

Student Government Association

The University of Texas at Tyler

- I. Call to Order**
 - a. Time: 5:17 pm
- II. Roll Call**
- III. Approval of Minutes**
 - a. Approved unanimously
- IV. Open Forum**
 - a.
- V. Speakers Podium**
 - a. Dr. Colleen Swain
 - i. Last month I shared with you all about the Texas Politics OER textbooks had gone live. Now, I'm excited to share with y'all that the 2305 Intro to American Politics textbook has gone live. All of the faculty are adopting the free textbook, which is an average of \$23,200 taking that course. Every bit counts. April 1st is when we start registering again for fall. We have it set up now that when you select a course that uses OER or less than \$50, it gives you a note. If you go to the online catalog and click on the very first link, you can see a listing of all of the courses that offer OER resources or affordable education.
 - ii. I also talked about the fact that we were getting the forms organized for any interested students that want to talk about the course evaluations. Sometimes we have these focus groups and no one shows up. We'll be there for 30 minutes for sure, but if we need to expand that, we can. The first one will also be a zoom opportunity and the zoom code will be 641085818. The second one will be at 7:30 in the morning outside of the Honors area. Astra gets weird when you try to do it outside of the normal day, so we're doing it in that seating area. Then, there will be a third opportunity for students that cannot participate in either one. The goal for academic affairs is to help faculty make good use of these and to improve your experience. The first 5 questions are required by UT system, but otherwise, there is some flexibility. That's what I have to share with you.
 - iii. Parliamentarian Ray- You said Monday will be a zoom option? Is it also in person?
 - iv. No, it will be Zoom only.
 - v. President Menhennett- Are there any more tracks to the creation of additional OER resources?
 - vi. It's time and labor intensive, so we're looking into courses that will have the most impact. We are also looking at options to encourage faculty to adjust and adopt to OER resources that already exist. We're working to target undergraduate classes first. We're looking at undergrads first, and what courses have the most impact. It's not necessarily always going to be a core course. Our largest undergraduate degree is nursing, so we're just trying to explore and see where we can make the most impact.
 - vii. President Menhennett- Has there been any look into how the results from course evaluations are used to make the coursework better for students?
 - viii. That's the reality of the world. In smaller programs, there's not going to be 47 people that can teach the same course. As you go up, you specialize more and you have to take classes with the professors that have the expertise. We want to have a system where students feel safe to provide valid comments. I understand that you may be concerned that professors will know who submitted it, but I'm trying to find a way to balance because we want real, legit comments. Many times when students come and say that they're worried about a class, I pull up the course evaluations and they're amazing and Rate My Professor will have a horrible rating. We are trying to figure out a way that students can really provide their comments. Many students take it seriously, but others use it as an opportunity to vent. Some people say "You're never available". Faculty have to weigh, are people venting or do they

legitimately have an issue? I am concerned about that safety issue. I want to make sure that you feel safe to respond to the questions.

- ix. Parliamentarian Ray- What do course evaluations actually do for students?
- x. First of all, course evaluations are part of faculty evaluations. They are used, but students also have the avenue of going to the chair to express a consistent pattern of issues. You do need to go through the hierarchy, the chair, and then the dean. If you haven't gone through the due process, then that's not fair to the faculty. Course evaluations are used in faculty evaluations. It's not all of it, but it is a portion of it.
- xi. President Menhennett- What if I go all the way through the hierarchy and they tell me that they'll take care of it, but it isn't and more students deal with it?
- xii. Then go as a group and start the process over.
- xiii. President Menhennett- I think one of the largest concerns is the fear of the repercussions of going to the people above the professor's head.
- xiv. I meet with the deans regularly, at least once every two weeks. Our deans are very student-centric so they'll listen.
- xv. Senator McAdams- Is there transparency regarding student course evaluations?
- xvi. You can view all of them, except for the comments.
- xvii. Senator McAdams- I feel like a reason that Rate my Professor is more negative is because students are warning one another.
- xviii. Senator Forster- Is it true that tenure keeps some problem professors from being fired?
- xix. No, since I've been here, I've had to remove two tenured professors and I just had to document it a ton. It's not a life sentence. I appreciate you guys and gals. Thank you again for your service to our student body and UT TYLER.

