

Transcripts of the  
STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION SENATE  
OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

1. This meeting was called to order by Speaker Gonzalez at 4:31 pm in the HSC (Holmes Student Center) Sky Room.
2. We acknowledge that we are on the traditional land of the Peoria, Kaskaskia, Piankashaw, Wea, Miami, Mascoutin, Odawa, Sauk, Mesquaki, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Chickasaw Nations
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. **Voting Members Present:** Senator Tinajero, Senator Zimmer, Senator Galloway, Senator Kushimo, Senator Adoye, Senator Boniecki, Senator Gunther, Senator Lozano, Senator Sanders
5. **Voting members Absent:**
6. **Voting members Excused:** Senator Brownlee, Senator Walker

**VERIFICATION OF QUORUM**

1. Senator Zimmer confirms quorum is met.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

1. There is none.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Speaker Gonzalez moves to table the minutes from October 31<sup>st</sup>
2. Senator Uhrine so moved.
3. Senator Zimmer Seconded.
4. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is any discussion or debate.
5. There is none.
6. Speaker Gonzalez calls for a vote.

7. The minutes from October 31<sup>st</sup> have been tabled to next meeting.
8. Speaker Gonzalez moves to approve the minutes from November 7<sup>th</sup> and January 23<sup>rd</sup>.
9. Senator Sanders so moved.
10. Senator Zimmer seconded.
11. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is any discussion or debate.
12. Speaker Gonzalez calls for a vote.
13. The motion is passed, and the minutes of November 7<sup>th</sup> and January 23<sup>rd</sup> were approved.

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

1. Speaker Gonzalez moves to approve the agenda.
2. Senator Sanders so moved.
3. Senator Zimmer seconded.
4. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is any discussion or debate.
5. There is none.
6. Speaker Gonzalez calls for a vote.
7. The motion is passed, and the agenda is approved.

## **SPEAKER REPORT**

A. Speaker Gonzalez states,

1. “Welcome! I would like to first start off by saying I was speaking with former Deputy Speaker Eddie Guerrero, now Election Commissioner for the Spring 2026 elections. He has told me that the election will begin, in terms of applications, February 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2026. So that is next week. Additional information we blasted out by Student Involvement regarding the dates and times for the candidate meetings. For this year, Election Commissioner Guerrero has informed me we will be moving towards a more online application process, and the application process will exist solely through Huskie Hub where that will be completed out. That any prospective individual seeking the positions of senators as well as our executive branch members, such as President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Student Trustee. There will still be a paper portion of the application, specifically to gain signatures from NIU students. 50 is required for the position of Senator, and 75 is required for any of the Executive Board positions and then those can be uploaded to the online Huskie Hub form. Those will

be published as well on February 2nd. The deadline for when those application materials will be collected and due is currently set for Monday, February the 23rd, 2026 at 5 PM. Any late application submitted after 5 PM on that date will not be considered and will not be placed on the ballot for this upcoming election cycle. We hope this new system for online processing will expedite the overall process for the elections, with the election itself taking place in the final week of March of this year. Aside from that report, I have been working on improving our visibility and transparency, which has led to the development of some of these bills that you will be seeing. Additionally, I've also been working with the new President, Rivera on helping him transition to his new role, which he will provide himself a update on his own behalf. Additionally, I've been looking into reports from students that have provided me with information such as issues with dining accessibility. Therefore, I am directing Campus Life and Environmental Affairs to investigate those claims and determine what courses of actions we can take. Additionally, because of other instances regarding a graduate program here on campus, I am also directing Campus Life and Environmental Affairs to investigate and determine what courses of actions we can take to assist graduate students here at NIU. However, most of my focus so far for this week has been catching up on the minutes.”.

## **SPECIAL REPORT**

A. There is none

## **OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER REPORT**

A. Deputy Speaker's Report

a. There is none.

A. Parliamentarian's Report

a. There is none.

A. Clerk's Report

a. There is none

## **COMMITTEE REPORT**

A. Chairperson of Student Life and Greek Affairs' report

- a. There is none.
- B. Chairperson of Campus Life and Environmental Affairs' report
  - a. There is none.
- C. Chairperson of Public Affairs' report
  - a. There is none.
- D. Chairperson of Organizational Oversight's report
  - a. There is none.
- E. Chairperson of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion's report
  - a. There is none.
- F. Chairperson of Board of Elections' report
  - a. There is none.

