

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 4:33 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 Asante, Senator Owusu, Senator Kushimo, Senator Adoye, Senator Boniecki, Senator Gunther
5. **Voting members Absent:** Senator Sanders, Senator Kucharzyk
6. **Voting members Excused:** Senator Salerno, Senator Lozano, Senator Walker, Senator Uhrine,

**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> and February 6<sup>th</sup>.
2. Senator Zimmer so moved.
3. Senator Kushimo seconded.
4. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is any discussion or debate.
5. Speaker Gonzalez calls for a vote.

6. The motion is passed, and the minutes from October 31<sup>st</sup> and February 6<sup>th</sup> were tabled.

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

1. Speaker Gonzalez calls for a motion to approve the agenda.
2. Senator Zimmer so moved.
3. Senator Tinajero 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. “Greetings. There are many things to get through today, so I've prepared it, summoned my initial thoughts to prevent me from rambling today. I've been working hard at administrative duties, such as updating the SGA Constitution and Bylaws, including stuff that was not updated at the close of the 55<sup>th</sup> Session. Anything that contradicts with the 56<sup>th</sup> or 57<sup>th</sup> Session will have the most recent changes kept. More constitutional reforms based on the discovery of obscured pieces might result in more changes. As an additional piece of information, Faculty Senate approved a resolution this past Wednesday providing support for the Equitable Public University Funding Formula and calling on the Illinois Board of Higher Education or IBHE to do the same. As an act of solidarity, in which I've already spoken with Faculty Senate President Benjamin Creed, as well as the authors of the resolution on this, I will put forth a resolution to the SGA Senate, endorsing the Faculty Senate resolution as this directly supports increased funding for universities here in the state of Illinois, such as NIU, which has been chronically underfunded. This is a way for us to act as a united front between SGA and Faculty Senate. In addition, some of the other responsibilities I focused on for this week have been improving relations, as well as looking at exploring new ways for SGA to collaborate, but also to better streamline our services and dedication to our students. Most of those actions will be revealed at a later date. However, some of those conversations that we've had in committees, specifically the

Campus Life and Environmental Affairs Committee, has generated enough discourse that led to some of the resolutions taking place for today”.

## **SPECIAL REPORT**

B. Speaker Gonzalez says,

1. “Please welcome Chief of Police from NIU Police Department, Chief Jason John, and Commander Dathan Jackson for their introduction”.

C. Chief Jason John says,

1. “Good afternoon. Before we get started today, I actually want to start off with a bit of thank you’s. First and foremost, to President Rivera and Speaker Gonzalez and to all of you for inviting us, Commander Jackson and I to this meeting. We are truly excited to be here. I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself to you. I am the new Chief of Police here at the NIU Police Department. My name is Jason John, I've been with the police department for 22 years. I'm actually also a Huskie. I graduated from NIU. I went to school here, started in 1999, graduated in 2003 with a degree in Human Resource Management. For me, this was the only police department that I actually applied for. I did a lot of research into police departments, and for me, I liked the way that the NIU Police Department did business. And for me, it was very important for me to reflect on an organization that stood by its principles and relations to, in relation to community orient policing. And for me, that was something very important for me, and as you can see, 22 years later, I'm still here and now I'm here talking to you. For me, I've risen through the ranks. I've worked in all aspects of the police department. I worked as a patrol officer. I've worked in our investigation unit as a Sergeant, a Commander, a Lieutenant, Deputy Chief, and now Chief. So, for me, I'm truly excited to be here. I think I understand both the student perspective and also an employee here at the university. I think that's what helps me, you know, obviously be the chief of police here at the NIUPD. And, really, I just wanted to come and talk to you guys and introduce myself and Commander Jackson here, if he can come on up as well. He's part of my leadership team. I have also have a couple others that are on the team, but I also wanted to have him introduce himself before we talk about another reason why we came here”.

