



USA Meeting Agenda

September 1, 2020 | 6:00 pm

- Welcome – Sami Ahmed – President, Utah State University
 - President Ahmed: This is our first official meeting. We met as a Presidency yesterday. Hopefully, we can get a sense of direction for the upcoming year. I'm looking forward to the work ahead of us.
- Approval and Introduction of Dexton Lake, Chief of Staff
 - *Motion to Approve: President Corbett/ Second: President Mills / Voting Body: Approved*
- Presidency Report
 - House Rules
 - President Ahmed: There are twelve bullet points, I will read through them really quick.
 - *Reading of the House Rules*
 - President Ahmed: Any questions with the House Rules? (*No questions*). Now, I would like to turn the time over to Matthew to discuss the website.
 - USA Website
 - President Griffin: We are updating the USA Website. I need from you all an autobiography of 150-175 words to add to the

website with initiatives, goals, and why you ran for president. Also, we need portraits for the website. I will send an email with this information as well. We need this information by the end of the week, preferably Sunday. If you have any questions on what it needs to look like, reference the website.

- President Ahmed: Please no full body photos.

○ Fees

- President Mills: I will talk to you all about budget and fees. We will not be collecting fees from universities since we will not be meeting at universities this year, we will be meeting over Zoom. We have a fee that needs to be paid to use the website. That cost is with *GoDaddy*. It's \$140.87.

- Linda Zimmerman: It is to keep the domain name and to use *WordPress* as a backend service as well.

- Motion to use \$140.87 to pay for the USA Domain

- *Motion: President Mills/ Second: President Ferney/
Voting Body: Passed*

○ Budgetary Update

- President Ahmed: Some of you may have noticed that the Chief of Staff stipend and other stipends in the budget, those don't need to be approved because it's part of the constitution.

- President Corbett: How does each institution contribute to these fees?

- Linda: It is all through full-time equivalent. We started with the Commissioner's Office. We continued paying the fifteen cents per full time equivalent. We dropped it down to thirteen cents last year and I believe the year

before. We have had a carry over the last couple of years. Last year they didn't spend a whole lot of money. It depends on the initiative. It depends on the full-time equivalent on how we issue fees.

- Representative Damron: Where does that money generally come from in each institution?
 - Linda: Some use student fees. At USU, Sami has a discretionary fund from the President that we pull from. It is solely up to the institution.
- Utah System of Higher Education Student Representative Report
 - Representative Damron: I sent an update in the Slack Channel. I will go through it again. We approved a bond for Dixie State. We introduced the Equity Resolution. Our inclusion and diversity group worked really hard with the Commissioner's Office to put that together. They are going to put together a couple of committees to have priority goals set on how we want to move forward in closing gaps and stopping state inequity. As we go forward with that, I may come to this board for student opinion on how we can fill these gaps. We don't have a budget per se, the system has given a guideline to follow on how to request a budget for the 2021-2022 year. We won't be hearing new building funding and other budgetary items this year because of COVID funding. As of right now, we are having the institution's report back on what they need for funding. I asked what you feel students are most concerned about. Could we open that discussion so that we as a board may know how to support students?
 - President Griffin: This has been a big discussion at my school. The big two points are safety surrounding COVID-19. There

are still safety concerns even with masks and social distancing. The bigger issue is what happens when they get it. Some students feel like they are an outcast if they get it and are discriminated against.

- President Corbett: I feel like for UVU, the concern is what we are doing to prevent racial injustice. This includes addressing equity in curriculum.
- President Kum: At the University of Utah, we have had trust issues with the administration. First, trust in the university to keep students from the virus. Students also think the university is just trying to get a money grab by ending classes after the drop day. Additionally, the trust issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Peoples are worried the university won't act on statements of being anti-racist. The last one is safety outside of COVID-19. I think the actions and the lack of actions from our public safety department has left some hard-to-heal scars among our students. Students at the university are not very trusting of the university.
- President Ferney: I would echo what Danielle said and add mental health. With the lack of in-person contact and using digital, it is making students feel isolated.
- President Cullen-Buford: Isolation and the uncertainty caused stress. Many BYU students are raising concerns about student housing. Provo housing recently switched from semester-to-semester to year-long contracts. Additionally, local landlords are doing similar things while not improving safety.

