

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 4:38 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 Uhrine, Senator Salerno, Senator Zimmer, Senator Mostaert, Senator Owusu, Senator Kushimo, Senator Adeoye, Senator Boniecki, Senator Lozano, Senator Gunther, Senator Kurcharzyk
5. **Voting members Absent:** Senator Brownlee, Senator Asante,
6. **Voting members Excused:** 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 31st, February 6th, and February 20th
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 31st, February 6th, and February 20th 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. “Welcome to all the new senators, welcome on your official first day for the 57th Session. Both of the new senators for this session have already been emailed about committee assignments and their availability, and I am requesting you get that to me as soon as possible. Everyone else, I hope your committees have been doing well in their own regard. So far, for what I've been doing this week is following up on the resolution that was passed last week, but as well as looking towards the future by reviewing some of our bylaws and making sure that they're clearly up to date. I will make sure a new clean version of all our changes made to our constitution and bylaws will be made public at some point next week, assuming I can get update on the status of the bills that's in old business for this current Senate meeting as well. Additionally, the efforts I was working with, Professor Mark Van Wienman, and we'll see that in today's resolution regarding the endorsement of the Faculty Senate resolution. I've been also working hard with keeping up with the ministry of duties and, of course, maintaining the meetings I have with the various shared governance committees here at the university as well. I've been making sure that all of Student Government Association is up to date and kept in a smooth, orderly fashion”.

SPECIAL REPORT

- B. There is none.

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER REPORT

C. Deputy Speaker's Report

- 1. There is none.

D. Parliamentarian's Report

- 1. There is none.

E. 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. "DEI committee is meeting tomorrow at 4:30 PM, virtually on Microsoft Teams. So, I just wanted to announce that and continue working on our Unity Dinner. We will keep working towards our goals".

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. There is none.

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. SB57025: A bill to revise attendance requirements for Budget presentations
 - a. Senator Kushimo motioned.
 - b. Senator Zimmer so moved.
 - c. Speaker Gonzalez says,

i. “As discussed last week, this is just to clarify who could attend the budget presentations. Before, the [student organizations] President, Vice President, and Faculty Advisor had to attend that special presentation in order for the organization to receive any type of funding. Based on Treasure Lazaric’s recommendation, we’re going to change that to [make it] at least one representative. Especially because those budget presentations are scheduled based on the Treasurer’s own schedule, and therefore to expect any organization to have all available members present at whatever given time and date that is, would be extraordinary. And we also don’t want to create undue burdens on student organizations, especially when it comes to their funding”.

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 in a vote of __12__, __0__, __0__.

B. SB57026: A bill to clarify SGA Supreme Court

h. Senator Kushimo motioned.

i. Senator Zimmer so moved.

j. Speaker Gonzalez says,

i. “As discussed last week, what this bill aims to do is just expands the already established provisions for the Supreme Court. Specifically, currently the Supreme Court [has their] duties and responsibilities transferred to the Senate, only in the instance if there is no quorum solely because the justices must recuse themselves. Presently, we only have two members in the Supreme Court, and we need three in order for the Supreme Court to function. Both former President Ja’Kobe Jones, current President David Rivera, and then also I have been working very hard to try and find a 3rd member. Even though we get nibbles and interests, they have come short before a full official appointment. So, just to make sure that we have in our books another avenue for students to appeal, especially regarding student organizational concerns, which they only have the

organization of a site remediation procedures that we approved at the beginning of the session, there is another avenue of appeal in case the Supreme Court is unable to meet because of the lack of quorum. Student organizations and students themselves should not be penalized and have a potential avenue of appeal removed from them just because one branch of student government is unable to meet. Just because we've been unable to find someone willing to be appointed to this position. This change explicitly forbids the Senate from assuming those powers if, in the instance, the court lacks quorum for Board of Election appeals or anything related to SGA elections as that's already handled by procedures that we approved at the beginning of this session. Also, anything regarding constitutionality of legislation passed by the Senate, as it does not make sense if Senate itself is the one policing itself, if that were ever to be the case. So that is why it's explicitly forbidden”.

- k. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is discussion or debate.
- l. There is none.
- m. Speaker Gonzalez calls for a vote.
- n. The legislation passes in a vote of __12__, __0__, __0__.