D. Commander Jackson says,

1. “Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Dayton Jackson. And, like, chief said... I'm one of our commanders. Excuse me, I have a radio on, 'cause I'm currently on patrol, so I may need to step out, so I will keep it as low as I can so not interrupt. But a little bit about myself, like, Chief said, for him, I was also a student here. I was actually his CA. So, we lived on campus. I worked on campus. I was involved, not as involved as you all are, with stuff like Riz Hall Association and a few student orgs so it's kind of like full circle for me to be here in this capacity as an employee. I have been here 25 years as of June 1st, so I've been around for a minute. I used to also make break for me as it relates to my further, my education, and being involved in the community, so I'm excited about this opportunity for us to liaison with you all. And currently, I'm our night operations commander, so I supervise our staff, everything that happens after 7 p.m. is on my watch. Um, and prior to being in this assignment, I was a sergeant, and I worked closely with Sajama, Alex, and those kind of, uh, individuals, as relation special events. So, I was the liaison from the police department to the social event committee that student affairs run. So, I work with a lot of student orgs planning security and planning coverage for their events. And now, again, like I said, I'm a nice operation commander, and I'm really excited about the opportunity to work with you all”.

E. Chief John says,

1. “Thanks, Commander Jackson. One of the other things why we wanted to come here today was to talk about a program that we've been talking about with leadership here at the SGA. A couple months ago, we had sat down with leadership, student government leadership, and talked about creating a Student Government Association, police officer liaison program. And we talked back and forth, and if you know anything about the police department, the police department believes in community-oriented policing and prioritizing that. And for us, one of the things that we talked about is creating direct access, direct line of communication for students and leadership of the SGA to have with the police department here in NIU. So, as we talked about this program, we exchanged some ideas [and] talked about how it would look, and for us, it was truly important for you guys to first, you know, talk about it

amongst yourselves and see if that was something that you'd be interested in, in partnering with the NIU Police Department moving forward. We believe that safety and security here on campus is a shared responsibility, and in order to make sure that this campus is as safe as it can, it only makes sense for us to be partners with all of you to help with making decisions here on campus. We know that your feedback is important, and what we want to do is hear it directly, rather than hearing it you know through other means, and through all the people. So, for us, being here at these kinds of meetings, and talking with leadership, and making sure that we're present is very important to not only the department, but myself as well. For me, safety and security is a very important thing. Not just because it's my job, but also because I'm a Huskie, I know what it means to be a student here. And I know how stressful it is. You know, on top of trying to study, get good grades, and various other things. I know safety and security shouldn't be something that you should be worried about as well. You know, so for me, this relationship is a very important one. I'm excited that you guys allowed us to be a part of this. You know, when [SGA leadership] talked about it we had asked, "Please make sure that the group is okay with this" and we were ecstatic to hear that you guys were very supportive of us being here at these kinds of meetings. The person that's ultimately going to be responsible and the person that's going to be here is a crime prevention officer at the NIU Police Department. He'll be joining us, when he does I will properly introduce him to all of you, and then he will be the representative for the police department for any matters that you have. Um, I'm now gonna open it up for any questions that you guys may have about the partnership or any kind of questions that you may have just, you know, so I can answer anything that, um, you may have some concerns about".

F. Senator Galloway asks,

1. "First of all, thank you, guys, for coming. I really value, I love you guys for your goodness and speech and introducing yourselves to us. Personally, I would say, I've always felt safe on campus, and it's been made safer because we have such a protective police department that looks out for the students. I also want to thank you guys. I represent our immigrant students. They were, I keep our my constituency, they like it. And I know the recent federal actions, initially, I confirmed this contact,

but you guys became... Anywhere, you know, can't listen to this. I appreciate that. Thank you from, from me. And then I also want to say, given a reason, sexual talk, is that, and a lot of certainty, right, between what's taking, and I appreciate your guys as broad, being able to be here with us, and, you know, for us to address this. I look forward to meeting the officer of the house. Thank you”.

G. Chief John says,

1. “Any other questions that anyone has? And for us, another one of these, another big tenet of this program is to listen. You know, a lot of times we do a lot of talking, but we don't listen enough. And what I will tell you is, in developing strategies for safety and security on campus, it requires us to listen. And so part of this whole program is to listen and listen to you guys so that when we are developing strategies in regards to safety and security on campus, that we can incorporate your ideas into those safety security measures on campus. Are there any other questions that you have? So one of the other things that I do want to say is, we do have an excellent partnership with our Division of Student Affairs. I believe the reason that we are very successful in our job here with safety and security is because of that relationship. I believe we work together very well, and I want to invite Dr. Reneau to come up and say a few words, um, if that will be okay?”.