Officer Reports

- b. President Menhennett
 - i. My week has been busy. I am finishing up my application for the UT System internship this summer. I've been busy doing that. It's also led into some other points that I want to bring up at UT SAAC. We met with the student regent and some of the regents. We got to speak about the issues on our campus and have some very distinguished guests. I spoke to VP Ona Tolliver about my thoughts of developing some new recreational areas, one of which is an outdoor basketball court. If we have some senators sitting on the new committee, we may be able to have that by next Fall. That's all I got.
- c. Vice President Cooper
- d. Like Josh said, we met with two of the regents today. We had met the student regent before, but not the others. I'm still on the search committee for Assistant Director, so there should be one next month. Midnight breakfast is still happening and it will be March 25th, and it is mandatory. We will be wearing our SGA shirts. We did finalize the dates for our events. Patriot Premiere is March 28th; it's a half-day event for prospective students. People come speak, there's an organization fair, etc. Usually, the organization part is in the morning. If you're interested in tabling for Student Government, let me know so that we can get us signed up. Just a reminder, the Big Event is now mandatory. There will be more details on that once everything is finalized. Remember, it is mandatory.
- e. Secretary Jennings
 - i. Senator of the Week
- f. Treasurer Rawashdeh
 - i. I don't have much to say. I had two SGAC requests. I would like to thank VP and secretary for attending. I got to fill in for Josh on Friday for commencement. The student input could have been more receptive, so hopefully I will make sure that everyone's concerns are heard more strongly.
- g. Parliamentarian Ray
 - i. I've tried to get started doing a few Rules orders of business. We recently approved some new rules that will go to a student vote. There were quite a few things that needed improving and I have what Blake worked on. Over the last week, I've done editing,

formatting, etc. to make it more clear. It was 22 pages and now it's 19. I've simplified it and corrected it. I'm going to try and finish it and then show it to y'all so that you can take a look at it. This long drawn out process won't happen with the new rules, so we'll be able to fix it a lot faster. We did Arbor Day as well. That was quite a hit. There was strong SGA representation. Jerry Stuff handed me the microphone so I said thank you on behalf of SGA.

VI. Student Voice Reports

a. College of Education and Psychology

- i.** Senator Williams- It was brought to my attention that students have been studying in rooms in the library that classes are being held in. I talked to the librarians about it. A lot of students are getting upset about having to pay for student teaching supplies. I talked to the dean but they said they can't really do anything, just to use the curriculum lab.
- ii.** Senator Stavinoha- You may have noticed that there are tons of new sculptures on campus; they're part of an Art History Symposium. On Tuesday morning, they were picked up and dumped behind the Art Building. Margaret Thatcher's head is now missing. Apparently, he received an email right before telling him to remove it before the Regent visit, so he didn't have an opportunity to fix it himself. The pieces are not owned by the university, and they were minorly damaged by the whole thing. For them to find out that it was taken down and damaged made them very upset. I asked him who emailed him but he hasn't responded.
- iii.** Senator Long- There was a picture going around of a broken glass wall at the library. I'm sure y'all have seen it. Then, I had been telling y'all about our difficulty finding a classroom. Now, we're in a completely different building and not even in a computer lab. Not only that, there are no plugs in the classroom so we can't charge our laptops.
 - 1.** Senator Stavinoha- We have been in multiple classrooms. There were two students in there. We were told that we were not allowed to be in there because it's for engineering students only and we shouldn't have even been let in the door.
 - 2.** Senator Long- I have one last thing. I want to make a proposal to get Lyceum as a dismissed day for classes, like the Career Success Conference.
 - 3.** Senator Williams- I'm also on the Committee for the School of Education and I'm going to let them know what's going on. The murals are also really nice.

b. College of Engineering

- i.** No one present

c. College of Nursing and Health Sciences

- i.** Senator Mays- I had the White Coat Ceremony this evening, I got to give my mom a shout out.
- ii.** Senator Brooks- I spoke to some students that were confused about the trimester system, so I directed them to the UT Tyler nursing page.

VII. Committee Reports

a. Committee Discussion

VIII. Old Business

a. Summer Commencement Discussion

- i.** Senator Brooks motioned, Parliamentarian Ray seconded.
- ii.** Senator Brooks- If you start in the summer, you end in the summer. Currently, we don't have a summer commencement. I spoke to people from a ton of different campuses. The total cost of SFA's for Summer and similar size would be \$13,000. I'm thinking that it would be smaller since we would only be doing the nursing program.
- iii.** President Menhennett- If you could send me that, that would be good. I want to try and get you as much information as possible, so that we have data points. If we can have it drafted in a really good document, like a referendum and submit it, that would be good. Could we do a letter of support based on that information. The President said that he just wanted me to look up the information.
- iv.** Advisor Neaves- He said that y'all could just research it and send it in to him. For this summer, I'm afraid that there's not enough time. The longer y'all wait, the less likely it is that it will happen this summer.

- v. Senator Brooks- SFA's is basically in the fall.
- vi. Senator Bauder- If we're going to have a summer commencement, then wouldn't it be good to have it for all of the colleges?
- vii. President Menhennett- That would be the goal and and it would be better.
- viii. Parliamentarian Ray- That would require every single department to provide faculty and resources. However, we could surely do something for the smaller graduation groups to get together.
- ix. Senator Reid motioned to close discussion. Secretary Jennings seconded.