NEW BUSINESS

C. SB57027: A bill to implement Senate Continuation Contingency Plan

- a. Senator Kushimo motioned.
- b. Senator Tinajero so moved.
- c. Speaker Gonzalez says,
 - i. “Executive order 57001 issued by President David Rivera earlier in the semester after the resignation of President Ja’Kobe Jones call for just general [assurance], making sure that we have some sort of contingency plan in place. This is about anything and doesn't have to be related to the resignation of the President. Part of this bill is reviewing Senate operations. The rationale behind this bill was looking back to the SGA's past during the COVID-19 pandemic in which it was completely sudden to

the Senate, and by extension, the rest of the world as well. Another issue related to when the pandemic happened was the Student Government Association lost files preceding the pandemic, during the pandemic, and even one session after the pandemic. The only thing I had in those intervening years was the legislation passed by the Senate, but I have no record of those agendas or minutes of those meetings. For whatever reason, somehow prior to the 56th Session, when I was appointed Deputy Speaker, those files were already long gone. So as of right now, I have no current accessible way of recovering those files and that is partially attributed to the panic surrounding the pandemic itself due to SGA's clear lack of continuation of operations. Another thing was, quite recently some weeks ago, the HSC had a fire alarm. That also brought attention to a case where SGA's offices were damaged beyond repair that we couldn't occupy or even the Sky Room was damaged. Especially because I've had issues with flooding in my own office over the summer itself. And so that got me thinking, which led to this proposed bill. What this bill basically says is that in the instance of any sort of emergency or pandemic, the Speaker should converse and get approval from the SGA Advisor before they set out a proclamation to the Senate that they must move toward a virtual setting. Once things move to a virtual setting, the Senate must approve or reapprove their meeting time, states, and locations, which would default to [Microsoft] Teams because they would have to still comply with OMA. Additionally, if committees need to be moved as well to an online space, that would be part of the proclamation. All paid positions within the Senate will still need to maintain and publicize office hours. As well as [when] they will be able to receive any sort of digital call. In lieu of having their physical office space, because if it's a pandemic, they're not going to be on campus to begin with. There's also, of course, built-in provisions to allow alternative meeting places as well. For instance, say the Sky Room is not available. Senate can still meet at a different place. Any emergency proclamations would end at the end of that session, unless

after consultation with the advisor, they need to be expanded into the next year. Again, keeping in mind of a potential other hypothetical pandemic in the future. And in all instances, as noted in clause G, to prepare for an event Senate must move to digital or virtual operations, every Senate session needs to make sure that all files are kept away in the central repository for student government. And so, these will contain files such as the agendas, minutes but as well as any sort of staff reports as well. Just to make sure that no files will ever be lost again”.

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

D. SB57028: A bill to repeal the Senator Stipend

- a. Senator Boinekci motioned.
- b. Senator Zimmer so moved.
- c. Speaker Gonzalez says,
 - i. “The senator stipend was introduced towards the end of the 55th session. The intention of the senator stipend was to promote incentivization for student government [senators] to conduct the word. It was introduced by then-Clerk of the Senate, Manny Corpuz, who eventually became Speaker of the Senate during the 56th Session, last year. Throughout the entirety of the 56th Session, as I was Deputy Speaker at that time worked with Manny to revise the senator stipend rubric and monitor the progress of it throughout the entirety of the 56th Session. We didn't believe that it met the mark of what was intended when it was initially passed in the 55th Session, and therefore, [a bill] was introduced to remove it at the end of the 56th Session. Unfortunately, due to the final Senate meeting lacking quorum to meet, that bill eventually died in the Senate session because it was not able to be approved, which on that same meeting day, when it was ready to be approved. This time, it's being brought back after in this spring semester, because I attempted to play with the Senator Stipend Rubic, which was approved by the Senate for this [present] session year and I did