H. Dr. Reneau says,

1. “So you all... You have to understand that I love getting around this group. I love the energy that comes from this group. I love the collective, the talents, the thoughtful leadership that comes from this group. If you saw any of my socials today, you saw that I was bragging on SGA and our speaker right here, and I just, I really am impressed with your leadership all the time. What I want you to know, though, is this, because I don't want this to get lost on me. We are living in such polarized environments that are telling us too often, these environments are pulling people apart, right? It is teaching us to pull apart instead of bringing folks together. And trust in institutions across the world, across the country, the institutions period is fragile. Dialogue is harder and assumptions are easier than actually listening in relationships. You know, people make assumptions, run with it, because it's easy, you know? And when you think about relationships, that's where the rubber meets the road. That's

where the work is. And so, what I need you to do, and I need you to really sit with this and understand your role as senators, the complexity of the work in SGA. The reality is that you are leading, and you are responding with intentionality, you are responding with courage, and you are responding, at this moment, you are meeting this moment in time with much maturity. You are welcoming, you know, the fact that you have welcomed... Our police department as a liaison, in this space, I will tell you, is something that sets you apart from a lot of your counterparts in the state or across the country. And it shows that you have wisdom and the ability to lean in. What it also shows is that by you doing this, it shows that you are choosing connection over distance, and that you are choosing relationship over retreat. And what I wish is that folks out in the community, folks across the nation, could see how you were choosing relationships rather than retreat. That's important. You could be used as a model for a lot of folks. I also want you to know that this decision sends a powerful message about student leadership at NIU. Leadership in complex times is not about standing taller. It is about standing closer. You have to get closer to people. So, what I want NIUPD to hear is that I have so much trust and belief in the individuals that serve on this campus, because they do it with head, they do it with heart. This Chief right here, I back, I support, and I appreciate the vision and the leadership and how he wants to be so... essentially transformative in the lives of our students. I want you to know that, you know, in NIUPD, the fact that they are also showing up just not simply as important, because I have worked on multiple college campuses. This model right here that you see with these leaders that are wearing this uniform, I can tell you, trust and believe it's not like that all over the place, right? The fact that they are showing up not simply as enforcement, but they want to be partners in community with you. This reflects commitments to community policing, relationship building, and you and SGA. So, our NIUPD partners and SGA, you didn't wait. The leadership lesson is this. You didn't wait for trust to happen. Right? You have to build conditions for trust to happen. And that's what she did. And I need you to understand that, because that takes attention, that takes courage. And that is going to be something as leaders, when you graduate into the world of work, you need to take that lesson with you everywhere you go. You have to build the conditions for trust. And so, in moments

like these, leadership, I just want you to know, it isn't about power, it's about proximity. It's about proximity. It's easy to make the assumptions, it's easy to run with it. It's easy too, but when you are close up with somebody, it's a heck of a lot harder to want to berate, to, you know, assign blame to past aspersions, to go on other things. If someone is close up with you, you have to, it forces you to sit. It forces you to examine it, forces you to go toward rather than away. And so, I need you to know that, you know, as a Vice President for this institution, a world that teaches us separation, choosing partnership is an act of courage. And you both... are leading into that, and you are demonstrating. And more importantly, you are demonstrating this campus. You are modeling the way for what we hope our students to do in life when things get hot. So, I need to know that, you know, your modeling collaborative leadership, you're modeling mutual respect, and you're modeling shared care for our community. And I am so grateful for you. We are a stronger campus when we build our relationships, and when we build strong relationships, and we extend a hand rather than build a higher wall. And we change culture, and you're changing culture. And I just want to say, thank you, thank you, thank you. I appreciate you all”.

I. Dr. John says,

1. “So, I just want to end off on this. I do want to echo the sentiments of Dr. Reneau when he says that we're looking to build relationships way beforehand. These conversations should be happening before somebody needs to call the police for whatever their concern, or thing that they need to handle. And that's why we're here. We really want to develop these relationships and want these to be genuine relationships. We do understand that sometimes conversations may be difficult, but we're ready for those conversations and what we want to do is build together and talk about these together so we can get through whatever it is that's in our way. So, I appreciate your time. Thank you to the SGA Leadership and all of you guys for everything that you guys do for our campus community. We really appreciate it. And if there are no other questions, we are going to kind of leave, so we're not, we don't interrupt the meeting. We are very cognizant of, like, not interrupting so please don't take our exit as.....”

