



# University of Florida Student Government *State of the Campus Address*

November 16, 2015 | Emerson Alumni Hall

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The State of the Campus Address serves to inform the UF Student Body about the initiatives SG has been working on so far this term and to update students on the progress of Student Government as the year continues.

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# LETTER FROM JOSELIN PADRON-RASINES

At the beginning of the year, we promised to be an accessible student government and I'm proud to say that we have kept that promise. Over the past semester, we have started weekly, public events with all three of the executive officers to give students an opportunity to meet with us and discuss campus affairs directly.

Outside of SG itself, we have already started lobbying for students' interests in Tallahassee & Washington D.C.; well before session has completely started in order to make sure that our needs are properly addressed in government. This year, we are focusing on keeping tuition and fees low for students, expanding summer bright futures, and funding the renovations for the Norman Hall. Additionally, we are working with the College of Fine Arts to continue the research and discussion into funding renovations of the music building.

As a whole, the executive branch has made diversity a priority for this administration and UF students, faculty and staff. We are also continuing our all gender bathroom conversion project to residence halls and more on-campus buildings to make UF a more inclusive campus for people of all gender identities. Additionally, I worked with my team to create a new SG Diversity Affairs advisory position to speak for inclusivity and over diversity awareness on campus. Through that, we gave mandatory diversity training to all executive branch staff to make them better aware of different perspectives at UF within their individual organizations.

As student government, we strive to listen to the students' needs and make positive changes for their benefits. At the beginning of our term, we heard numerous accounts of a need for more safe transportation on campus. In response to this, we distributed a Transportation Survey to students all over campus to hear their ideas for new transportation methods and how to improve the current ones. We are currently discussing many of these options with local transport interests.

So far this year, we have hosted numerous events on campus so far as well including: Sexual Assault Awareness Week, and now, in coordination with the State of Campus Address, Civic Engagement Week. This is just the beginning however, we will continue to keep making strides for the students throughout the rest of the year.

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# SG FINANCE STATUS

Since taking office in April, our main objective has been to put the needs of the students first and increase the transparency of Student Government financial processes. This summer, we amended the budget for this 2015-2016 fiscal year and, for the first time in history, we were able to have a decrease in Student Government's budget for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. This is a reflection of SG Finance's meticulous attention to detail when assessing the current year's budget, coupled with the desire to spend SG's money as mindfully as possible. In addition, we created a \$50,000 projects line so that SG can have money dedicated to projects we undertake. Some of these projects include the solar-powered picnic tables and the additional tables installed in Turlington Plaza.

In line with our goal of more transparency, we were able to create a Docutraq Transparency Report, which shows the approved Student Activity Requests submitted by campus organizations. This allows students to see how their Activity & Service fees are being spent by these organizations. This encourages students to take advantage of the services that Student Government provides because they can see specifically how their money played into its success.

With the help of Action SG, we created an event called Nickel and Dime With Nick to allow students the opportunity learn more about SG Finance and ask my Assistant Treasurers, Chief of Staff, or myself any questions. At the event, students are asked trivia questions such as how much SG's budget is, what services SG provides, and how much per credit hour they pay towards the budget. Many students were excited to learn more about SG Finance and even surprised by how much we fund.

Our goals for the rest of this year center on one main theme: having a lasting impact on the student body. One of our main projects right now is creating a professional business clothing lending closet for students: the Greater Gator Closet. We know that business attire is expensive and that not every student can afford it, especially if they only use it sparingly. We are working with various campus faculty members, including Associate Vice President Dr. Jen Day Shaw from the Dean of Students Office, to make this program a reality. We are very excited to provide this opportunity to all UF students!

We are working to make SG accessible and transparent. If there is any idea that a student has, this administration is committed to putting it into action.



# AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS

**Youth Leadership Conference (YLC)** is starting the first **Sponsorship Program** to cover the attendance cost of \$250 for up to 20 students from underprivileged areas that cannot afford the conference cost.

**Student Government Productions (SGP)** has put on 2 successful shows with **Fat Joe** and Gator Growl featuring: T.I., Echosmith & Jana Kramer. **Andy Grammer** will be coming later this month, and 3 other concerts are planned for Spring semester.

**Students Taking Action Against Racism (STAAR)** hosted a forum entitled “**What you can’t get back: the human costs of mass incarceration**” where panelists discussed the issues facing those who have been incarcerated. Panelists also discussed the correlation between color and incarceration rates. STAAR held a public screening of **Gator Tales**, a play based on the oral histories of the first black people to integrate the University of Florida and Gainesville high school.

In coordination with other organizations on campus, the **Freshman Leadership Council** planned 5 high-scale events in the fall semester such as **Pass the Plate**, **Food for Thought**, **Pumpkins in the Plaza** and **Heroes of UF**. They all obtained or are expected to gain at least 300 in attendance (some as high as 700).

**Gators Going Green** successfully started a bicycle tire **rubber recycling program** in the SG Bike Repair Shop in the Reitz Union and mapped out all of the **self-repair bike maintenance stations** on campus to increase student awareness of the services provided to them. Through a partnership with Greeks Going Green, UF was one of 16 universities across the United States to compete in the “**Kill the Cup Challenge**”: an effort to reduce the paper cup waste used in on-campus coffee shops. The winning university is currently under deliberation.