IX. New Business

- a. Appointment of New Senators
 - i. None present
- b. Mr. and Ms. UT Tyler nominations
 - i. VP Cooper motioned to discuss, seconded by Reid
 - ii. VP Cooper- There was an email sent out that for Homecoming, we have a Mr and Ms UT Tyler. Every student Org is allowed to submit nominees, but there are certain qualifications. Mr and Ms UT Tyler is open to any fulltime junior, senior, or graduate student. The student has to be in good standing and involved in two or more student organizations on campus. They have to have a minimum GPA of 3.25 and there are dates and times that the nominees would be there during Homecoming week. Anyway, if you are involved and you have a GPA of 3.25 or higher, and you are interested in Ms. UT Tyler, raise your hand.
 - 1. Senator Long and Senator Williams
 - 2. Motion to vote on who to nominate for Ms. UT Tyler by Astbury, seconded by ??
 - 3. Senator Williams- I'm in SGA and AXO. I have a high GPA, I'm in honor societies. I told Hannah, I've always wanted to be Ms. UT Tyler. I put my heart and soul into everything. I would love to be SGA's representative.
 - 4. Senator Long- I'm Cameron. I am heavily involved in UT Tyler, which is why I want to do this. I am in SGA, Zeta, Honors, and I'm an RA, for four semesters. I've been in all of the above for a long time. This is my last semester to give this a go, so this is my one last chance to try and do it. That's all I got.
 - 5. Senator Long won, 14-8

Motion to talk about Green Fee by Senator Reid, seconded by ??

Senator Reid- It goes toward sons of sustainability movements, not just recycling. Joel and I have been doing research and we're near the bottom for sustainability efforts in the UT system. Introducing a green fee, which has been done at many UT system schools, is good. With that in mind, if we vote on it tonight, we could propose it.

A question was asked on the last ballot for information and 72.6% of students said that they would support a \$5 green fee. With that many student saying that they would be okay with it, that's a big deal. I would like to open up a vote to propose this to administration.

Senator Astbury- The whole point of the ESC won't be able to achieve anything to revamp their plants, facilities, etc. All of that work can't happen without lots and lots of funding. This green fee would give us lots and lots of funding. We can't do anything other than like educating students.

Senator McAdams- I want to vote.

Senator Roberts- So this is voting on the amount, correct?

Senator Reid- Yes, we would just be voting on the concept of a green fee

President Menhennett- What office would these funds go to?

Senator Reid- I'm thinking that maybe Facilities. Motioned to vote on the proposal for a green fee. Seconded by Senator McAdams. It passes.

Parliamentarian Ray- Energy management would be a good office to give those funds to.

Senator Roberts- In our meeting last week at RHA, we discussed the constitution. The bylaws are also near completion. We have the charters for each facility. We're also signing up for NACURH, which is a resident hall association. RHA is looking to work with SGA over the next semester and in the future.

Senator McAdams- This is kind of weird and specific, but I lost my wallet, which had all of my identification. Therefore, I couldn't even eat at the MET. A lot of people in O Hall specifically, depend on their ID card.

President Menhennett- I could put you in with Tammy Hill to talk about that, so my guess is that, because it's third party, there's some issue in the transfer of funds.

Senator McAdams- You can't charge it to your student account, which sucks when you lose all of your money.

President Menhennett- Tammy Hill would be the person to talk to.

Senator Green- There is a food pantry on campus, as well.

VP Cooper- Skye Burns currently runs it. Did you find your wallet?

Senator McAdams- No.

Senator Nepal- It's a little irresponsible for cards that get lost and offices to not inform the student that they have it.

President Menhennett- Does anyone have anything to add to new business?

X. Advisor Comments

- a. Lauri and Skye both run the food pantry. We open it from 2:30-4:30 every single day during the week. There are starting next month, there will be different themes for the food pantry. We're trying to keep it where the institution doesn't have to spend money on the pantry. The only thing that we've had to pay for is electricity. If they don't feel comfortable coming in person, they can email patriotpantry@uttyler.edu. We want people to use it; anybody can use it. You don't have to be starving to use it.
- b. Dr. Swain mentioned those feedback sessions. It would be everyone's interest to go to the sessions. It would be a great opportunity for y'all to comment on concern.
- c. I'm very grateful that y'all got the committees sorted out. If you're not showing up, it'll be documented and you'll be up for review after 3 absences.
- d. I do want to remind everybody that I see everything. A few years ago, the senate had discussed removing technology all together because senators weren't paying attention like they should. Please pay attention. If you're not, someone may call you out, and it might be me.

XI. Announcements

- a. Focus Groups
 - i. Monday, Feb. 24th from 5:30-6 pm on Zoom. The meeting ID is 641-085-818.
 - ii. Tuesday, Feb. 25th from 7:30-8 am in the UC 2nd floor seating area around Honors
 - iii. Wednesday, Feb. 26th from 12:30-1 pm in UC 3322
- b. SGA Officer Candidacy Meetings (3/2 at 12:30, 3/3 at 12:30, and March 4 at 4:30)
- c. Meeting with President Tidwell (3/4)
 - i. Will be at 5, and you should show up at 4:45 in the UC Theater. We want to be as timely as possible. We will be using a special form of submitting questions.
- d. Headshots (3/19)

XII. Next Week's Student Voice Reports

- a. College of Arts and Sciences
- b. University Pines

XIII. Second Roll Call

XIV. Adjournment

- a. Time: 7:17 pm (motioned by Senator Reid and seconded by everyone)