J. Dr. Reneau adds,



1. “[Laughs] [Inaudible] You need to get through your stuff”.

K. Dr John responds,

1. “[Chuckles] Yes”.

L. Speaker Gonzalez says,

1. “Thank you once again for your time”.

## **OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER REPORT**

M. Deputy Speaker’s Report

1. There is none.

N. Parliamentarian's Report

1. There is none.

O. Clerk’s Report

1. There is none

## **COMMITTEE REPORT**

A. Chairperson of Student Life and Greek Affairs’ report

1. There is none.

B. Chairperson of Campus Life and Environmental Affairs’ report

1. There is none.

C. Chairperson of Public Affairs’ report

1. There is none.

D. Chairperson of Organizational Oversight’s report

1. There is none.

E. Chairperson of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion’s report

1. Chairperson Boinecki says,
  - a. “Yes. We had attempted to meet this past Thursday, but since the original environment, it's different. We are working out, you know different times and dates, but we're looking at Saturdays, virtually, just to make sure everyone [can attend]. This works for the director, and, um, a lot of those here as well. So, I will be arranging that”.

F. Chairperson of Board of Elections’ report

1. There is none.

## **EXECUTIVE REPORT**

### **A. President's report**

1. There is none.

### **B. Vice-President's report**

1. There is none.

### **C. Treasurer's report**

1. There is none.

### **D. Deputy Treasurer's report**

1. There is none.

### **E. Chief of Staff's report**

1. There is none.

### **F. Student Trustee's Report**

1. Student Trustee Innis says in a written report read by Speaker Gonzalez,
  - a. "Good afternoon and happy New Year. I hope everyone had a wonderful and relaxing time over the winter holidays and have hit the ground running for our 2026 Spring semester. The Board of Trustees had our first round of Committee meetings this Thursday February 19th and voted on the following action items:  
Recommendations for Faculty and Supportive Professional Staff Sabbatical Leaves for the 2026-2027 Academic Year, Request to Transition Tenure Homes – College of Health and Human Sciences, Request to Transition Tenure Homes – College of Education, Request for New Master of Science in Cybersecurity, Request for Deletion of the Minor in Cognitive Science, Request for Deletion of Bachelor of Science in Fashion Merchandising, Request for Deletion of Bachelor of Science in Rehabilitation and Disability Services, Fiscal Year 2027 Room and Board Pricing Recommendations, Fiscal Year 2027 Undergraduate Tuition Pricing Recommendation, Fiscal Year 2027 Graduate Tuition Pricing Recommendation, Fiscal Year 2027 Law Tuition Pricing Recommendation, Fiscal Year 2027 Undergraduate, Graduate, and Law Student Fee Pricing, Laundry Services Contract, Blackboard Learn Software License, Microsoft Enrollment Contract Renewal, Investment and Cash Management Policy, Honorary Doctorate Recommendations for Theo Baustert, Collective Bargaining Agreement for the International Brotherhood of

Electricians, Chapter 364, Physical Plant. The full details of which can be found at: <https://www.niu.edu/board/meetings/2026/index.shtml>. As we approach the Student Government Association election, I implore each and every member of SGA to promote and encourage their fellow students to cast their votes next month. I wish you all luck as we approach midterms and encourage you to finish out the first half of the semester strong before what I expect is a much-needed Spring Break. Thank you all for your hard work and your unwavering support of the NIU student body”.

## **CABINET REPORT**

### **A. Director of Diversity, Equity and, Inclusion**

1. There is none.

### **B. Director of Organizational Development**

1. There is none.

### **C. Director of Athletics**

1. There is none.

### **D. Director of Student Life and Greek Affairs**

1. There is none.

### **E. Director of Public Affairs**

1. There is none.

### **F. Director of Academic Affairs**

1. There is none.

### **G. Director of Campus Life and Environmental Affairs**

1. There is none.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. SB57022: A bill to restructure Executive Directorships**