**External Affairs** has worked with SBP Joselin Padron-Rasines Padron-Rasines to lobby early for **tax-free textbooks, tuition, funding, and Bright Futures**. External Affairs has been working to extend those tax breaks. In coordination with the **Student Legislative Action Program**, External Affairs helped coordinate an informative legislative discussion.



# AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS

**ACCENT Speakers Bureau** partnered with Pride Student Union to host **Jim Obergefell**, a key player in one of the most consequential Supreme Court cases of the 21st century: same-sex marriage. To celebrate Homecoming Week, ACCENT brought newly retired **U.S. National Women's Soccer Player Abby Wambach** back to the University of Florida.

**Nightlife Navigators** hosted the first **Scooter Safety Week** to promote general safety practices and the benefits of wearing a helmet while scooting.

**Action SG** started the **#SGPowerHours** campaign where SG officials' office hours are publicized on social media and visitors are encouraged to share their stories and discussions through the SG social networks.

**Chomp the Vote** has already registered more people than the past two years combined with more than 300 registrations so far.

**Student Honor Code Administration** hosted **Conflict Resolution Day** and had over 50 people participate with their trained conflict coaches.

**Gator Innovators** held **UF Demo Day** with Guest Speaker **David Whitney** at University of Florida's Engineering Innovation Institute to give students a chance to see cutting edge advances in engineering and hear from a distinguished professional in the field.



# ADVISOR UPDATES

The Solicitor General, Nicholas Gurney, filed a brief with the UF SG Supreme Court to review the constitutionality of the Executive Committee.

Rachel Wise, SG Press Secretary, coordinated with The Independent Florida Alligator to set up a monthly column with SBP Joselin Padron-Rasines.

Graduate and Family Affairs Advisor Michael Vincent is working with Baby Gator to make child care more available on campus.

Harrison Magoutas, Technology Advisor, helped organized the UF Technology Fair which advises students on their resources on campus like the SG Printing Lab.

Legal Affairs Advisor Brandon Spierto helped lead the effort to expand Student Legal Services to part-time students, innovation academy students, and other affected parties.

Diversity Affairs Advisor Kalyani Hawaldar helped coordinate the all-gender bathroom conversion project on campus to make facilities more inclusive.



# CABINET'S CREATIONS

**Health Affairs** helped host **Climb UF**, event to raise awareness for the Cystic Fibrosis foundation. Not only did they have the presence of several Gator football players at the event, but they also received the endorsement of **Tim Tebow** on ESPN!

**Orange and Blue** had its first collaboration with the UAA this year to build hype for the Florida v. Georgia game with #WarfortheOar #FloridaFriday is a recurring event from the UAA to promote school spirit among students. They are also currently working on a UAA Meet & Greet event with student athletes.

**Academic Affairs** will soon be hosting "**Study with SG**". This event will be nights where students who attend will not only get snacks and refreshments to aid their studies, but connections with local tutoring agencies as well.

**Disability Affairs** hosted the largest and only **Accessibility Fair** aimed at informing students, faculty and staff with information about organizations that contribute to the lives of those that identify with having a disability and their allies.

**Veterans Affairs** hosted **Veterans' Walk** in honor of Veterans' Day for members of the armed forces in the Gainesville community.

**Women's Affairs** has held various **Yes Means Yes** seminars on campus to teach students about consent in a college environment.

**Career Development** organized the **Life After the Swamp: The Art of Negotiation** event to discuss how to negotiate a salary after getting a job offer.

**LGBT+ Affairs** held its first **Black Queer Collective**, a discussion group that served as a social and cultural body for LGBTQ+ students who identify as Black and/or African-American.

In coordination with **African Student Union**, **Chinese American Student Association** and **Gator Bhangra**, **multicultural cabinet** tabled in Turlington with **#UFCelebratesDiversity** to promote diversity on campus.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

**Freshman Leadership Council: Pass the Plate**  
November 17th, 2015, Plaza of the Americas at 11:00 AM

**ACCENT:**  
**A Conversation on Policing, Gun Violence, and Civil Rights  
with Al Sharpton and Ray Kelly**  
November 17th, 2015, Phillips Center, 8:00 PM

**External Affairs: Meet Your Local Officials Day**  
November 18th, 2015, Levin College of Law, Holland 180 at 6:30 PM

**Chomp The Vote: Bigger Than The Booth**  
November 19th, 2015, Graham Rec Room at 6:00 PM

**Housing Affairs: UF Housing Fair**  
November 20th, 2015, Reitz Union at 10:00 AM

**Women's Affairs & Interfaith Cabinet:**  
**Gender Across Faith: Asking the Big Questions**  
November 20th, 2015, Reitz Union at 6:00 PM

**SGP Presents Andy Grammer featuring Magic**  
November 20th, 2015, Flavet Field at 7:00 PM

**Health Affairs: Mental Health Awareness Week**  
December 1-4th, 2015

**Gator Leadership Cabinet: Greater Gator Conference**  
January 23rd, 2016

**Youth Leadership Conference**  
February 15th-17th, 2016

**SHCA: Ethics and Civility Week**  
March 2016.

