

Spring 2015

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

STUDENT  
GOVERNMENT  
ASSOCIATION

ROCKY TOP WRAP-UP

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

University Center 315E

## Introduction

In a continuous effort to increase transparency with our work, SGA has compiled this cumulative report to show how we have worked to better your experience at UT. This is merely a brief snapshot of highlights from this past semester, and we encourage you to visit our website ([sga.utk.edu](http://sga.utk.edu)) for a better understanding of our efforts. We encourage any and all feedback, so please contact your senator, tweet at us (@UTKSGA), or contact our executive board through our website. We want to serve you to the best of our abilities, and we need your feedback to do so. Good luck on finals, and Go Vols!



## Executive Officers

Position	Name	E-mail
President	Kelsey Keny	<a href="mailto:sga1@utk.edu">sga1@utk.edu</a>
Vice-President	Connor Dugosh	<a href="mailto:sga2@utk.edu">sga2@utk.edu</a>
Student Services Director	Katelyn Hadder	<a href="mailto:sga3@utk.edu">sga3@utk.edu</a>
GSS President	Jessica Welch	<a href="mailto:gss@utk.edu">gss@utk.edu</a>
Chief of Staff	Daniel Richter	<a href="mailto:sgacos@utk.edu">sgacos@utk.edu</a>
Executive Secretary	Amy Prosis	<a href="mailto:aprosis1@utk.edu">aprosis1@utk.edu</a>
Treasurer	Madison Kahl	<a href="mailto:mkahl1@utk.edu">mkahl1@utk.edu</a>
City of Knoxville Liaison	Thomas Carpenter	<a href="mailto:tcarpe11@utk.edu">tcarpe11@utk.edu</a>
Webmaster	Jonathan Jackson	<a href="mailto:jjack15@utk.edu">jjack15@utk.edu</a>

## Major Internal Developments

1. The SGA Constitution was amended through the Constitutional Review Committee.
  - a. The Executive Board was retitled the “Executive Cabinet.”
  - b. The Executive Cabinet now consists of the Student Body President, Student Body Vice-President, Student Services Director, Graduate Student Senate President, Chief of Staff, Executive Secretary, Executive Treasurer, Director of Communications, Director of External Relations, and the Board of Trustees Student Representative.
  - c. The Freshman Council was renamed the “First-Year Council.”
  - d. The Judicial Branch of Student Government was added to address grievances as well as interpret and enforce the constitution.
  - e. All programming functionality now runs solely through Student Services.
2. All Vol Update was developed as the first internal newsletter among all students involved in any branch of Student Government.



## Senate Update: Legislation Passed

1. Bill to Promote Student Safety in Severe Weather Conditions (SEN 13-15)
  - a. The bill asked the University to review the Inclement Weather Policy and adopt revisions that better reflect the importance of student safety.
  - b. Bill presented by Senator Korbin Niehaus.
2. Bill to Implement an Undergraduate Research Fee (SEN 16-15)
  - a. This bill recommended the addition of a \$5 fee to tuition for students entering the University in or after the fall of 2015 to be directed towards the Office of Undergraduate Research.
  - b. Bill presented by Senators Mariah Beane and Travis Daniel Wilson.
3. Bill to Institute a Preferred Name Policy (SEN 17-15)
  - a. This bill allows students to submit a request to change to their preferred name for the campus directory and class rosters.
  - b. Bill presented by Senators Leala Marlin, Travis Daniel Wilson, and Sean Burnett.
4. Bill to Introduce a Student Interview Policy (SEN 18-15)
  - a. This bill requests the University instate an interview policy allowing students to miss class for documented interviews for graduate school, internships, or full-time jobs.
  - b. Presented by Senators Jennings Hardee, Kenan Smith, and Mariah Beane.
5. Bill to Implement a 24/7 974-HELP Line.
  - a. This bill recommends an operator from the Center for Health, Education, and Wellness be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and only forwarding to UTPD under extreme circumstances.
  - b. Presented by Senators Elisabeth Logan, Kenan Smith, and Sophia Rubio.
6. Resolution to Support the Implementation of an Environmental Literacy Requirement (ELR) in the General Education Curriculum (RES 03-15)
  - a. This resolution expresses support for the University to add an environmental literacy requirement to the general education curriculum.
  - b. Presented by Senators Duncan Bryant and Erica Davis.

## Other Senate Acts

1. Attended luncheon with Chancellor Cheek and other administration to discuss updates and initiatives currently taking place at the University.
2. Received updates from Dean Shivers on the current status of previous legislation that was passed.

