



## USA Meeting Agenda

February 21, 2021 | 6:00 pm

Welcome – Penny Mills – Dixie State University

- President Mills: **Welcome to our USA meeting today! We have a guest today, but before that we need to approve last meeting's minutes.**
  - Motion to approve minutes
    - President Ferney: **Moved** / President Griffin: **Seconded** /  
Voting Body: **Passed**

Public Forum

- George Gemelas: **Thank you so much Penny and it's great to see many of you. I'm a student at Yale University I wanted to talk to you today just briefly about something many of you are familiar with, but I also wanted to update those who are part of our climate change effort. I wanted to talk about some of the statuses of what's going on and also give a little bit of background. Climate change is an issue that's really come to the forefront of the national conversation. As young people, we have a lot of years ahead of us. It's an issue that is not going away so we might as well sort of tackle the issues head on with solutions that are smart and work. We have this moment**

of leadership. As young people, we have decades of life ahead. I think we are sort of naturally chosen to help lead the charge because it's our life, our families, and our kids that will be affected. So, what we've been doing is Ephraim, Ben, Danielle, Sione, Newman, Matt, and I have been working on an effort to unite student body presidents around a statement of climate leadership and propose concrete solutions. This statement was released last semester and it gained the support of 400+ student body presidents. It was pretty awesome and the largest statement ever. When it launched it caught the eye of people sort of at the at the highest level. I'm talking to you now because there is a Utah component to this. Ephraim and Westminster's student body president got to publish an op-ed with the Salt Lake Tribune which went smashingly well. It actually reached the ears of Senator Romney and I think he was really eager to hear from student leaders in the state and it actually led to a phone conversation between the three of them. I think Senator Romney was hoping to hear more from folks about this issue and he sees that you guys care. I think he's one member of the Senate who's trying to lead the charge in finding common ground and offer real solutions. A special letter is being sent to Senator Romney sort of delivering what he asked for within the next week. Almost all of you are on it which is super great. Senator Romney continues to express interest in the issue and does continual interviews regarding climate change. I was wondering if you had any questions?

- **Representative Damron:** Is there anything that we as a group can do to promote this among the students here in Utah?
  - **George Gemelas:** Team effort. I failed to mention that we have this cohort of student body presidents across the states that are participating in the effort. I wanted to ask you guys, when this

special letter goes into Senator Romney's office, would any of you be interested in talking about the issues with him if he chooses to do another discussion? There is no guarantee, but it seems possible.

- President Corbett: Would we need to be involved or just the upcoming student body presidents, since a lot of us are having elections?
  - George Gemelas: I think all of you could be.
- President Griffin: You mentioned how you are looking for concrete solutions. The letter we signed was very general. Are there any concrete ideas that we are presenting to Senator Romney? We should all come together on this.
  - George Gemelas: It focuses on the Carbon Dividend Solution. It was inspired by economists who put a framework for mitigating the crisis. I'll send you more concrete details including some web links. Penny, I will send you more information.

#### Presidency Report and Committee Reports:

- President Griffin: The purpose of our fee initiative is we are looking for more transparency of student fees. We are asking you to list out all your student fees and the purpose behind them, then make the information accessible to students. It's pretty simple. At Snow College, I'm the chair of the Fee Advisory Board, so I was able to contact the Vice President of Finance and Administration and he was able to give me the names of contacts for people who are over fees. I have contacted those names and they've given me a description on what that student fee is used for and that's

all that we're asking. So that's how it's going with myself; however, how it's going with the whole committee that would be something you'd have to ask Sami since he is the chair of this committee. Sami, Emily, Nouman, Spring, and I were on that, I believe. As a committee we don't have too much initiative as a group. Sami has asked each of us to do individually. There has been no push from any member of the committee, so I think that would be helpful.

- **President Mills:** I know I need that same push. So, the bill that went to committee yesterday, Ephraim will you talk about that?
  - **President Kum:** Tomorrow will be the third reading. I will go to the Hill if I get the chance. Hopefully it will pass the House, and then on to the Senate. I believe it will go to committee in the Senate. There was a decent amount of support for it in committee. Sione and I had a meeting today that went well. I will let him touch on it.
- **President Siaki:** We were able to meet with some of the members of the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs. We made plans to collaborate with them on a virtual townhall to raise awareness about our initiative. They're very excited about the idea, so, moving forward, we're looking between March 15th through 19th to hold that. The goal with our virtual townhall is just to make the students aware that this is the initiative that we've been working on this school year as well as create transparency between the Utah Student Association and students. This will mostly be an event catered towards students, so when the time comes around, I'll be asking you guys if you can reach out to your students and make sure that they are aware of this event. We'll just be discussing our initiative as well as hopefully being able to have some experts within our initiative talk about many different topics. I

just wanted to ask if everybody would be able to send me the contact for your student pantries on campus, if you have a one.

- President Mills: How can we help?
  - President Siaki: Just spread awareness of the townhall. Also, just giving me the student pantry information. If you could get me that information in the next two weeks, that would be great.
  - President Griffin: Shout out to Ephraim for your hard work and your Salt Lake Tribune op-ed.
- President Mills: Student regent interviews are April 9<sup>th</sup>, I believe.