- a. Senator Boinecki motioned.
- b. Senator Zimmer so moved.
- c. Speaker Gonzalez says,
  - i. “As stated in the last meeting we have, what this bill aims to do is modify the current directorships and broaden the scope of the work that they're

doing. The purpose of this is to increase the workload for all our directors and to refine what specific commitments they have to do. Additionally, one of the requirements is that, aside from being required to attend any meetings directed by the President or Chief of Staff, they have to submit weekly [staff] reports which can be available upon request. This is upon request by anyone, including senators. The goal of this provision is to ensure that even though there are no longer hard objectives that they have to do, they are still continuing and conducting their work, official business, which [is] being kept track by weekly reporters. This [bill] also changes the Director of Campus Life and Environmental Affairs to the Director of Campus and Academic Affairs to highlight the increased role in academics, but also to negate an action taking the 55<sup>th</sup> Session when the Director of Academic Affairs was removed”.

- d. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is discussion or debate.
- e. There is none.
- f. Speaker Gonzalez calls for a vote.
- g. The legislation passes unanimously.

B. SB57023: A bill to adjust SGA Committees

- a. Senator Kushimo motioned.
- b. Senator Zimmer so moved.
- c. Speaker Gonzalez says,
  - i. “Because we are adjusting our directors, this following bill adjusts Senate committees because Directors serve to record the minutes for these meetings. It makes sense that Senate committees also be readjusted. None of the provisions of what [committees] can do is being lost, and of any instances, small instances, such as the form of Campus Life and Environmental Affairs [which] will take on more actions related to academics [being Campus and Academic Affairs Committee]. And clearly separated the duties from the SOGA committee. In addition, it also strikes a part of the bylaws which have duplicate functions for standing committee procedures [as could be a source] for great confusion. So, this

is all being consolidated in one simple format, which you can see on screen as section 8, and section B, and section C”.

- d. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is discussion or debate.
  - e. There is none.
  - f. Speaker Gonzalez calls for a vote.
  - g. The legislation passes unanimously.
- C. SB57024: A bill to clarify and codify Senator removal
- a. Senator Kushimo motioned.
  - b. Senator Zimmer so moved.
  - c. Speaker Gonzalez says,
    - i. “So, what this bill aims to do is provide a clearer instruction on how Senators can be removed for instances not already mentioned within the SGA Bylaws. This is just to ensure that the Speaker cannot just unanimously remove someone based on their will. Additionally, the provisions regarding the Senator removed from the Senate, for any reason, prohibiting them from returning back for a certain position or any other appointed position, is also just being transferred over to this new section, section 7. And there is no change in the old provisions for that matter”.
  - d. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is discussion or debate.
  - e. There is none.
  - f. Speaker Gonzalez calls for a vote.
  - g. The legislation passes unanimously.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. SB57025: A bill to revise attendance requirements for Budget presentations
- a. Senator Kushimo motioned.
  - b. Senator Zimmer so moved.
  - c. Speaker Gonzalez says,
    - i. “Under the current bylaws for all student organizations, it requires a President, Vice President, and Treasurer to attend a budget presentation before they can apply for annual funding. Since these presentations are

dependent on the SGA Treasurers schedule, it can be difficult for student organizations [if they] are unable to get all of those noted executive board members to attend the required budget [presentation]. Instead, the change allows [at least one] representatives said to attend the meeting, making the process much easier for student organizations, but that way it also doesn't create undue hardships for student organizations just because they were unable to attend the meeting because of a scheduling conflict. And it's also not right for student organizations to be denied funding just because time was an issue. So, this just helps to clarify that regardless”.

- d. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is discussion or debate.
- e. There is none.
- f. This bill has been tabled for the next meeting.

B. SB57026: A bill to clarify SGA Supreme Court

- a. Senator Kushimo motioned.
- b. Senator Zimmer so moved.
- c. Speaker Gonzalez says,
  - i. “As in reference to what I mentioned in my Speaker's report, regarding to obscure provisions that were passed in the hey days of the 55<sup>th</sup> Session, One of them was from SR55050 which clarified that the SGA Senate can act as the SGA Supreme Court in a case that justices had recused themselves due to objectivity. Prior to looking at the clause and looking towards our current state of the SGA Supreme Court where we're unable to find a 3<sup>rd</sup> justice for the court to run. With this bill specifically does is that it expands that provision that was already laid out to begin with, and expands it to include that so long as the case is not related to SGA's Elections, or Constitutionality of legislation passed by the Senate, and the Supreme Court is unable to meet because it lacks core unnecessary, then the SGA Senate will act as the Supreme Court, with all senators acting as justices and the Speaker acting as Interim Chief Justice. The reason why the provision forbids SGA Elections is due to the confidentiality nature of SGA elections, but also earlier within the 57<sup>th</sup> Session we approved a