## **EXECUTIVE REPORT**

- A. President's report
  - a. There is none.
- B. Vice-President's report
  - a. President Rivera says,
    - i. "Good afternoon, everyone. Some of you may know me but today, I stand before you, in front of a new SGA group. First and foremost, I do want to express my sincere gratitude to former President Ja'Kobe Jones, for the dedicated leadership and hard work to the SGA. He set a strong foundation, and I know I have big shoes to fill. I want to be fully transparent, and I am still fully transitioning to this role and I appreciate your patience. That said, my immediate priority is ensuring continuity and stability in this administration which has been at hard work moving forward without stress. Over the upcoming week, I'd like to be close to Executive Board members, Senators, and chairpersons to stay informed of our ongoing initiatives, priorities, and any challenges we may be facing. These conversations will help guide me and be constrained to our effort on building on the learning, working, and identifying opportunities to better serve students. I want to emphasize

that this administration will be grounded in collaboration, transparency and other communication. SGA is strongest when everyone is heard and feels valued and empowered to contribute. I agree that you should continue bringing forth your ideas, in terms of perspectives, your guy's input is essential to our success. Each day SGA is written by the commitment and dedication of its members, and I am grateful for the work each of you do and I'm excited to work alongside, you guys, continuing to advocate for students, and creating meaningful changes on the surface. Thank you for your time and I look forward when we can come together. Thank you.”.

C. Treasurer's report

- a. There is none.

D. Deputy Treasurer's report

- a. There is none.

E. Chief of Staff's report

- a. There is none.

F. Student Trustee's Report

- a. There is none.

## **CABINET REPORT**

A. Director of Diversity, Equity and, Inclusion

- a. There is none.

B. Director of Organizational Development

- a. There is none.

C. Director of Athletics

- a. There is none.

D. Director of Student Life and Greek Affairs

- a. There is none.

E. Director of Public Affairs

- a. There is none.

F. Director of Academic Affairs

- a. There is none.

G. Director of Campus Life and Environmental Affairs

- a. There is none.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- A. There is none.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- A. SB57018: A bill to eliminate the Sergeant At-Arms position.

1. Senator Kushimo so moved.
2. Senator Gunther seconded.
3. Speaker Gonzalez says,
  - i. “For this bill, I’m continuing my cons for reducing and streamlining our activities in the office of the speaker. The sergeant at arms position was originally created with the intent to control the Senate, such as ensuring Robert’s Rules of Order was being followed, as well as decorum and dress code being enforced. Especially at the time when Sergeant At-Arms position was created, this was a necessity position. At the time, the Speaker of the Senate and the Deputy Speaker could not do on their own. However, since then, the behavior of the Senate is both professional and official. and just well spoken all around. This is based on my observations during my time in the 56<sup>th</sup> Session. Additionally, the Sergeant At-Arms position has not been filled since the 55th Session. Along with the rationale, in terms of when I consolidated the positions of the former Director of Community Service, Historian, and Legislative Director during the 56<sup>th</sup> Session, that same understanding of rationale still exists. For eliminating the Sergeant At-Arms position, it has outlived its usefulness, and those same objectives and activities that the whole former Sergeant At-Arms position did can now be fulfilled by the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, as well as a new Parliamentarian role in itself. And because this is not a paid position anyways, its removal will not create any long term consequences for the SGA once it is eliminated”.
4. Speaker Gonzales asks if there is any discussion or debate.
5. Senator Bonecki asks,
  - i. “. So... I tend to like that we are proof that we have been professionals, that will start what we're supposed to do in the future, if the sudden habits to fall back and become a reason why they would need that position. Is that something that could be reinstated, if necessary?”.
6. Speaker Gonzalez responds,

- i. “As of right now, no. However, the hope is that Senate doesn't devolve back into its former self. If anything, it should be the responsibility of any future speaker to ensure that there is decorum in the Senate chamber. And if for whatever reason, the future speaker cannot abide by that fulfillment of that obligation, then in my understanding, as current speaker of the 57th session, I feel that they would have failed their duty as speaker, and by extension, the NIU student body. And at that point, it should be up to the NA student body and the current center at that point to hold them accountable for failure to enact their provision. And so I understand the, like, in terms of preparation, like, maybe we should have it on the books, but as it stands, we still have the speaker, deputy speaker, and parliamentarian that can enforce Robert's rules of order and general decorum in the Senate Chamber. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is any further discussion or debate”.

7. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is any further discussion or debate.