### Student Regent Report

- Representative Damron: We've had committee meetings for the board this last week and I want to shout out Ephraim, Sione, and Danielle who came and presented about their initiative. Our Student Affairs Committee people loved it. I got so many emails after that meeting saying that they were so excited that students were able to join, so just know that the efforts of this board as a whole do not go unnoticed. I'm part of a Transfer Council trying to make it more of a smooth process to transfer between institutions within our system whether it's a tech institution, community college, or a research institution. So many students have a lot of challenges and it can really push some people out of getting their education. We're hoping to have some more updates by March for our next meeting, so I'll keep you updated on what we're doing with that. We also continued working on our board strategic plan (that's what I introduced to all of you I think last semester I want to say October. We are talking about the strategic goals that we've been setting with access, affordability, and completion). They want to increase completion by 3% statewide and then 4% for underrepresented students, so

they're keeping the equity framework within every conversation that we have on the state level and they are really trying to remove barriers as best we can. They've been focusing more on full time students and I've been pushing for them to remember to include part-time students and nontraditional in our strategic plan. I learned these last couple of weeks that within Utah, women are significantly outnumbered as far as leadership goes within our University and tech systems. So, they're kind of working on trying to find ways that we can include more genders in our leadership so we can have more representation. We're including people of color and different religious backgrounds as well. We've approved an interim president for the University of Utah. Applications are open for the student regent position. I want to encourage all of you to think of one to two students that you feel might be a good fit for this position or might be interested in serving the state and personally reach out to them. Personal recommendations go a long way, and we want to see a good applicant pool this year. This position really can make a big difference for students in Utah, especially with the connection to USA and all of you. I think if you want to apply you might be able to. Take that into consideration over the next few weeks.

## Campus Updates

- **President Kante:** Student elections are coming up and we have done a lot of information sessions. I put most of this burden on my Executive Council to explain the positions. Our sports events are up and running. We started our random testing for COVID-19.
- **President Corbett:** We have had some concerns with our commencement speaker selection from our faculty. Our commencement speaker for this year is Wendy Nelson who is affiliated with a local religious group in Utah, so

there's been some concern for LGBTQ+ student. We haven't received anything directly from students so we're just going to review how we choose commencement speakers and go from there. Unless there's further student voice opposing that speaker it's pretty set-in stone at this point. Its elections week here at UVU so I'm a little bit on edge. But we only have about a day left.

- **President Griffin:** Snow College is doing well. Unfortunately, with covid cases we are at a high right now. It is the highest that we've ever had; however, (this is both like a positive and negative but mainly positive) we're testing currently 35% of our campus which about two months ago we were just sitting at anywhere from 5-10% daily. But now we're testing around 35% of our campus which we're very happy about. There are good things happening on our campus. Sporting events have started back up again and we're not having to limit students. Any student can come as long as you are wearing a mask and if you remove your mask at the sporting event, you're asked to leave. All students have been wearing masks while being in sporting events and it's been really refreshing.
- **President Siaki:** Similar at USU Eastern, we have our sports programs going. It's election week for us. For some reason students don't want to be in leadership or plan activities during coronavirus, so we actually have a pretty small number of people running campus this year. We are working with Utah State University in Logan to be able to transfer/combine statewide campuses to become USUSA, so we've been working on those changes and implementing those on our campus. We are making sure we're in the place to begin writing bylaws and our own types of things.
- **President Kum:** We have a new interim president. His name is Dr. Mike Good. I think it's a good choice as I haven't heard any complaints from

students. Dr. Good has been overseeing a lot of the work the city has been doing regarding coronavirus response. It seems like he will be a good interim leader for our school. As far as the search goes, the search committee had their first public meetings today and then again next week. I can get you that information if you want. The U has been offering testing every week. Since we have such a huge medical research background, a lot of our students are getting vaccinated. It is also election week for us. It has been very messy and has caused me stress. Hopefully, all that craziness will end by the end of the week. We do have a lot going on for Black History Month. The biggest highlight is our Conference on Diverse Excellence we have. The other thing I wanted to mention is, I am in the works on launching a fundraising campaign for our George Floyd Memorial campaign. We have a \$1 million goal. The last thing is just some legislative stuff. Let's all make sure to email our government affairs people urging them to support S.B. 163. Also, please urge them to support the resolution that would declare racism a public health crisis.

- **President Ferney:** The biggest thing is that elections are starting. Other than that, nothing major to report on.
- **President Cullen:** Some good news: we've delivered over 1000 covid care packages to BYU students in quarantine, which took a lot of coordination and a lot of rigid rules for volunteers. Since BYU is a private university, it doesn't follow the same model as other universities. One thing I've been doing is pushing for meetings with the deans of colleges to try to make sure every college has a student council. Since we aren't so involved with legislative matters, I think that having more student voice on the college and department level is a really big and important step for student input. In addition, our elections are also underway. We set up a meeting with our new

sustainability director to kind of talk over what the school's plans are to be more sustainability. As for covid, we are doing really well. We've done random testing and it's really easy because just through our tracking app students are notified if they've been exposed.