## Student Services, Administrative Committees, and Miscellaneous

1. Executive members from SGA attended Day on the Hill in Nashville, where they had the chance to communicate with legislators about issues that affect University of Tennessee students.
2. Student Services hosted Orange & White Week on the last week of class.
3. Government Affairs attended State of the State, in which they were able to speak to Governor Haslam.
4. Government Affairs hosted Advocacy Week in which students advocated for higher education.
5. Student Services hosted the Administrative Panel, where students were able to ask questions to a panel of UT administrators.
6. Environment & Sustainability hosted Big Green Friday, which encouraged students to go green.
7. Academic Affairs hosted Vol Walk of Life for students to learn about different majors and different programs offered at UT.
8. Student Services hosted the Safety Walk, where students and officials from UTPD walked across campus to find different ways to improve safety measures.
9. Student Services hosted Cheek Speak, where students could attend and ask the Chancellor about pressing issues.
10. Environment & Sustainability participated in the Office of Sustainability's Earth Day celebration.
11. Diversity Affairs has begun an initiative to make Panhellenic more accessible for students.
12. Diversity Affairs hosted a Privilege Awareness campaign.
13. Diversity Affairs assisted with Everyone Matters Day alongside various other groups.

14. Diversity Affairs attended the Disability Conference.
15. Government Affairs hosted coffee with Mayor Rogero, where students could ask questions regarding the city of Knoxville.



## Graduate Student Senate Achievements

1. Worked with the Graduate School to finalize the Leave of Absence Policy.
2. Organized the second annual Graduate Student Orientation that hosted over 600 graduate students in Fall 21014.
3. Directed \$240,000 in travel awards to graduates presenting research at conferences.
4. Passed the “Residency Bill” which outlines a procedure for graduate students to receive in-state residency.
5. Passed the “Ombudsperson Bill” which requested that two student advocates be hired to assist with conflict management.
6. Created a comprehensive orientation packet for new Senators.
7. Created a website to allow for electronic submission of travel awards applications.
8. Analyzed metrics of equity in the procedures for administering travel awards.
9. Raised nearly \$1000 for the McClung Museum during the Big Orange Adventure.

10. Hosted a Town Hall that allowed dialogue between students and administrators.
11. Provided programming for the first annual Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week.

## Freshman Council Update

1. A bill was passed to introduce “First-Year Town Halls” where students will be given the opportunity to voice their concerns directly to the First-Year Council.
2. A bill was passed to call for more trash and recycling bins across campus to reduce littering.
3. A bill was passed that calls for a transport system to the airport to be offered to out-of-state students during holidays.
4. The First-Year Council bylaws were updated to align with the overall mission and new structure of SGA.



## Freshman Council Officers

Position	Name	E-mail
Council Chair	Tristan Smith	<a href="mailto:tsmit173@vols.utk.edu">tsmit173@vols.utk.edu</a>
Council Vice-Chair	Chris Hall	<a href="mailto:chall46@vols.utk.edu">chall46@vols.utk.edu</a>
Council Secretary	Joe Chirico	<a href="mailto:jchiric1@vols.utk.edu">jchiric1@vols.utk.edu</a>

## Letter From the President

Hey Vols,

Thanks for checking out this Rocky-Top Wrap Up. A lot of times students complain that SGA doesn't do anything or that SGA doesn't do a good job telling people what we do. And I'll say that the latter of those complaints is valid. SGA takes on a wide variety of projects and initiatives, and many of them are hard to communicate. This Wrap-Up is one way we're trying to do better about that, so thank you for taking the time to read it.



Reflecting on our term in office, I'm proud of the work we did. I think of events like the inaugural All Vol Tailgate, the #OptIn campaign, gender-neutral restrooms legislation, a Board of Trustees Student Representative nomination, some internal SGA restructuring-- and I'm reminded of the countless hours we spent planning and advocating on behalf of students. That makes me happy.

But, of course, I also think of the things we didn't get done like we planned and the issues we could have handled better. I think of how we could have been better for you. For that, I apologize. But, like you, we are both humans and students, so we could never presume to get everything just right. If I had another year to do this job, I would know ways to do and be better, but even then, I can promise you I wouldn't be perfect.

The good news is that a group of incredible students just took the SGA reins. They're ready to pick up where we left off, to take on what we couldn't do, and to serve all students to the best of their ability. In transitioning these students into office, we've recommended they focus on areas we wish we had executed better—such as communicating SGA happenings, attending organizational meetings, and getting more students to vote in SGA elections. I know they will go above and beyond these ideas.

For those of you who will be here next school-year, I encourage you to hold your SGA accountable. Communication is a two-way street, so tell them what you need from them; let them know what's working and what's not. I assure you that Student Government Association cares about you. So help them help you.

Thank you for an incredible year on Rocky Top. It was a year of successes and failures, and it was a year I will never forget.

Go Vols,  
Kelsey