8. There is none.

9. The bill is tabled to next week's meeting.

B. SB57019: A bill to update expectations and consequences for paid SGA officials

1. Senator Kushimo eo moved.

2. Senator Tinajero seconded.

3. Speaker Gonzalez says,

- i. “It is basically somewhat overhauling and making clear expectations for paid SGA officials. As the wording suggests, this is specifically for elected and appointed positions, meaning these are hourly paid positions within student government. So, this does not apply to any position that is governed by stipends, Senators, as well as any other position that is only paid by a stipend. So, I do want to make that clear. What does this bill entail is that it specifically states that any paid position, they must; If a person, say take for an example I fail to maintain any sort of the requirements regarding needing for me to remain in this position. If I fail then, according to some of the we have on the rules, how it's phrased, I can still retain my position without any consequences from the Senate. Additionally, if, say, I were to commit a fireable offense by the university and still be fired by the university, I would still be able to maintain my position as Speaker, because the Bylaws currently does not provide a mechanism for automatic dismissal. It is my opinion that if any elected official were to commit any fireable offense, then they should automatically be removed from their position, and they do not need to have an additional requirement of being removed by the Senate body. It should be automatic. The rationale is why should SGA officials have some

sort of cushion beneath them in regards to accountability in regards to actions? So that is why it was made much more explicit in terms of these provisions. Additionally, in that specifically in these expectations of office section. Now, when I was showing you there was also another thing that was added. Student government sits upon all student organizations. We help approve, oversee and manage them. We're all students at the end of the day, and we have our own organizations that we're part of. However, it is a higher bar for student government officials to meet. So, that being said, if any SGA official is part of an executive board for any type of student government they forfeit their office in SGA. Because what this bill is trying to have is, if you're going to be part of these leadership positions in SGA, that should be the only thing you're part of. Because quite frankly, you can divide your attention between all these different student organizations, but specifically if you're part of leadership positions within all of these student organizations. Additionally, it also creates conflict of interests and breaches of ethics. So, in order to ensure that that is not the case, this is what this provision aims to do. Now, in regard to, you know, election cycle, have a person has, you know, some level of an executive or position with instrumentation, that's fine. They just must ensure that they resign from that commission prior to them taking office. So, they can be a part of any sort of organization as a member. They just can't be a part of their executive work by the time they take office as a student government association official. And again, it is that breath of responsibility and ethics that I want to instill within SGA. So that is why those 2 requirements are set”.

4. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is any discussion or debate.
5. Senator Galloway asks,
  - i. “So, when I was reading this initially, I was concerned, because I thought there were a bunch of senators as well, just to clarify these changes, did not apply to the senators”.
6. Speaker Gonzalez responds,
  - i. “Correct. These do not apply to centers. In order if...if we were to apply to Senators, that would be such a tall order that I don't think SGA would fail if I would be quite frank”.
7. Senator Galloway adds,
  - i. “So, like, I mean as executive board member myself of student organizations I feel that as a Senator, that allows me to better connect with my constituents. I understand, I think that there's value at that. Then the amendment that I was going to suggest was that we have to disclose the student organizations that we are executive board members of because I



agree with you, like, in principle, on the conflict of interest, I can see the logic for that, I just think, uh, I'm going to do this on it, that it would be too good, though. So that's not the case. My other question was how does this affect Greek student organization?

8. Speaker Gonzalez responds,

- i. “Yes. So, in that regard, the current wording says of any type of student organization. So that would include reading. Okay. The way it would be done is say during the election cycle you know, they are currently a part of an executive position. That is fine. They could be still elected, even if they have that position. Just by the time they take off the office, if they are still an executive board member, they would have to resign that commission in order to take the office of whatever they were elected to. If they don't, then the position would could be considered vacant, so they have to be filled by normal, by the way our Bylaws says. But like they could still be a part of the organization, just not an executive board position. And this is just for any student organization in general. If it helps to clear up language, I would be open to a friendly amendment to specifically say that these provisions only apply to the positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer, Speaker, um, for the time being as well. If that would satisfy the Senate in terms of clarity of language”.

9. Senator Galloway asks for friendly amendment to include specific leadership positions.

10. Speaker Gonzalez accepts and the friendly amendment is passed.

11. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is any further discussion or debate.

12. Senator Bonecki asks,

- i. “Um, we're talking about, like, reasonable reasons for somebody getting fired, right? Since you can get fired for ridiculous reasons.”

