

Student Government Association

The University of Texas at Tyler

August 31, 2021

I. Call to Order
a. Time: 5:32pm

II. Roll Call

III. Open Forum
none

IV. Speakers Podium
a. Dean of Students Andy Pettee

Dean Pettee: I am a doctoral student and am getting my PhD in human development. I had talked to Kacey about several things we are doing to provide support, advocacy and guidance to our students. So I have been here a little over 19 months and some of the things that I started noticing was that our students were waiting until the last moment to seek help. I was noticing this trend and it would eventually hurt my ability to help a student. So the earlier a student comes to me when there's an issue, the better likelihood that I'm going to be able to help them. Whatever issue or problem they are having. So we created and went live July 1st an office called student assistance and advocacy center. It is a branch of the office of the dean of students. We don't just call it the office of dean of students because what is your reaction to when I ask you have you been to the dean of students office?

Senator McNamra: It's scary.

Andy Pettee: When I try and tell people how helpful they are they have a hard time believing us because that is the perception of us. But the dean of students office, about 95% of what we do is help people and maybe 5% is helping people make better choices. But it's important to me that students see the dean of students office as a place to go for are and support. So we created the students assistance and advocacy center so when students see that they're thinking the office of student assistance and advocacy is rushing out to me and not the dean of the students. At the end of the day, it is kind of the same thing, but we are signaling the students to seek out for help.

We have a case manager, her name is Mary Logan, if any of your have friends, or you yourself, were in quarantine, Mary Logan is already advocating for you because she is communicating with your faculty. So that is a piece that we already do to notify faculty and staff of something. But if you had something else going on if your life, needed extra money, had a conflict with a peer, faculty member or program, anything under the sun that is impacting your ability, you come to the student advocacy center, we talk and figure out what is going on and find a solution. The goal of this is to help student help identify the problem before. When I talk to students in orientation, I tell them it is easier to dig out a 2 week hole instead of an 8 week hole. If you wait until the week 8 to start going to the writing center or tutoring center, you're going to struggle, right? So this



center is also doing outreach. Our stress ball has our name and number on it and we are just talking with students and letting them know. One of the support systems we have is called the medical withdraw process. So when we're doing outreach to students, our goal is to let you know of all of the levels of support that are available, so that if you need it, you already have it.

That is just a bit of the overview, one of the other services that we can provide, is that if you have a conflict or you're not sure how to go about something and need some advice. Maybe it's with a faculty or staff member, about a grade or something that didn't go so well. You can ask for Mary Logan, myself or Dean Kim Livingston to come with you. That allows for you to feel comfortable, I won't say anything. It will just be someone else who supports you. You all are students leaders and are confident, but there are first year students who are not comfortable talking directly to authority. So we just provide this service so that they still feel comfortable. We also want to instill things to students about how to navigate things by yourself. You all will be out in the world by yourself, and if you need help, we want to show you have to advocate by yourself and how to be resilient. Our goal is to help students to build those life skills as they head off.

Other services, how many of you have heard of the care team. We have a care team which is the peace within the dean of students office. If you were worried about your friend because their family member passed away, or they weren't eating, they aren't going to class, you're worried about them, you can file a report. I am worried about Sammy, Sammy hasn't been going to class can you check on him? And we reach out to Sammy. Sometimes we can keep it anonymous and sometimes we can't. But the overall goal, is that if someone is worried about someone, let us know so we can get them help. It is a team who works to help intervene students and support them. Those are a few things we have upcoming. We also have wellness Wednesday through the counseling center. Does anyone know why we do wellness Wednesday every Wednesday. There is a stigma with counselors, if you meet our full-time counselors in the counseling center, you're going to think they're really cool because they are awesome. We are having them reach out to students to break the stigma so that students feel more comfortable reaching out to them. It's confidential and it's free. So some ways we can partner together in the future is to make sure students know these things. So those are ways we can partner for student advocacy so they students have a fantastic experience. And so those are just a few things that I am really excited about and look forward to. Did I miss anything that you wanted me to share?

President Jennings: I wanted to a couple of things. Taylor Clark from the counseling center is coming in a few weeks to speak. We're working on supporting wellness Wednesday and through volunteer attendance and by posting about them. Also I don't know I'm sure you guys can tell from the fact that he is here for our first meeting, but Dean Pettee would do absolutely anything for our students and both if you know the student with a concern or if you have a concern in your own experience in UT Tyler, he



is the man. I also wanted to give our online students the chance to introduce themselves as well.

Andy Pettee: So with all of that being said and what KC said, please send students to our center. What questions do y'all have? Is there anything I can answer that helps you support our students?