- President Kante: SUU can relate to all the different things people have said. The university has taken a lot of quick action on racial issues. But students still feel like more should be done. Something else students are struggling with is the financial aspect. Candyce, do you know if there are going to be any further budget cuts?
 - Representative Damron: I'm not sure. The government is holding special legislative sessions to discuss appropriations. Hopefully we will hear more by October, but no guarantee.
- Representative Damron cont.: Penny and I are discussing student fees on a committee we sit on. What are you hearing from your students about paying student fees? We don't have to have this discussion now, but I would like to have it.
 - President Kum: There have been a lot of conversations about this. There have been a lot of emails about why we still have to have student fees. We had to explain CARES Act funding as well as how bonds still have to be paid. That was the most we could do at that point. Recently, the U announced a \$150 credit. While that is good news for students, it raises the question on why we have certain student fees, if we will lower student fees, and if this is permanent.
 - President Ahmed: The hardest thing with fees is understanding the concept of student fees being an investment. There is some murkiness surrounding how not paying student fees one year will have ripple effects. Bridging that gap is probably the hardest thing.

- President Corbett: I wish there was more transparency with the state on student fees. I was going to send out a statement on student fees but then the state changed their minds on student fee positions.
 - President Kante: We cut 40% of our fees. A lot of our students were very happy about that because we aren't having athletics or larger student events. We still have issues with students complaining about paying student fees when they aren't on campus. We have to work on having a clear understanding perpetuated to the students.
- President Ferney: What is your official title?
 - Representative Damron: Student Representative for Academic Education.
- President Ferney: At the beginning of your time you mentioned other topics you may discuss, if you could send those out before the meetings, that would be helpful.
 - Assistant Lake: If you send them to me, I can include them in the discussion, Representative Damron.
- New Business
 - Discussion on New Initiatives
 - President Ahmed: I'm hoping to have an idea of what each of us would like to see this upcoming year. Hopefully by the end we can come around one or two ideas. We can get started on that. After that we need to schedule meetings for the rest of the time we are in office. We just had a set time when we did this. Before we do that, I want to open it up to ideas.

- President Kum: I feel very passionate about what I campaigned for. I feel we can tackle multiple issues at once. I feel like we should tackle equity as a whole. We can address inequities and discrepancies in higher education, as well as health and financial equities. If we make higher education in the State of Utah as equitable as we can during our tenure, we can have a historic year for this year.
- President Corbett: Mine is quite similar to Ephraim's. What was done the last couple of years with mental health has been great, but I would like to see more of a focus on some of the root causes of poor mental health such as: equity for housing, lack of student health resources, food insecurity. Rather than using mental health as a blanket statement, we should be actively pursuing why poor mental health exists at our different colleges, and chances are it will be different for each institution. (I.E. BYU may focus on housing equity whereas UVU may focus on food insecurity.)
- Representative Damron: I love both ideas. This is more of a Fall Semester idea: I feel we need to improve the student voice and that they are using their voices to be heard. I think voter registration is an important topic since we have a gubernatorial and presidential race this year.
 - President Griffin: Is everyone involved in the Campus Cup sponsored by the Lieutenant Governor?
 - Linda: The Lieutenant Governor may want to come to one of our meetings. I'll look into who we need to talk to.
 - President Griffin: Everyone should participate in this.

- President Ahmed: I have two main proposals. The biggest thing I would like to make people aware of is our time constraint. Higher Ed Day in February is our crowning moment to present what we have worked on. Other groups have complained they have great ideas but not enough time. My first idea is having COVID-19 vaccinations be free across all campuses should that become available and cleared. Preliminary proposals are in the \$30 range. I would like to see this be a state-sponsored thing for part-time and full-time students. It would be about \$22 million which sounds like a lot, but it really isn't within a state budget. I think this is topical. Movement on a COVID related topic is likely to move quickly. This also encourages students to take a precaution. I also think this will leave a good legacy for us should this become available in 2020 or 2021. Next, tackling issues within our university and bringing them to USA to collectively work on them as a group. Additionally, improving reporting of student fees and tuition in our institutions. We can compile this into a report and then the next group can hit the ground running on issues that they can tackle that we brought up. Lastly, can we have voting stations on campus?
 - Linda: At USU, we have ballot boxes that people can drop off their ballots that the county picks up.
 - President Corbett: I think the issue is going to be write in ballots and having accessibility to post offices. The other will be actually having to travel to polling stations.
- President Ahmed: Let's open it up to discussion now.