13. Speaker Gonzalez responds,

- i. “Correct. This is, um, so this would be like through, because we are, as leadership positions are technically hired through the university. So, through student involvement. So, for whatever reason the students are still governed by the same human resource policies as any other employee of this university. So, if the university sees fit to fire us because we committed a fire able offense, then, and if, say, we've, it was unreasonable, then we would just have to go through normal HR processes at that point. is that it is a university HR matter, not an SGA Senate matter at that point. But yes, it would have to still be for a reasonable fire able defense. It just wasn't clarified in the bylaws, just because it is something that there's already separate policies for within university. All right? And then, I would like to add, because this, even though this legislation is to

take immediate effect, in the further resolved sections, the stipulation is not to go into effect during the 57<sup>th</sup> Session, just because it is in the session when we're introducing it and to enforce it, would be problematic. This is not without precedent, as when the 25th Amendment, to the United States Constitution was ratified, which imposed term limits to the President, the then President was also exempted from that provision. So, there is precedent for that. And then this will just affect those who want to be a part of the spring elections. So again, they can still retain their positions for now, but after the election, if they win it, they would have to resign to their commission. as part of the executive board”.

14. Senator Bonecki says,

- i. “In the sentence saying they cannot use their position of privilege to benefit any student organization they are a part of, can you provide an example of that?”.

15. Speaker Gonzalez responds,

- i. “I can't really think of anything off the top of my head since that sentence is very subjective. Um, and quite honestly, in terms of enforcement, it would be hard to enforce because it's subjective, and we don't really have, like a firm, like ‘this is what constitutes as using your position as a privilege?’ At that point, that might just have to be something that if, in the future, something happened close to it and someone felt the need to call it out they would have to just go through normal removal procedures and then have to play out in the Senate as a debate. But other than that, I really don't know as an example”.

16. Senator Uhrine asks,

- i. “I was just thinking, I think we're gonna come, like, like, trying to see a better example. Maybe we can pass a bill that says, like, before the bill is considered, if that person is trying to ask them, then all current attended senators must disclose whether they hold an office in an organization club, or committee involved, and then this department of their own, what would be potential conflict and interest, if that exists then the senator's role must begin considering that. The Senate will determine the presence of the conflict of interest and if the conflict is, like, identified, then the affected senator may not vote on the bill or attempt to persuade any other senators at that time. If it's necessary, 3rd party, maybe, like, consulted to review it, and knowledge the ethical implications of the impact in any potential traumas that may arise”.

17. Senator Gonzales responds,

- i. “I would say that sounds good but at that point, it sounds like it would be its own separate bill. So, we probably have to make it in its own thing. So,

uh, we can have to go through Rules and Procedure Committee for that bill and I would not mind striking that sentence in the meantime”.

18. Senator Bonecki makes friendly amendment to strike line regarding using position to help student organization.
19. Speaker Gonzalez accepts and the friendly amendment is passed.
20. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is any further discussion or debate.
21. There is none.
22. The bill is tabled for next week’s meeting.

C. SB57020: A bill to clarify the Code of Procedures

1. Senator Sanders so moved.
2. Senator Kushimo seconded.
3. Speaker Gonzalez says,
  - i. “So, for this bill, I would have, in writing the previous one, I would never find this one. The Code of Procedures is basically, the Student Government Associations their own version of the NIU Student Code of Conduct. The wording of it was quite interesting. In pieces of the bylaws, it says that it was basically SGA's own version of the NIU Student Code of Conduct with potential exceptions and other provisions that would only apply to Student Government Association officials. However, in what you were looking at the display screen, you can kind of see in some of the previous highlighted portions, it was also contradictory, because it was saying it's not a separate document but then it makes reference that it is a separate document because it has exceptions to it. And my understanding is no person is above any sort of rule here at the university. So, therefore, to make that official, I'm completely removing any reference to the SGA Code of Conduct. The only code of conduct or code of procedure should be regarding the SGA Supreme Court which address their functions on how they proceed with cases. It should only be the only other code that SGA should recognize. So, again, no person is above any code of conduct. And this is what this bill aims to do to ensure. Again, this is how to promote transparency and accountability from us to our constituents. We reasonably assume that people want to reach out to us and if they see that we have essentially cushions regarding in terms of expectations and responsibilities....so.... that is why this bill was being written and proposed”
4. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is any discussion or debate.
5. There is none.
6. The bill is tabled for next week’s meeting.