Senator McNamara: I don't know if you can answer this but so does Mary Logan reach out to students off campus with Covid?

Andy Pettee: Anytime with students, we always sent out faculty notification before wasn't as frequent as it is now with covid because students get in car accidents, students get sick, unfortunately there is a death in the mail here or there, so we would always send those out and contact the students but yes. Mary does, Kim does or I do. Mary is like the face, she is like the coordinating and we help.

Senator Harrison: I also do not know if you can answer this but is there any kind of infrastructure with these two examples that you've set to help students better like LGBTQ etc. you know more other disabilities stuff like that.

Andy Pettee: That is a really good question. We have the student accessibility and resources office. That is the office who provides reasonable accommodations to students to have equal access. They are involved with the counseling center and dean of students office to support students who may have accommodations and needs to support them. You mentioned something that I am not the best person to speak to, but I can share a little bit more. You may have noticed there are two positions that have been posted at UT Tyler. One is the manger of diversity something initiatives and that's a position in human resources and we most recently just posted the position for the director of student diversity. That director will be working to provide programming and education on diversity equity and inclusion which would include, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, whatever term, but they are there to help educate students. Those are two things as university we are working to do. We're working on a few things and I can't make any promises but we are also working on referred names to get on academic rosters and IDs to support students who don't want to be called by their dead name. We also have international students who come in and want to adopt an American name as a part of their experience. Maybe they want to put that name on their ID or roster. There are some other initiatives going on, and if there are things that you in SGA want to see, you have a wonderful voice.

President Jennings: If we have a student or peer we are concerned about, what is the method for getting support from them?

Andy Pettee: Last year, I shared with SGA a faculty staff resource guide. I will share it with you. It talks about the continue of student behavior and concern. There could be I am concerned but not a crisis. Timmy hasn't gone to class in a few days. Something low level that does not require immediate attention, you can file a care report. It's just on the dean of students office web page. As the continuum goes on, when we get to the middle



area, you might see hints to self-harm, or other concerns related to significant alcohol or drug abuse. You may want to call or come see me and let me know. If its to the point where we cannot wait a day or two. And then at the far end of the continuum, I am worried about this persons safety, you should called the university police. But earlier stuff, file a care report. If you don't know who to call, call me. Come see me if you are really worried about someone because we want to get the wheels going if you are that concerned. I will share it but it is called dysregulated behavior. It shows the increase in dysregular behavior. So always tells somebody, if you are worried about someone and we reach out to your friend and they say "I am working two jobs and just overslept" or "My mom lost her job" and all of the sudden we start hearing more things that we can start supporting and working with them to make sure they are doing okay. It never hurts to support a care report and if you are worried, this is good.

Senator Barria: I was just wondering if the students from Houston have the opportunity to make virtual appointments.

Andy Pettee: Yes! I have actually met with some Houston students. We have actually travelled down to Houston to meet with students. We can have virtual meetings, you can use our counseling center, we have tel-a-help. I don't ever see this going away. Students still prefer to come in person but there are those students that prefer because they may be distanced and it is easier. You can reach out to me anytime and I would be happy to help you. I would also reach out to Letitia Heidleberg who's the student success coordinator. She is fantastic. I have spent some time with her in May helping her understand how we support students. She has all the information. I like to meet students and I like to get to know you and make time.

Secretary Mattern: What about false reports?

Andy Pettee: That happens seldom. I don't love it. We take care very seriously. So it really depends on what the report says and how impactful it is. One time I got a report about a student who was using drugs and it was false. If you file one of these reports, you are going to be more in trouble than the person who might've been using the drugs. It doesn't happen a lot. If this did happen, we would take it very seriously.

Secretary Mattern: How does the judicial affairs office relate to the dean of students?

Andy Pettee: They are one the offices that report directly up to me. That's our student conduct and intervention office. We have student conduct and intervention office, we've got the care student assistance and advocacy, coupling center, scheduling and conference services, center for financial wellness, university center, resident life, military and veteran success center. Those are the offices who report through that. We all work closely together while student accessibility and resources doesn't report to me, we still work close together. We have good relationships across the board. Which is also why I encourage students to come talk to me when they have an issue, I might have an in with a faculty member which might help. We are connected to student conduct.



Senator Harrison: This is kind of hypothetical, so a student comes and is like “Oh I am addicted to x substance and need help” are they going to get in legal trouble?