- President Mills: I really like what has been proposed. The plan is hard to envision. It is hard to pick one that will be accomplishable in the time that we have.
- President Kum: The other issue is when that impact will go into effect. I think it is important to consider timing as well.
- President Ahmed: Anything we do has to be a well thought out plan so the next group will desire to pick it up. Moving forward to execution, once we decide what we want to do, we move forward with subcommittees and work on accomplishing our goals.
- President Griffin: I think mental health is still the biggest issue facing students with not a whole lot being done. I feel like we should address COVID-19 and getting vaccines across the state of Utah.
- Representative Damron: I think a lot of it will be using our local elected officials. We will need to discuss with them now on how to support us in preparation of going into session in February.
- President Ahmed: We don't even have to have an initiative. USA can be an outlet for helping each other on institutional issues.
 - President Kum: I think it is essential for us to have initiatives since we have such a unique path ahead of us.

- President Ahmed: For those of you who have submitted ideas, do you have a plan to carry this out?
 - President Griffin: I think we can get a broad idea of what the state of Utah needs for higher education, but it will ultimately be up to each one of us to determine what our individual university needs.
- President Ahmed: I think the best way for us to get this done is for those of us who have submitted an idea to submit a plan and we can do an electronic vote. After that we can start making plans for subcommittees on what we can do. In an email, send to everyone what your idea is and what your plan is to carry that out. By Friday submit your plan and by Monday or Tuesday vote electronically. This will give us the weekend to review plans. So, I'm clear, we have Ephraim and Danielle who proposed equity, Candyce was voter registration and civic engagement, and mine was COVID-19 vaccines and reporting tuition and fees.
 - President Ferney: Can anyone submit an idea after today?
 - President Ahmed: Yes, but the deadline is Friday.

- Meeting Schedule

- President Ahmed: Last year, we picked to meet every second Friday and met once a month. How often would this group like to meet and what day of the week would we like to meet?

- President Cullen-Buford: Monthly is good and doing them Friday is good.
 - President Ahmed: How about we just say the second Friday and adjust the time?
 - President Kante: Are all our meetings going to be over Zoom?
 - President Ahmed: As of now, yes. Ultimately, it's up to us to decide along with university policy.
 - President Griffin: What about Thursday? Thursdays are usually good days.
 - President Kum: We usually have our executive cabinet meetings on Thursday evenings.
 - President Ahmed: How about the first Thursdays at 6 p.m. If we need to change it on a case-by-case basis, then we can. For instance, if we want to meet in person on a campus, then we can. Then it is official: **our meetings will take place the first Thursdays of every month starting at approximately 6 p.m.**
 - Representative Damron: Can we send out calendar invites?
 - President Ahmed: Yes, Dexton and I will work on that.
- Campus Updates
 - President Ferney: I have two mental health advocates in my cabinet that are working on Suicide Awareness Week in October. I think they are working on doing monthly things. Also, I started, what I call, Friday with Ferney. This year, with the lack of in person accessibility, I am going to do this weekly. I created a QR Code that has a form

called Feedback for Ferney. The last thing I want to do is speak for the students if I'm not talking with them.