D. SB57021: A bill to further revise student organization policies

1. Senator Tinajero so moved.

2. Senator Gunther seconded.
3. Speaker Gonzalez says,
  - i. “What this bill aims to do is just clarify two quick things. One assigned, wants to make sure that we require three additional people, um, who are interested in any new student organization, while they go through the new student organization recognition process. So, in terms of having to have the 3 positions that we voted to approve last semester being the President, Vice President, Treasurer, they also need three additional students. The rationale behind this is just so, you can't have a group of friends and just make a new student organization. There has to be at least some reasonable size of interest. So just to make sure to maintain that. And then the other thing is, is just to clarify that all student organizations need to add, um, what their executive board members are to the Husky Hunt. This is mostly just because while organization oversight, more specifically me and former Deputy Speaker Guerrero at the time, we're going to the check-in process. Sometimes there is only one executive board member on Huskie Hub and in regards to students wanting to join the club, if there's only one point of contact and they don't happen to respond to, then they're basically out of luck in terms of joining that organization. So, this is just to make sure that there's more points of contact. And additionally, if whatever reason, as the committee for Organization Oversight or anyone need to reach out to the organization, there's more than one person they can reach out to. And then another thing that was also proposed to be implemented is no person may occupy more than one position on a student organization's executive world. Clarification. You as a student, based on this wording, you can have executive positions of like 5 different clubs or so and that's completely fine. This is about within one student organization. So, you could say as an example, you could be President of speech team, you can be Vice President of chess club and you can be Treasurer of... I don't know, some other organization. That's fine. What you can't be is you can't be President and Treasurer of of the same organization. Not a lot of student organizations have these types of provisions within their Constitution and it's much more effective for us just to implement it at an SGA level, then try to have OO go back and try to force it upon every student organization. Just because it doesn't make sense to have more than one person occupy these positions as I don't see as democratic and democratic provisions is required by us in our own bylaws for certain organizations to keep. So, trying to make sure to keep everything uniformed”.
4. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is any discussion or debate.

5. Senator Asante asks for friendly amendment to make it clear that the provision only applies to within one student organization.
6. Speaker Gonzalez accepts the friendly amendment and revises the affected portion.
7. Speaker Gonzalez asks for any further discussion or debate.
8. Senator Galloway asks,
  - i. “So, I was interested in this because I'm apart of another organization. I think it will impact, and others obviously, but has a valid reason not to have more than one board member. Um, I'm an E-Board member in a student organization and for various reasons, we try to keep it kind of private, who is something, who is a member. So, I wonder if it could be exceptions and cases like that, wherever you could come about, that it's a record, somebody's safety, being associated with a club right now, be given, you know the conditions of what is happening in our country right now”.
9. Speaker Gonzalez responds,
  - i. “In that case, I would have, I wouldn't be opposed to adding a friendly amendment with a wording, something among the lines of, if there are exceptions needed to this provision the student organization can contact Student Involvement to proceed with next steps. This allows Student Involvement to take care of that provision, especially if it is something as serious as what you're waiting to understand”.
10. Speaker Gonzalez asks for any further discussion or debate.
11. There is none.
12. The bill is tabled for next week's meeting.

E. SR57024: A resolution confirms a Senator

1. Senator Zimmer so moved.
2. Senator Salerno seconded.
3. Speaker Gonzalez asks for a motion to table since the candidate was not present at Senate.
4. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is any discussion or debate.
5. There is none.
6. Speaker Gonzalez calls for a vote.
7. The motion passes and SR57024 is tabled to the next meeting.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER**

- A. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is anything for the good of the order.
- a. There is none.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there are any announcements.

- a. There is none.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

1. Speaker Gonzalez calls for a motion to adjourn the meeting.
2. Senator Zimmer so moved.
3. Senator Lozano seconded.
4. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is any discussion or debate.
5. There is none.
6. Speaker Gonzalez calls for a vote.
7. The motion passes and the meeting is adjourned at 5:08 pm.

## **CLOSING ATTENDANCE**

7. **Voting Members Present:** Senator Tinajero, Senator Zimmer, Senator Galloway, Senator Kushimo, Senator Adoye, Senator Boniecki, Senator Gunther, Senator Lozano, Senator Sanders
1. **Voting members Absent:**
2. **Voting members Excused:** Senator Brownlee, Senator Walker
3. **Candidate Members Present:** Sam Mostaert

## **MINUTES SUBMITTED BY**

Speaker Gonzalez on January 30, 2026

57<sup>th</sup> Senate on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026