Andy Pettee. No they are going to get help. As long as it is not on campus and I don't already have a report on it, they are going to get help. I want the individual to get help. It also a developmental office. People think of conduct as you are in so much trouble, we are there to help you make better decisions, occasionally, that comes with getting your education somewhere else. That was joke but it rarely happens. If someone gets into trouble about academic honesty, we are going to get the root of the problem. What was the cause/ And we work with them to help make better choices. If someone gets caught smoking a blunt in the residence halls, we're going to talk to them little about why? We'll explore this and they are self medicating for anxiety or they were just trying it for the first time and got exposed and now they hate it. We are going to work with them to make better decisions. There are some behaviors we can't work with. Violence, selling drugs. We don't want either of those. We work to help make better decisions. Our goal is to help. David Hill is really working to help so those things don't happen again.

Anything else? This is good, last time I came no one asked questions.

You mentioned a few things you wanted to see, in terms of culture on campus, what are things you want to see?

Senator Harrison: This is more related to the committee I am on, this is kind of obscure because I am kind in a spot but there are a lot of invasive plants on campus but this is a non-issue thing. I was thinking about having something where we work with students where we do plant biology and go out and identify what these plants are, why they're bad.

Andy Pettee: I think this is something we could explore. How do invasive species affect our campus environment?

Senator Harrison: Specifically when you look at invasive species, they're going to take nutrients out of the environment and not put them back. There actually are some plants on campus that I don't see elsewhere in smith county, which is weird. Seeing them co-exist next to invasive species.

President Jennings: Let me connect you to the elite botanists on campus. He might be a good person for you to talk to.

Andy Pettee: Any other questions or anything you want to know? How many of you live in the residence halls? How was you experience moving in this year? A little chaotic tis year right?

Senator Dix: Going back and forth was a lot.

Vice President Stavinoha: My boyfriend got moved between four different apartments, before it finally got resolved. He isn't with the roommate he wanted.

Chief of Staff Smith: I got notified the week before moving in that we were being moved to liberty instead of victory and we wanted victory because of the bathrooms. It



would have been problem if we had been notified maybe 3 months before but the week before was bad. I try called victory and never got ahold of anyone and called Liberty and they transferred me. I had a friend who lives at liberty and he was already moved in and they came to him and said he had to move out and moved him to victory.

Andy Pettee: My recommendation when looking at all of this, looking at this year, it was a challenging year in changing over a lot of rooms very quickly. When you do returning room selection, be very careful and pay attention to the dates. They are going to change up the process to be more transparent to your needs. When housing emails go out, pay close attention to the dates. We learned a lot this year.

Sectrary Mattern: I don't know if you can do anything about this but the parking this year has been terrible.

Andy Pettee: It settles down after the first couple of weeks. We can talk offline and see what your challenges are. I know the parking for the first weeks are chaotic. Thank you, my office door is always over to any of you. I prioritize you, if you ever need anything, just come in. Third floor, university center and glass office to the left. Thank you KC for inviting me.

V. Officer Reports

a. President Jennings

President Jennings: I will start. This week I have been working on a variety of things. Including in getting prepared for our upcoming elections that is at the end of September. Reaching out and setting up meetings with USAC and faculty senate representatives. Just a ton of different things.

b. Vice President Stavinoha

Vice President Stavinoha: I am working on planning midnight breakfast. Those are our nexts big upcoming events. Like KC mentioned earlier, working with the counseling center that their first event is coming up fairly soon. I am working on reaching out to the office of student accessibility to do some similar events with them that we're doing.

c. Secretary Mattern

Secretary Mattern: I will be having the committee meetings on Monday at 1:00pm for communications. I have also been working on the shirts.

d. Treasurer Limbrick

Treasurer Limbrick: For this week I am still trying to get an exact meeting and time for SGAC. From my understanding the forms to request money will pick up next week, if I have that time line correct. I still have not gotten some feedback from a particular senator. Justin Melendez. Just trying to get that understood and get a specific time because right ow there is 5 members, not including me, on SGAC and the times are split evenly.

e. Chief of Staff Smith



Chief of Staff Smith: I have been working on making or at least looking into making a few changes to the student government constitution. One of the articles had to be suspended in order for us to fill all the roles on the E-Board. I mean we're going to put in a notice that shows people what that change was for. I made changes to part of the constitution that deals with the residence hall and what the language it has on there for the senators it has representing them. Made a few other changes and I have talked with JOsh about the referendum process and going through the process later this year. And I met with rules committee yesterday letting them know everything that is happening and eventually i'll have a final draft and we'll review it.

