attend Cowan Center events.

Senator of the Week is Emma Harlan!!

<u>Next Week</u> Nothing to add.

Adjournment

Let the record show that the Senate unanimously voted in approval to adjourn the meeting at 7:22pm.