special route in case the Supreme Court was unable to meet. And that was having student government officials and Student Involvement officials hold a panel that would act as a kind of final intermediary, which provides more fairness. The reason why constitutionality of legislation passed by the Senate is not something that the Senate themselves cannot be allowed [to judge] is because of conflict of interest, of the cases about constitutionality of legislation. It does not make sense that the same body, to rule on unconstitutionality of that legislation, if they were the ones that passed it. So that is why that is explicitly forbidden. This is not to replace the Supreme Court. This is just, like so far from the 56<sup>th</sup> and 57<sup>th</sup> Session, where if there's a case that needs to be heard, then Senate can act as the Supreme Court. Because currently under the wordings if a case was to be submitted to Supreme Court, but the Supreme Court cannot meet due to quorum, then the case or ruling of whatever it was at that time would remain. It is unfair for students or even student organizations, depending on the nature of the case, to not have heard or chance of appeal, just because the SGA was unable to have that branch of government function. So, this is a way to help students”.

- d. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is discussion or debate.
- e. There is none.
- f. This bill has been tabled for the next meeting.

C. SR57029: A resolution to appoint a Senator

- a. Senator Kushimo motioned.
- b. Senator Zimmer so moved.
- c. Candidate Mostaert says,
  - i. “Hi, I'm Sam. Just a heads up. I, uh, just got over a sickness, so if I sound a little congested, I promise I'm not contagious anymore. But anyways, I love the Santa Monster. I am currently a third year here at NIU. I'm majoring in political science with a minor in Spanish and global studies. And I am standing here before you because I want to share our position as a senator in the past. And the reason why is, as a student here at NIU, I

have experienced life doing this. I have had a work study job since I was in my freshman year. And I wrote as a supervisor where I helped, I worked with students such as athletes, not coordinators, academic professors, and all that. And I've also been a part of the foreign residence language program. In this program, we practice speaking not only language, but we practice engaging with the community. We practice working with the College of Liberal Arts, the [Department] of Language that includes, by the way, that's like all the ages, like French, Spanish, German, whatever you can think of. And with that being said, we take part in nature, that's life, the town show, and the international antenna. And with this, we help communicate with the public, we help to communicate with the crowd and get more community activity. I'm also currently working with a professor in my sustainability department managing volunteers for birthdays. So, we're working on getting more active participation between Nlu students and campus. We've also the community of DeKalb, because that's just as important. So, while I'm up here, in front of all of you, and as you know, as hard-working students in every you know, I specifically brought to the attention of SGA, because I actually first heard about it when I was reading the Northern Star. And as a student, we read the Northern Star there were a lot of different stories. You have stories about, uh, what's going on campus, stories about student opinions, and that's actually what resonated with me first, is the student opinions, because as somebody who's really interested in advocacy, I feel like that is a major important part. Students made up the university. And there are a lot of issues, especially in that you talk to students about, that they express, they don't always realize where they can go for that. When I was campaigning, I often told people I would start off asking, "do you know what SGA is?" "Do you know who government is?" And only very few would raise their hands, not because they haven't heard about it, but they don't actually truly know where to go to advocate for themselves. And I wanted to help with that alongside with you guys. I was talking to



some peers who were having some issues with [DuSable] hall. One of my kids was explaining to me that, sex-, accessibility, my apologies. And you saw those very poorly, and they were on crutches and the elevator took 4 months before it was repaired, which made it almost impossible for them to get into their classes. And they were contacting the school about it, but not, like, nothing was being done until it was fixed. And that's not okay. I also, with that being said, I... Oh, yes, dinning halls. A lot of people, a lot of people have complaints on time, you always hear on campus, and I know that's an ongoing problem, but I would love to work with you guys to help with, because a lot of students have, they've talked about that. They don't feel like, even though the dinning halls presenting options, and they don't really have options. And I know I was talking to a professor who they're trying to work with gardens on campus and such to possibly get that food to go to the dinning halls. And I want to continue that work in progress with you guys. I hope to represent the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, but also the school at large. And I please welcome any questions on topics or anything that you want to ask me, please do”.

