

MINUTES

Undergraduate Student Senate

September 1st, 2026

6:30pm

Squires Auditorium

Present – Lindsay Ricci (presiding), Gavin O'Brien, Jungwoo Choi, Saira Junnarkar, Atharva Shashank Kokane, Dominick Scozzafava, Robert Waugh Dawson Bell, Chloe Fitzer, Estee Ruiz, Sanjam Saini, McKenna Corrado, Jordan Kim, Parth Mehta, Cody Duggins, Xan Whitt, Brady Nast, Delisia Hart, Natalie Hayman, Justin Broughman, Keiana Mason, Amelia Peura, Nina Nelson, Rachel Mustapha, Mejd Hutchison, Mitchell Keller, Declan Hawthorne, Carson Knowles, Mira Morales, Reuben Monyo, Liam Nagy, Tanvi Aggarwal, Aryan Adhikari, Chi Pham, Kyra Moore, Eden Enwiya, Matthew Wagner, Nyima Kijera, Owen Yeatman, Keagan Clark, and Aisha Kijera.

Absent: Sarah Tchuma, Lauren Meyers, Jeril Antoney, Alessandro Buzzalino, Daniel Cherkasskiy, Abigail Caldwell, Ben Soltis, Ruun Samatar, Milani Reid, Ryan Hendrickson, Ansleigh Toone, Anna Huang, Symonie Kargbo, Amogha Bangalore, Maya Farrar, Estub Habewold, and Owen Tabler.

Guests: Kat Nelson, Chelsea Haines, Meghan Kuhn, Noah Fox, Patrick Clark, Fredrick Smith, and Tina Pan.

Lindsay Ricci called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. A quorum was present.

1. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda. Motion carried.

2. Approval or Announcement of approval and posting of minutes of April 28th, 2026.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the April 28th, 2026, minutes. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

None.

4. New Business

Roberts Rules Overview

Lindsay, President of USS, gave a presentation on Roberts Rules for first reading. Her presentation went over the following:

- General voting procedure
- Starting and closing a meeting
- Debate Procedure
- Point of Privilege
- Point of Inquiry

Office Hours Expectations Overview

Lindsay Ricci, President of USS, presented the Office Hours Expectations Overview for first reading. In her presentation, Lindsay went over the requirements of the Senator Engagement Credit System, and the options available to Senators that will enable them to meet their monthly four-credit hour requirement.

USS Strategic Plan 25-26

Lindsay Ricci, President of USS, presented the 2025-2026 USS Strategic Plan for Senate awareness. Lindsay began her presentation by giving a brief overview of the structure of USS outlined within the Strategic Plan. She then provided an overview of the survey conducted and answered by Senators within the Strategic Plan before transitioning to the recommendations and areas of growth identified in the plan.

Lindsay then opened the floor for discussion on what Senators and the cabinet can do to make USS better than it was last year. The following are points that came from the discussion:

- One Senator made a recommendation to increase the competitiveness of joining USS by reducing the number of available Senate seats. Another Senator countered and suggested that USS focuses on outreach and marketing rather than making the role more competitive. The first agreed with the second, further offering that USS should outline the differences between them and the class president structure.
- A Senator recommended that Senators table during fall elections to offer their own personal experiences with USS and explain the importance of the organization and why students should apply.
- One Senator asked if the issue was the number of Senators, or if Senators are engaged with the role. Lindsay explained that there will be more accountability implemented for Senators to engage more, but it is ultimately on individual Senators if they truly want to see more engagement across the board. Another Senator added that transparency is also important, and that the USS could implement a system that requires Senators to vocalize what they are working on.
- A Senator asked if there was a section in the meeting for Senators to share what they're working on and discuss opportunities for collaboration. Lindsay and Kat explained that public forum is currently the place for that and said we could add an additional section earlier in the agenda to give Senators that chance
- A Senator asked if all Senators are allowed to host their own individual events. Lindsay clarified the Senator Engagement Credit System and explained that individual events can count toward a Senator's monthly four-credit requirement and are encouraged.
- A Senator asked if there is a way for Senators to directly email their constituents. Kat answered and explained that this is a project that is currently being worked on and offered to receive any feedback from the Senators pertaining to institutional limits for emailing large groups of students and any protections on student data.
- A Senator asked if USS could improve their social media presence. Kat and Lindsay explained that this is under the purview of the Marketing and Communications Committee but is something they are also interested in improving.
- A Senator asked if they could host a black student forum through her role as a USCO Senator

for BOC. Lindsay answered in the affirmative, explaining that this would count toward a credit hour in the new Senator Engagement Credit System. Any student forums can be supported through special programs, and there are best practices that Senators can be trained on.

Shared Governance Appointments

Atharva Shashank Kokane, VP of Shared Governance, presented the shared governance appointment process for approval by the Senate. Atharva gave an overview of the shared governance system and the ways undergraduate students can get involved.

