



## USA Meeting Agenda

March 31, 2021 | 1:00 pm

- Welcome – Sami Ahmed – President, Utah State University
- Approval of Minutes
  - President Corbett: Moved/ President Mills: Second/ Voting Body:  
Passed
- Public Forum
  - George Gemelas and Emily Hales Walker, Citizens' Climate Lobby
    - George Gemelas: It is so good to see you all. I'm coming with updates and some more opportunities. Young people care about the climate issue and we are looking for smart and sensible solutions. Utah rocks in terms of addressing the issue. The final pieces are coming together in our plan.
    - Emily Hales Walker: I graduated from BYU a little over a year ago. I volunteer with Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL). We lobby for carbon fee and dividend legislation. We also work to create a meaningful will for climate change solutions. We have five levers of political will: lobbying congress, media relations, grassroots outreach, grassroots engagement, and group

development. In my conversations with Rep. John Curtis, he has changed his mindset on climate change because of his conversations with young people. There's lots of ways you can get involved. You can sign up for CCL's monthly calling campaign, write about carbon fees and dividends, and encourage university leadership to endorse carbon fees and dividends.

- President Cullen-Buford: Have you been in contact with the Sustainability Union of Utah Students?
  - George Gemelas: No, but we will definitely reach out!
- President Ahmed: How can we help you guys?
  - George Gemelas: The letter is ready to go and will go out very soon. We will keep you up to date about that. A few of you have offered testimonials or quotes, so I may reach out to you about that. If you want to write pieces or stories, that help shapes the conversations. If you want to do more, reach out to Emily.
  - Emily Hales Walker: You can also join CCL without a serious time commitment.
- Student Regent Report
  - Representative Damron: We got some buildings funded and some one-time funding passed through the state. The Utah educational system is getting some extra funding through the recent stimulus bill. We are still trying to get college access advisors funded. Every institution presented their tuition and fee increases. The state approved

an average of a 1.98% increase. We are going to create mandated training for college safety officers. Hopefully that will help shed a more positive light on campus safety officers. We passed a draft of a resolution called *Resolution to Recognize the Positive Impact of Dreamers in the College Education System*. It is meant to support DACA students. We are looking over our strategic plan. We added another goal of system unification. We talked about non-traditional students. I've been pushing for additional child care services. We have a board transfer council that helps students transfer institutions and instituting transfer pathways. Applications are due Monday for the student board member positions. Keep pushing that out.

- President Ahmed: With so many of you coming back next year, we think we can make it possible for incoming and outgoing presidents to attend. So, try to keep your April 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> open if you aren't returning next year but want to attend the interviews. Per the constitution, each institution would get two votes for the regent. I think for the returners, you should get both votes rather than bring a representative with you to just help with logistics.

- New Business

- USA Structural Change

- President Ahmed: All of you should have a piece of legislation regarding a structural change. Please take the people out of the issue and focus on the challenge as a whole. USU Eastern is part of USA which I considered odd because they are part of USU. Let's read the legislation first and then we can discuss. We want this to take place in 2022.

## **Reading of Bill to Remove Utah State University Eastern President from the Utah Student Association Committee**

- **President Ahmed:** USU Eastern is a statewide campus and each has representation. It doesn't make sense to have an appendage of a university on a board like this. If that continues, then other universities could be compelled to have the same thing. Like I said, this will take place in 2022 and will allow USU and USUE to figure out more merger goals. It was voted in favor by all USU except Eastern as a new structure. On Eastern Campus, it failed by less than one vote. For USA, the existence of USU Eastern on the board doesn't make sense because it isn't a separate institution. We are doing a restructuring at USU internally to have more uniform representation.
  - **Representative Damron:** Would this need to be something that we need to hand off since it didn't pass at USU Eastern?
    - **President Ahmed:** I don't think it necessarily matters since the issue is still the same. USU Eastern is here because they were once the College of Eastern Utah. Nobody has acted on the change. The reason I'm bringing it now is because it gives the next group the chance to work with the new structure and hopefully won't create tension with the pending changes at USU.
    - **President Siaki:** These are things that are already taking place. We have a meeting with President Cockett as well tomorrow.

- President Ahmed: I have the letter from President Cockett indicating her support on your tables as well. The main thing here is we need to look at it as “does this make structural sense” and right now it doesn’t. Administration and student government see it as not making sense too. The honest truth, USU Eastern was not in favor of this initially because of all the perks for being in USA. Internally, they don’t sit on the Board of Trustees or university committees. I’ve made decisions that Eastern has had to live with as the university recognizes me as the student body president. I’ve been here for two years and understand the problem thoroughly. Sione has been an amazing president. It’s just more of looking at the problem.
- President Mills: I see the issue that needs to be fixed, so how do we make sure that USU Eastern still has a voice? I think going forward this will just be a problem that doesn’t get fixed if it isn’t addressed now. Is President Cockett the president for both campuses?
  - President Ahmed: Yes, she is.
- President Griffin: Do you represent USU Eastern too, Sami?
  - President Ahmed: The reason they stayed separated was because the people of Price weren’t too happy because they had their own college and mascot and wanted to keep it that way when they

merged with USU. This merger has been gradual. For instance, last year we just merged all of our student fees.