- President Griffin: Face-to-face classes are going well. People are wearing masks. Residential halls are kind of struggling. Snow is doing well. I have a question: how are you guys reporting those who aren't following COVID-19 guidelines? The issue is parties being held in residential halls and doing off-campus events. We just don't know how to report it.
 - President Ahmed: We are doing a nonconfrontational approach. We have a reporting mechanism that goes to our Student Code of Conduct. We have temporary code that requires students to follow these guidelines. The first offense is a warning, the second is a disciplinary paper or report, the third is a transcript notation and will go onto probation.
 - President Kum: I think it is important to have it as part of the student code. We also have a hotline, but I think that is more for students who have contracted the virus.
- President Mills: There was a flood here last week. Students are still adapting. We are trying to figure out how to deal with that. I think overall, we are doing ok. I really like Ben's idea. I may do something like that. We haven't had many issues with masks and members of campus. I'm looking into student fees right now, so it is very cool to sit on that committee with Candyce.
- President Kum: The first week of school has felt like a month. I've largely mentioned what I wanted to report. We've been trying to combat COVID-19 the best we can. We are doing a lot of testing including testing the sewer and saliva-based testing. Approximately

80% of our learning is online. 87 have been reported positive of the 60,000+ on campus.

- President Cullen-Buford: First day was yesterday and everything has been great. BYU is doing a mixed model of classes. I'm doing the same thing as well with remote office hours every week. Our Instagram has a highlight bubble specifically for student engagement. Our student association has a research grant that is exploding. It is exciting to see people wanting to get involved.
- Lyra Peterson: Salt Lake Community College started last week. As far as I can tell everyone is complying pretty well.
- President Siaki: Everything is going well. This is our second day of classes. Most students are following guidelines—wearing masks and trying to social distance. I think we are doing alright so far.
- President Kante: Things are great at SUU. We have orientation this week. We have a lot of students back on campus. We are doing blended classes that students can choose what they would like to do.
- President Ahmed: USU has had a hectic summer working on policy. We are doing a lot of preventative measures for COVID. We are testing wastewater. We had high levels and had some dorms tested and quarantined. It has been pretty calm these last couple of days. Nothing has melted down yet. Please make sure that you submit your proposal by Friday to Dexton and I. Candyce, if you can pass this on to Danielle that would be great.
 - President Griffin: Please send in autobiography and pictures.
- Adjourn
 - Motion to Adjourn:

- *Motion: President Kum/ Seconded: President Mills/ Voting Body: Passed*

In Attendance: Sami Ahmed, USU; Spring Cullen-Buford, BYU; Penny Mills, DSU; Matthew L. Griffin, Snow College; Norman Kante, SUU; Ephraim Kum, U of U; Sione Siaki, USU Eastern; Danielle Corbett, UVU; Benjamin Don Ferney, WSU; Candyce Damron, Student Representative-Academic Education; Lyra Peterson, SLCC Dexton Lake, Chief of Staff; Linda Zimmerman, Advisor

Welcome Lyra!

From [Danielle Corbett](#) to [Everyone](#): 6:22 PM
Candyce, I believe UVU uses student fees. I can talk to Marissa and get you that info.

From [Candyce Damron](#) to [Everyone](#): 6:22 PM
That would be great, thanks!

From [Danielle Corbett](#) to [Everyone](#): 6:40 PM
I think for the most part students at UVU were upset about paying the fee for Athletics, which was cut.

From [Penny Mills](#) to [Everyone](#): 6:41 PM
Something DSU is struggling with is adjusting in general.. with Covid-19, quarantine, connecting with other students, etc.

From [Danielle Corbett](#) to [Everyone](#): 6:57 PM
And also getting them to vote LOCALLY!! Preach Candyce.

From [Lyra Peterson](#) to [Everyone](#): 6:57 PM
Transportation to poling places is hard too for some students.

From [Danielle Corbett](#) to [Everyone](#): 6:58 PM
^^^ maybe we tackle voter suppression as a part of that if we choose to make that a focus?

From [Candyce Damron](#) to [Everyone](#): 6:59 PM
Yes yes yes @ lyra & danielle

From [EPHRAIM KUM](#) to [Everyone](#): 6:59 PM
YES. Voting inequity is rampant and something we could def tackle

From [Danielle Corbett](#) to [Everyone](#): 7:00 PM
RIP at me and the other 41,000 students at UVU

From [Lyra Peterson](#) to [Everyone](#): 7:01 PM
An email would be good for Emily

From [Ben Ferney-WSU \(he/him/his\)](#) to [Everyone](#): 7:01 PM
Great! Thank you Matthew!

Supplemental conversation that
took place in the group Zoom chat.