monitor the progress in the fall semester. However, much like the 56th Session, the reason why you're here in the Senate to begin with isn't about some sort of stipend. It is about the work and the dedication you have to your fellow NIU students. And even still, the incentivization that was explored upon in the 55th Session that was believed to have that effect never ended materializing. Therefore, I find reason that that experiment that Clerk Corpuz had at the time has come to an end. It, of course, is up to future Speakers and Senators as well to reintroduce this type of stipend, if they have a different rationale for it. But for this point of instance, especially because of the costs with paying out Senators for the Stipend, which we could be using those funds to support other initiatives, such as we saw in the month of October with the Huskie Pantry resolution, as well as an additional idea I have that we can utilize our funding pending annual funding applications being due after March 31st, which I will delve more further into that idea. But that is why the senator stipends I'm hereby proposing to remove it. And the reason why Election Commissioner Guerrero's is listed as a sponsor was because he was Parliamentarian during the 56th Session, and he sponsored that initial introduction [bill] to remove the stipend, and I did reach out to him, seeing if that's something that he still [wanted] to sponsor, which he stated "Yes". So, that is why you see Election Commissioner Guerrero's name attached as a sponsor. Just to make you all aware as well. Before I forget, there is a "Be Further Resolved" that even though the legislation takes effect immediately, you, as a 57th Session, will still be entitled to your spring semester stipend as well. So, it is not in no way going to affect your stipend for the end of this year. So, the 57th Session will be the final session if this gets approved to receive the senator stipend"

- d. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is discussion or debate.
- e. Senator Boinecki asks,
 - i. "So, like, logistics question; How much would be saved in funding if we repeal the Senator stipend?"

- f. Speaker Gonzalez responds,
 - i. “I can quickly get you those numbers. Um, right off the top of my head, I believe what the amount that Speaker Corpuz gave for the spring semester, um, because I do not have the totals from the fall semester, currently up in mind, but I believe we approached a figure close to, I believe, almost \$2,000 or something among those lines”.
 - g. Senator Uhrine asks,
 - i. “Instead of getting rid of this, this stipend, what if we utilize that for graduating Senators [where] you can get the stole or cord when they graduate from when they graduate from the SGA?”.
 - h. Speaker Gonzalez responds,
 - i. “That's something that, um, that's something that we don't necessarily have to codify in the Bylaws [and] something that the Office and the Speaker can do on its own accord. The Speaker still has leeway, along with Treasurer approval to make those types of purchases possible. That's something that we can do, but that doesn't have to be something that's necessarily codified into the Bylaws”.
 - i. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is any further discussion or debate.
 - j. There is none.
 - k. This bill has been tabled for the next meeting.
- E. SB57029: A bill to redefine weekly staff reports.
- a. Senator Kushimo motioned.
 - b. Senator Salerno so moved.
 - c. Speaker Gonzalez says,
 - i. “So, last week where we passed the bill to restructure the Executive directorships, it got me thinking on the staff reports provision. Because the staff reports provision only really applied to directors, it should be made sure that we have that provision so anyone can request a staff report [from all paid SGA officials]. So, we can have accountability for our positions, me included, for the Senate. So that is why I wrote up this bill. What this bill aims to do is explicitly puts it in the Constitution, since the

Constitution is superior to the SGA Bylaws. And what it specifically does is that all paid positions, made explicit at the Constitutional level, to write weekly staff reports detailing their activities and other work conducted in their official capacity for their position. Including who they contacted as well, though they can remove who they explicitly contact with such as student organizations because that's also an issue of privacy as well and we want to respect that as well. As well, it should also be noted if they conducted that work during their scheduled office hours. Staff reports will just simply being submitted to that same repository for all files, and it would be up to the SGA Advisor to determine how procedures for requests [from students or Senate] would look like and how they would disperse it to those that are requesting the information. And I also put in [this] standard in the Bylaws themselves in [a] new standard section which details staff reports. There will still be both Presidential and Speaker of the Senate oversight to how that process plays out. That way there's still a level of student involvement over their own paid weekly reports. So that way it's not entirely putting it in the hands of the SGA advisor as well.”

- d. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is discussion or debate.
 - e. There is none.
 - f. This bill has been tabled for the next meeting.
- F. SR57033: A resolution to endorse Equitable Public University Funding Formula
- a. Senator Uhrine motioned.
 - b. Senator Kushimo so moved.
 - c. Speaker Gonzalez says,
 - i. “Last week, the Faculty Senate of Northern Illinois University on February 18th approved a resolution that endorses the Equitable Public University Funding Formula. What that formula does is it readjusts how the State of Illinois distributes funds for you public universities. Unlike a community college that gets most of the revenue from tuition, but as well as property tax, public universities [or] four-year universities, such as Northern Illinois University, receives most of this funding from tuition