- President Mills: Why would they do that? How can Eastern still have a voice?
  - President Griffin: We all have branches of our main campus that we represent. If we keep this same structure, then USA will need to get a lot bigger to have representation for every single campus and its appendage campuses.
  - President Siaki: The USU system has a lot of issues and that is what we have been trying to figure out. We looked at all the campuses and discussed together that the role of the student body president needs to have communication with all campuses and represent all campuses, which is not the case right now.
  - President Ahmed: Sione was part of the structure change and the constitution restructuring so it wasn't done in the night. Regardless of USA, USU is going to make the internal structural changes and we have to get rid of incentives here that don't make sense. Those incentives dissuade from having a streamlined system. In order to approve this, we would need a seventy-five percent majority vote. It won't impact next year's group, like I said.

- Representative Damron: What would next year's responsibilities for the USU President and USUE President be?
  - President Mills: That would go to the next USU President, right?
    - President Ahmed: Correct. There are ways that I currently hear about USUE, but the incentive to stay on this board is still there. This new structure streamlines representation. That is an internal issue that we can fix and move forward with. The administrators over USUE think the way it is doesn't make sense. We are very concerned about the representation for USUE. That's why we spent three days together rewriting the constitution. Sioni was an integral part of that. We need to make the hard decisions now so we can keep moving forward.
- President Kante: My only concern is visibility because we don't want the students to struggle finding their leaders. How do you make the Student Body President visible for all campuses?
  - President Ahmed: Each campus will have their own government entity that students can go to. What we are changing is Sioni and I will now have a formal connection. Right now, anything and

everything that happens at USUE, I don't hear about. There will only be one student body president and then that position will be a vice president.

- President Griffin: If this passes here and then USUE doesn't approve your internal changes, does that change our decision here?
  - President Ahmed: That can always change. We could vote to have USU Salt Lake on here. This right now is just a stumbling block that needs to be overcome now.
- President Corbett: We have a similar structure. If we vote to make this change, I think it would be valuable to thoroughly explain the changes to the next group.
- President Griffin: So, there already is a solid plan on representation? With USUE being here, I don't find it fair that USU has more votes than any other institution because it only benefits Utah State University.
  - President Ferney: I would also say that extra vote isn't aligned with our constitution.
- Motion to Approve the Bill
  - President Griffin: Moved/ President Ferney: Second/ Voting Body: Passed
- Campus Updates
  - President Cullen-Buford: Commencement is online. We are pushing for more transparency from administration. Just passing the baton.

- President Kante: We have activities happening, clubs being created, initiatives passing, and funding requests being approved. I also won reelection.
- President Corbett: I'm wondering if we change the structure to have the regent chair this since they don't vote? Then this would eliminate any potential biases.
  - President Griffin: What would be the point of having them chair?
    - Representative Damron: I'm elected to be a non-bias opinion already by serving in this position. We thought this position could chair to just be non-bias and represent the entirety of the system as they already do.
    - President Corbett: We could have the board member serve as the chair and then have an election for VP and Chief of Staff. I just feel there's a disconnect for legislation. If this position chaired, then they could say "here's the student body presidents" and then they can directly instruct on Higher Ed Day, legislation, etc. This could also give potential for higher scholarships.
  - President Ferney: Would the workload be realistic?
    - Representative Damron: I don't see that being an issue.
  - President Ahmed: In the interest of time, can we move this to a discussion with next year's group? I would like to even meet before that first meeting and hash out the details. Right now, I'm not in support but I would like to schedule a time to discuss this more so I can hear the complete idea and let you all be heard.

- Representative Damron: Absolutely, and it would just be a discussion item that they would discuss as a group.
- President Kum: We had a great year. The Equity Townhall is tonight at 6:00 p.m. Donovan Mitchell is our commencement speaker. I wrote an op-ed for the Deseret News about our George Floyd Memorial Scholarship.
- Ayana Amaechi: We wrote a piece of legislation regarding interpersonal abuse. It is in memorial of Lauren McCluskey. It was passed within the University of Utah Senate. It includes a syllabi statement, hosting a day of memorial to remember Lauren, furthering the goals outside the U, and ensuring the work of violence prevention continues.
  - Motion to Support These Initiatives
    - President Corbett: Moved/ President Siaki: Second/  
Voting Body: Passed
- President Griffin: Snow was able to be ninety percent face-to-face for the entire year. We are continuing our school's mask mandate through the end of the year. We have a lot of fun activities happening now through the end of the year. We were able to present our student fee's transparency initiative and we created a document of fees that any student can look at and understand how their money is being spent.
- President Mills: We are continuing our mask mandate as well. House Bill 278 passed both chambers. A change was required that creates a group to be formed to come up with name ideas and get public opinion. We have a lot of fun events coming up too. We have been discussing fees here too and how to make them more transparent and

useful. There was a student death from a drunk driver on our campus. I'm appreciate of your support.

- President Siaki: We have the structural changes. I want to commend everyone's work this year.
- President Corbett: We lowered our student fees. We have reformed our scholarship structure. We also now have our third female student body president.
- President Ferney: You are all wonderful. There will be a virtual component of commencement. We had an inclusion week last week. We plan on keeping our mask mandate. We are doing a survey on tobacco usage on campus. We passed a lot of bills in the election cycle. I was reelected.
- President Ahmed: Like I said, we've been working on our restructuring. We have a new student body president, Lucas Stevens. We had a big fee and tuition restructuring. I've enjoyed working with all of you.
- Adjourn
  - President Griffin: Motion/ President Ferney: Second/ Voting Body: passed