- **President Hernandez-Alzamora:** We have been changing a lot. We did a couple of changes within our organization. In our constitution for students to vote on, we are adding our Vice President of Equity and Diversity. We are removing our publicity and advertising board and just creating an overall marketing department under our offices. We are adding a Vice President of Community Engagement. This will help bring community issues and engagement to Executive Council. COVID-19 testing is just sign ups. We are trying to figure out the best way to escort students out if they don't follow COVID guidelines at activities. We are creating a resources page for students.
- **President Mills:** You guys are all doing great! From my institution, we are doing Swab for Swag. It incentivizes students to go get tested. Elections start next week. Truth in Tuition is tomorrow. I am hiring a mental health position in my president's cabinet. The Senate is hearing the bill on the Dixie State name change.
- **Representative Damron:** I have a question, UVU has had quite a bit of controversy on our speaker for commencement. How do others choose speakers for commencement?
  - **President Mills:** I think here it is a recommendation and then an interview.
  - **President Griffin:** For Snow, it is the president's cabinet that makes suggestions.
  - **President Kum:** It is something done from the Board of Trustees here.

- President Kante: We have a committee that some students, faculty, and staff along with a member of the Board of Trustees sit on.
- President Siaki: I know that once elections were over, we were supposed to send information about trainings. Do we have more information about those trainings? Isn't it just the new presidents and the current USA presidency?
  - President Mills: Yeah, so I believe that is April 8<sup>th</sup> and April 9<sup>th</sup>. I can have Dexon send out that information again.
  - Representative Damron: Can I get more information on that?
    - President Ferney: I will send it to everyone.
- President Corbett: Last year, we had Sheva in the interviews with us. Is there a way that we can include Candyce in those interviews? I think that is important to have context just because most of them won't know what that position is.
  - President Griffin: Who decides that?
  - President Mills: I think we should talk about it with the presidency and vote on it as a whole.
  - Representative Damron: I've been emailing Sami a little bit about it. I was told the presidency was already made aware of the decision and you made the decision as a whole. I think it would be really beneficial to loop a decision like that with the entire board. Obviously talk about it with the presidency but I think every student body president here needs to be involved in conversations like that because it's not just the presidency that should be choosing or mentoring the upcoming presidents. I think it is everyone so I think I would support a conversation like that. I would love to have a separate conversation with the presidency just about how we can do that moving forward and how we can include the board as whole. Candidly, I haven't been

involved in most conversations with the board this year which I think could be very beneficial to implement for future boards and more collaboration just because I think that relationship could be very pivotal for future student body presidents and the state as whole. You guys are the ones with your feet on the ground and I want to see more collaboration which is a conversation I would love to continue over the next few months on ways we can do that. I would love to be part of that conversation. Obviously, meet as a presidency but I would recommend, if you all are comfortable with it, talking about that with the board as a whole. You guys have a lot of power and I think you should be involved in the decision.

- **President Griffin:** In terms of the presidency making a decision, we haven't made a decision. It has been brought up to both me and Penny about this specific question on whether or not you should be in those interviews or not. However, we were unfamiliar with the process in which we would make a decision for this kind of a problem, so because of that we kind of have to step back and figure out guidelines for who is involved. But in terms of there being a set decision on whether you're in the interviews or not for that position, that not been made yet and I'm contacting Sami to make sure that's the case.
- **President Corbett:** I would add, I think it would be helpful to have a vote as whole board. I respect the authority of the presidency, but I also think there is more voices than just the presidency, so I would be uncomfortable if the presidency said, 'we aren't going to

exercise that thought.' I'm ok if we have a vote on that now, but I think it is important to vote.

- President Mills: I agree. Do we have enough time between now and our next meeting to talk about it, or does it need to be a Saturday afternoon conversation about it?
  - Representative Damron: It just depends on when the next scheduled meeting is.
    - President Mills: Sami and Dexton might know, they just aren't here and can't tell us for sure. So, that's hard.
      - President Griffin: Aren't they once every month?
        - President Mills: Yeah, something like that.
- President Ferney: Could you touch base with Sami, Penny and Matt, and then if we need to before our next meeting, we can all come together and figure out a time to have that conversation or if we have one scheduled, we can talk then.
  - President Griffin: I see the presidency having a conversation pretty quickly, but if needed, we will have a USA meeting about this topic before the deadline. We will make sure it gets done.
- Representative Damron: I'm not advocating that I need to be a part of the interview process, that's up to you and what you feel is best

moving forward, but I am more than happy to just be part of the discussion afterward and be a soundboard if you want to discuss the candidates and ask questions. But I do think it should be a decision of the group as whole. Historically, it's bounced back and forth. Last year Sheva was a part of it, and she felt it was a good thing to be a part of along with other USA members, so I would just encourage all of you to think about it. I'm happy to do whatever is best. I think this should pave the way for future boards as well.

#### Motion to Adjourn

- President Ferney: **Moved** / President Griffin: **Seconded** / Voting Body: **Passed**