from students but as well as funding from the state itself. Northern Illinois University along with many other public universities in the State of Illinois, such as Eastern Illinois University, have been chronically underfunded for years. The Board of Higher Education, IBHE, helped to put out the revised formula, but it's not endorsed it, which is part of some legislation in the Illinois legislature itself. The focus for the Senate resolution is just endorsing what the Faculty Senate has already stated, which is endorsing the formula itself. You must remember as a public university we also cannot take direct political stance so that is why the resolution is formulated in the specific way. But we are endorsing the full text of what the Faculty Senate has already put out there and that full text of what the Faculty Senate [approved], I have attached to our resolution itself. That way you as senators have a full idea what the intent is. I have it in contact with the author [of the Faculty Senate resolution], Mark Van Wienen, professor and President for the United Faculty Alliance, which is one of the unions here on campus. I discussed it with him about potentially endorsing the resolution submitted to Faculty Senate and he was enthusiastic about SGA's own efforts to endorse the resolution itself, which is why I'm putting it out here. In the past, SGA has always taken the stand for greater advocacy for more funding from the state of Illinois. There're several resolutions in my office from previous sessions from SGA that passed resolutions advocating for more MAP grants and other sources of funding as well. This is no different than those past efforts and continues our own efforts of advocacy to improve funding for our own university. I made sure I discussed [this resolution] with SGA leadership, which they were both on board, both President David Rivera and Treasurer Nicholas Lazarus. Both agree with the message of what we're doing for this resolution, which is why they have been added as authors and sponsors. This is something that [SGA] has always historically done, and this is something that directly impacts us here at this university itself. And you can read through more of the text of what the resolution says

such as the underfunding. As well as rising costs of student education, as well as student debt for graduating students approaching \$30,000. So, this is something that is of great importance, not just for here, but for students across the State of Illinois. That is why we're endorsing. That way, both SGA and Faculty Senate are [same] or aligned in the same message in this regard”.

- d. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there is discussion or debate.
- e. There is none.
- f. The legislation passes in a vote of __11__, __0__, __1__.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

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

- a. Speaker Gonzalez says,
 - i. “This message comes from Mark Van Weinen, he is the author of the Faculty Senate resolution. He specifically stated that, the University Professional of Illinois, the labor organization to which the professors and instructors at NIU belong, is funding a mega rally for April the 16th in the Capital, or Springfield, Illinois. It is to be a “Teach Out”, a big statement to the legislator, which will then be in session and to the public via the media, that we need full funding for higher education in Illinois. This is open to students and the intent is to send a message to reduce student debt, as well as increased funding for higher education as well. He's just calling on anyone interested, so this is both you, yourselves as senators, or even for the students of NIU, if they're interested in the Teach Out to email him. He will speak directly on this matter as well. The date is Tuesday, April the 16th, and there will be a bus departing here in DeKalb at 7 AM, and because Springfield is a bit of a long ways, it will be an all-day event. So, returning in the evening. Additionally, another thing for the Good of the Order is, as mentioned last week, there's also NIU Advocacy Day itself, which is for March 25th, 2026, which also hits on those similar themes, except this one is through the university itself. Similarly, a bus will be taking students from the HSC early in the morning and bring them to Springfield, where it would also be an all-day event. There are limited spaces

available, so please sign up if you are interested or also pass on the information to your constituents, as those spaces will run out by the deadline or whenever space itself runs out”.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Speaker Gonzalez asks if there are any announcements.

a. Senator Boniecki says,

- i. “The Campus Activity Board is holding a Bridgerton Ball tomorrow and it'll be at Altgeld Hall. There are over 100 people signed up so far, and there are over 200 spaces left open. This is a great opportunity to connect with your constituency and just have fun. So, I recommend you go.”

ADJOURNMENT

1. Speaker Gonzalez calls for a motion to adjourn the meeting.
2. Senator Kushimo so moved.
3. Senator Salerno 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 5:11 PM.

CLOSING ATTENDANCE

7. **Voting Members Present:** Senator Tinajero, Senator Uhrine, Senator Salerno, Senator Zimmer, Senator Mostaert, Senator Owusu, Senator Kushimo, Senator Adeoye, Senator Boniecki, Senator Lozano, Senator Gunther, Senator Kurcharzyk
1. **Voting members Absent:** Senator Brownlee, Senator Asante
2. **Voting members Excused:** Senator Walker
3. **Candidate Members Present:**

MINUTES SUBMITTED BY

Speaker Gonzalez on March 4th, 2026

57th Senate on February 27th, 2026