In response to Atharva's presentation, a Senator asked if further information could be sent out through email. Kat explained that she sent out the email and that it should be available for all Senators' review. A follow-up email will be sent again later this week on everything discussed in the senate meeting, including a chance for Senators to submit their preference for shared governance committees and commission appointments.

Vote on Shared Governance appointments:

- Senator Liam Nagy to the Commission on Studies and Policy
- Senator Parth Mehta to the Budgeting and Planning Committee
- Senator Carson Knowles to the Commission on Research
- The motion carried, and the Senators were confirmed

USS Internal Committee Assignments

Jungwoo Choi, VP of Administration, presented the Internal USS Committee placements.

5. Reports

- USS Reports – Cabinet Reports
- President's Report – Lindsay Ricci:
- Milkshake Mondays with Dean of Students
- Dates and Times:
- 9/14 from 4:00pm-5:00pm
- 10/12 from 12:30-1:30pm
- 11/2 from 3:30-4:30pm
- 12/14 from 12:30-1:30pm
- Blacksburg Police Citizens Advisory Board
 - Senators have the opportunity to go to the Blacksburg Police Station to speak with the Sheriff.
- Meets once a month on Thursday
- The time is still being finalized, but the meeting will last 1.5 hours sometime between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.
- Student Life Council (SLC)
- Advisory group to Dean Davidson (Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students Vice President's Council) and Dr. Keene (Vice President for Student Affairs).
- Includes attending Town Gown.
- Meet once a month on Thursday from 5:00pm-7:30pm (meeting for an hour then Town Gown for an hour).
- Free food and interesting conversations.
- BOV Representative – Robert Waugh:
- Update on LLPs

- Last week, the BOV passed a resolution to allow LLPs to stay.
- Whether an LLP can be on campus will be reviewed yearly.
- President Search
- Went over general timeline of the search for the new University President.
- Offered to express any questions, comments, or concerns the body may have as Robert will be sitting in on interviews.
- Dining
- Upcoming meeting with Dining to discuss the new dining plan.
- Offered to express any questions, comments, or concerns the body may have in his meeting.
- VP of Finance – Dominick Scozzafava
- Reaching out to the appropriations committee members via email soon.
- VP of Shared Governance – Atharva Shashank Kokane
- Optionality of Commissions
- Asked for Senators to only join commissions if they have the bandwidth.
- VP of Inclusive & Strategic Affairs – Saira Junnarkar
- Contacting the ISA committee via email soon.
- Town Council Advocacy Summit Sign-Ups are open.
- 9/25/2026 10:00 am - 4:30 pm.
- RSVP form closes on 9/13/2026.
- Hokies on the Hill Informational Session 9/3/2026 at 7:00 pm in Litton Reaves 1860
- VP of Administration – Jungwoo Choi
- Merchandise is available for Senators in the USS Office.
- Crewnecks, t-shirts, padfolios, water bottles, pens, pins, and lanyards.
- Asked any Senators who had not filled out the required forms or attended the mandatory onboarding to meet with him after the meeting.
- Senators receiving emails with their committee selection after the meeting.
- Interim VP of Issues & Policy – Gavin O'Brien
- The I&P and Special Programs will be meeting next Tuesday, September 8th, 2026, with communication via email coming later in the week.
- Will go over plans for legislation, tabling, and the semester with the I&P and Special Programs in their meeting.
- USS Reports - Advisor Report
- Kat Nelson
- Encouraged Senators to get word out about elections and encourage peers to apply.
- Went over current vacancies and the election timeline.
- Currently working to fix the Teams site – update coming on Thursday.
- Qualtrics is being used for Senate votes instead of GobblerConnect for the time being.

6. Presentation

Kat Nelson, USS Advisor, presented on the USS Cabinet Accountability Document. Kat explained that while the responsibilities and misconduct process for the Cabinet are included in Article IV and XIV in the USS Bylaws, there is not a clear accountability process that outlines the specific steps or expectations of how to address a concern with a Cabinet member's leadership efficacy or ability to fulfill their role. USS Cabinet members receive a \$5k stipend over the course of their term, with the funding for this coming from student activity fee dollars. These roles fulfill critical

functions for the institution and the undergraduate student body, and a need to create a structured process to address any concerns has been raised.

After consulting legal and HR, the USS Advising team has created an educational administrative process which provides clarity, opportunities for Cabinet members to grow and learn within their roles, and timely responses from the USS Advising team while maintaining compliance with the USS Bylaws. This administrative process is effective starting in Fall 2026.

7. Public Forum

- Jungwoo started the forum with an example, asking if any Senators had furniture available for his apartment.
- Senators discussed flock cameras, their placement on campus, and the potential necessity of discussing this matter further. One Senator suggested that Senators speak up at the town forum.
- A Senator asked how football lottery tickets will be distributed.

8. Announcements

- Student ticket holders must go to Gate 7 for admission moving forward.
- Gates open at 5:45pm; Game starts at 7:30pm.
- Pride Center Open House
- Spot open for any undergraduate interested in serving on one of the Working Committees to the IT Advisory Council

9. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:02pm.