- d. Speaker Gonzalez asks for questions.
  - e. There is none.
  - f. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is discussion or debate.
  - g. There is none.
  - h. Speaker Gonzalez calls for a vote.
  - i. The legislature passes unanimously.
- D. SR57030: A resolution to initiate a referendum regarding the Residence Hall Association
- a. Senator Kushimo motioned.
  - b. Senator Salerno so moved.
  - c. Speaker Gonzalez says,
    - i. “So, for this resolution, I will call in for a request to table and send the piece to the now Campus and Academic Affairs Committee. But I will still provide rationale for the resolution itself. So, the resolution itself came from discussions I had with some of the community advisors or CAs here

on campus, one of them being SGA's own, Senator Uhrine. The rationale behind us was to understand and explore ways to assist and help address the needs of our students who live on campus. The Residents Hall Association, for those who do not know, or the RHA, was a student organization that was made up of CAs that would help to hear the voices of those living amongst the different residence halls, here at NIU. From the conversation I've spoken with of many people who were part of the organization, it was primarily centered around student activities than hearing primary concerns for students who lived in these residence halls themselves. The idea being, though, was to bring back the Resident Hall Association, perhaps on as a subunit of the SGA as others to the governments do across the United States, or back as a student organization, but with a different mission statement and purpose in mind than just focus on student events. The idea being they were more focused on the issues going on in these residence halls, around campus, and then act as not only as a mediator, which amongst themselves, the students living in their residence halls, NIU Housing Administration, but also the SGA, so we can advocate for this subset of students. The only reason why I would request a motion to table, and the rationale for this resolution as a referendum, were to be gauging student interest and reviving the RHA. In the conversations I've had with people, both in the past, of the RHA and even students living on campus themselves, there has been a wide variety of opinions regarding if they should be brought back under this proposed new idea. So, therefore, a right for referendum was going to be initiated by the passage of this resolution, as given to us in our powers by the SGA Constitution, to ask students directly if they would like to see the Residents Hall Association revived, as mentioned in the stated [previous] framework, if possible. The referendum itself would be non-binding per SGA Bylaws, meaning that, regardless of whatever students stated, it does not affect either direction or force SGA to take an official policy action in this regard, either as an organizational whole, to the NIU administration or

even upon individual members of SGA. Their rationale in requesting a motion to table and send to a committee is to further redevelop the whereas, but also hear more voices from students, after some further conversations I've had since the adoption of the Senate agenda for today. However, I'm also happy to hear the opinions of the senators present here”.

- d. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is discussion or debate.
  - e. There is none.
  - f. Senator Zimmer calls to table.
  - g. Senator Kushimo seconds.
  - h. Speaker Gonzalez calls for a vote.
  - i. The motion passes and the resolution is tabled and sent to Campus Life and Environmental Affairs Committee or the renamed Campus & Academic Affairs Committee for revisions.
- E. SR57031: A resolution to recommend revisions concerning undergraduate courses and admissions to the Graduate School.
- a. Senator Kushimo motioned.
  - b. Senator Zimmer so moved.
  - c. Speaker Gonzalez says,
    - i. “Let me provide some backstory on SR 57031. Within the fall semester of the past year, there was a situation regarding a student revolving one of the graduate programs here at NIU. It was in regards to irregularities with the admissions process, as well as what was seen as the deficiencies. Graduate programs here at the university can state, as per the requirements, if a student fails to meet certain requirements, they could still be conditionally admitted within the program itself so long as [they can] complete undergraduate courses that meets those deficiencies that the program stated. However, in the case of a student who contacted the SGA email address, and I have worked upon them by even speaking with the Dean of the Graduate School, Dr. Ahern, about it. And the exact issue was the deficiencies that they were told to take were not explicitly stated anywhere