VI. Committee Reports

a. Events

Vice President Stavinoha: It will be Tuesdays at 4:00pm.

b.

c. Communications

Secretary Mattern: Monday at 1:00pm

d. SGAC

Still planning on figure out when to meet.

e. Rules

Chief of Staff Smith: Monday at 5:15

f. ESC

Senator Harrison: Went over ideas on how to encourage on recycling and finding more permanent bins than the blue plastic ones. And other sustainable ideas about how to get students more involved. A flea market or a goodwill drive. And ideas about how to reduce wastefulness, like a compost drive.

g. GSA

President Jennings: for those who are unfamiliar, I'll go over in a moment. We voted to created and ADHOC committee called GSA. This is the graduate student association. This is a separate organization but with covid they fell out of the organization. We have temporarily picked up this responsibility. This is only for the duration of time GSA is not a registered organization. When GSA is back on the roster, this committee will resolve. I have taken up this responsibility and I am planning to meet twice a month at lunch time for graduate students. Keep an eye out for that post on instagram and share it. We are trying to get as many students on the main campus, the health campus and other satellite campuses

VII. Student Voice Reports

a. College of Arts and Sciences

Senator Harrison: I wasn't in class yesterday but I know for a fact that the AC did not seem to be working very well in CAS. I am in room 158 but it was much worse upstairs, room 258.

Senator Dix: The chairs in the building are very close together and there are no social distances. I do not trust the chairs to ever be organized.



Senator [redacted] The chairs are very bad and maybe there is something we can do. They are all over.

b. College of Business

No college of business senators are present.

VIII. Old Business

a. Summer Recap

President Jennings: I would like to entertain a motion to open up discussion just recapping summer.

Vice President Stavinoha: Motion carried

Secretary Mattern: Motioned Seconded

President Jennings: I want to kind of go over briefly what we accomplished over the summer. As the senate, you guys do have the chance to review any decisions that were made over the summer. So, one of the main things we did is we approved two different senator projects. We improved the disc golf course, and add two benches to the RBN. As far as I know, both of these projects have been completed. However, with the disc golf, there are two parts of this projects we have approved. A situation, where if you do one, you have to do the other. We completed half the project over the summer, and the other part will be completed once our budget runs over. We have already agreed to put down that expenditure to finish the renovation project and hopefully make the disc golf course a lot safer and more playable by putting down the concrete patch. We know the disc golf course club is very appreciative and we're hoping to see more community use of that course as well.

We attended orientations org fairs and had a quite a few conversations with freshmen who are interested. A lot have signed up to be on the ballot in September.

Moving on, as Chief of Staff Smith mentioned, we did vote to approve a temporarily suspension article 1 section 2 which is an eligibility requirements and the reason being we exhausted multiple different routes of finding members to fill the e- board and seeing that none that were qualified were interested and reached out to our senate, and because a couple were interested, we decided to make that decision and it is only in affect until December 31st of this year, and we will automatically be reinstated after those members meet those requirements. It will not require a secondary vote.

We voted in 2 new e board members, we wanted to get them trained so we could start the school year with 5 e board members. I think this has been a good decision.

We also reinstated a couple of our Judicial Board members. You can expect to see a couple of nominations in the next couple of weeks. Currently we have 2 judicial board members and they were both prior members.

The next thing we voted on was the addition of two health campus seats to our senate. The way our senate is set up, we have 2 seats for each of our satellite capuses. We felt that for equal representation, 2 seats would be for the recently added health campus.

We are working on new senators. One thing for y'all's information, for housing, RHA has priority in choosing senators from their organization so that they have the most information and most up to date. They have up to the second meeting of the semester to



send information. After this, it becomes our responsibility. We have been working on reaching out to interested students in orientation to get more senators as well. Starting next we will be able to fill housing seats if RHA does not.

Finally, we discussed the fee increase. No votes were cast, we just briefly discussed it over the summer and considered alternatives. That will be part of our discussion next week unless someone brings it up in new business. It is my intention to bring up all the new information we have received so that you senators will have it.

I would like to entertain a motion to close discussion on summer recap.

Vice President Stavinoha: Motioned carried

Secretary Mattern: Motioned seconded.

IX. New Business

a. None

X. Advisor Comments

None

XI. Announcements

a. Polo Order

b. Labor Day Sept 6th – University Closed

c. Thrive – UC Sept 8th

XII. Next Week's Student Voice Reports

a. Houston Engineering Campus

b. College of Nursing and Health Sciences

c. Student Body at Large

XIII. Second Roll Call

XIV. Adjournment

President Jennings: I would like to entertain a motion to adjourn.

Vice President Stavinoha: Motion to adjourn

Secretary Mattern: Motion seconded.

Adjournment 6:21pm