within the Graduate Catalog, nor on the websites page for the department. The entirety of the experience was so detrimental to that student that, even though they're now part of the program, they no longer wanted to pursue any sort of remediation after I checked in with them or at the beginning of this fall of this month. Because no student should have to fight for their education here at this university. It was a stated objective and goal, of SGA to the Faculty Senate, during the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting [that] academics is a priority of this administration. Based on the event of that student, [in addition] to conversing with other graduate students [of] similar situations [that have] occurred regarding similar aspects, I'm putting forward this resolution, which would simply make recommendations to the Graduate School [based on all those students' experiences]. Therefore, it can be codified in the next applicable Graduate Catalog to make recommendations involving communication for conditional enrollment, and requirements for the student and be a resource available, to ensure that provisions that are required by departments, are reflected in the Graduate Catalog. And to make any revisions, if departments need to, as needed. And as well as ensuring departments have standardized admission requirements and a process depending on those needs as well. The intent of these recommendations is to inform the Graduate School that the situation was simply based on lack of communication, but as well as clear requirements that were found on the Graduate Catalog and the department's website. The intent of this resolution is not punitive. It is not. But the idea behind it is to make sure that this doesn't happen again and to ensure that all requirements are clearly laid out between the Graduate Catalog and any department's website. Because at the end of the day, students rely on the Graduate Catalog, or any catalog, to determine what are the requirements and processes they need to meet in order to complete their degree. That is why this resolution is being proposed. And before I open up to discussion and debate, I will not be providing the name of [that one] specific graduate program, out of respect towards students, as they

requested it, but also it's because it is not an intention, as again stated before, to be punitive against the department or the program in particular, but to instead address the underlying concerns being the lack of clear standardization and clear guidelines impacting multitude of students”.

- d. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is discussion or debate.
- e. There is none.
- f. Speaker Gonzalez calls for a vote.
- g. The legislation passes unanimously.

## **GOOD OF THE ORDER**

A. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is anything for the good of the order.

a. Speaker Gonzalez says,

- i. “NIU Advocacy Day for 2026. Make your voice heard in Springfield.

Advocacy Day is your chance to meet with legislators and speak up for higher education funding and policies that impact NIU and students like you. The date is March 25th, 2026. And of course, the location is Springfield, Illinois, straight to the Illinois State Capitol Building. Free bus will depart from the Barsema Alumni and Visitors Center at 6:45 AM, if you're a student. This will be in nearly all day event. Why participate? You gain valuable advocacy experience, network with policymakers, represent NIU and student employees in higher education. Their seats are limited for Advocacy Day. Registration closes, March 15<sup>th</sup> or whenever seats are full. I do have a flyer which has a QR code that provides you direct access for NIU Advocacy Day. And as mentioned in my Speakers report, it directly connects with the efforts that was approved by the Faculty Senate resolution. I would also like to remind, of course, all senators, to please be aware of political engagements, just because we are an apolitical organization. But at the end of the day, we're still advocating for all students at NIU”.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there are any announcements.

- a. Senator Galloway says,
  - i. “I would just like to say, oh, we mentioned it several times in a meeting. We're in the state of the university. Northern Star Reports, [Governor] Pritzker proposes \$104 million for NIU, \$26 million short of the University's request. So, I will bring that to everybody's attention if you haven't seen it. As the Speaker of the Senate said we have historically been an underfunded institution, and it's important, not just on advocacy day we see them, but also on campus, in terms of, you know, upcoming elections, to help [inaudible]. And I really just hope to see this come from the students, that the university wants to increase the tuition costs. Everybody that I talked to is really talking about the money. [Inaudible] So, consider coming to advocacy day. Thank you.”
- b. Speaker Gonzalez says,
  - i. “I have just one. For any one currently in the Senate chamber [is] interested in running for the next SGA elections, the final candidate meeting is being hosted at 5:30 PM in the Stephen Agee Conference room”.

## ADJOURNMENT

1. Speaker Gonzalez calls for a motion to adjourn the meeting.
2. Senator Lozano 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 passes and the meeting is adjourned at 5:26 PM.

## CLOSING ATTENDANCE

7. **Voting Members Present:** Senator Tinajero, Senator Zimmer, Senator Galloway, Senator Asante, Senator Owusu, Senator Kushimo, Senator Adoye, Senator Boniecki, Senator Gunther, Senator Mostaret, Senator Sanders, Senator Kucharzyk
1. **Voting members Absent:** Senator Sanders

2. **Voting members Excused:** Senator Brownlee, Senator Salerno, Senator Lozano, Senator Walker, Senator Uhrine
3. **Candidate Members Present:**

**MINUTES SUBMITTED BY**

Speaker Gonzalez on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026

57<sup>th</sup> Senate on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026