

MINUTES

Undergraduate Student Senate

September 15th

6:30 p.m.

Squires Auditorium

Present – Lindsay Ricci (presiding), Robert Waugh, Dominick Scozzafava, Atharva Shashank Kokane, Saira Junnarkar, Gavin O'Brien, Ansleigh Toone, Daniel Cherkasskiy, Maya Farrar, Jordan Kim, Liam Nagy, Xan Whitt, Mejd Hutchison, Dawson Bell, Kyra Moore, Alessandro Buzzalino, McKenna Corrado, Keagan Clark, Amelia Peura, Delisia Hart, Chi Pham, Nicole Pham, Estee Ruiz, Mitchell Keller, Gianna Colangelo, Milani Reid, Rachel Mustapha, Cody Duggins, Brady Nast, Declan Hawthorne, Reuben Monyo, Sanjam Saini, Chloe Fitzner, Keiana Mason, Nina Nelson, Ruun Samatar, Iris Williams, Carson Knowles, and Matthew Wagner.

Absent: Natalie Hayman, Symonie Kargbo, Justin Broughman, Mira Morales, Sarah Tchuma, Aryan Adhikari, Owen Yeatman, Lauren Myers, Jeril Antoney, Eden Enwiya, Parth Mehta, Aisha Kijera, Abigail Caldow, Ben Soltis, Tanvi Aggarwal, Ryan Hendrickson, and Anna Huang.

Guests: Heather Wagoner, Meghan Kuhn, Kat Nelson, Noah Fox, Patrick Clark, Fredrick Smith, Sydney Holland, Tina Pan, Declan Hawthorne, Billy McKeon, Hannah Banks, and Riley Shelton.

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 September 1st, 2026.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the September 1st, 2026 minutes. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

None.

4. New Business

None.

5. Reports

- President's Report – Lindsay Ricci
- Upcoming Speakers:
 - September 29: Virginia Tech Police Chief McBabb will discuss Flock cameras.
 - October 13: Dr. Davidson, Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students, will speak to the Senate.
 - October 27: Carrie Cox, Senior Director of Auxiliary Services, will discuss parking.
 - Milkshake Mondays: Dean of Students and USS Collaboration
 - The event will take place on November 2 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
 - Student Life Council (SLC)

- The Student Life Council is an advisory group to Dean Davidson and Dr. Keene.
 - The council also participates in Town Gown meetings.
 - The council meets once a month on Thursdays from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. The first hour is dedicated to the SLC meeting, followed by approximately one hour of Town Gown.
- BOV Representative – Robert Waugh
- Flock Cameras
- Rob met with the Virginia Tech Chief of Police to discuss Flock cameras. He asked Senators to contact him after the meeting if they wanted to discuss the meeting further.
- Dining
- Rob met with Dining Services to discuss the new dining plan. He asked Senators to contact him after the meeting if they wanted to discuss it further.
- A meeting between Dining Services and the Board of Visitors Advising Committee will take place soon.
- President Search
- The University will soon conduct interviews for a new president. Robert asked Senators to speak with him after the meeting if they had any questions, comments, or concerns.
- VP of Finance – Dominick Scozzafava
- No report was provided.
- VP of Shared Governance – Atharva Shashank Kokane
- CUSA goals for this year:
- CUSA will help create an approval process with appropriate checks and balances for funding the largest organizations on campus.
- CUSA will appoint members to the Academic Support Committee, which is discussing the possibility of a two-day fall break.
- CUSA will create a new grievance process for student employees across campus.
- CUSA will rework their scope and goals to be more intentional going forward.
- The following updates were provided regarding the Shared Governance commissions:
- CUSP is trying to make it so that professors need to inform students of materials that need to be purchased for their class before the term begins.
- COR is doing a review report on VTNSI and another research facility.
 - CGPSA is working with CUSA to make sure that SAFAB policy has more checks and balances to go through.
 - Congrats to the new Shared Governance appointees:
 - Senator Brady Nast to Athletics Committee
 - Senator Ben Solits to Campus Development Committee
 - Senator Matthew Wagner to Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies
- VP of Inclusive & Strategic Affairs – Saira Junnarkar
- Encouraged Senators to sign up for the Town Hall Student Summit.
- VP of Administration – Jungwoo Choi
 - Requested Senators that have not filled out or have not gone to the mandatory onboarding to meet with him after the meeting.
- Interim VP of Issues & Policy – Gavin O'Brien
- Requested I&P and Special Programs Committee to check their emails
- USS Reports - Advisor Report
- Kat Nelson
- Explained that elections are taking place next week and encouraged Senators to get their peers to vote.

- Highlighted the recent updates with compliance with the Office for Civil Rights for hosting events on campus to ensure all students would feel welcome to attend. She gave suggestions on the best course of actions Senators can take if they are interested in hosting an event to get constituency feedback.
- Kat opened the floor for Senators to give feedback on the Teams site so they can provide a response on whether they are facing any technical difficulties.
- A discussion was had on the Teams site about concerns Senators have with the site, as well as on why the site is being used for USS.
- Kat offered to give a video tutorial on how to use the Teams site.
- A Senator had a question of whether USS will be using GroupMe moving forward, with Kat opening discussion up to the Senate on how they want to communicate moving forward. It was decided that moving forward communication will be the same as it is currently.
- Kat urged Senators to submit a response to the feedback form displayed on the onboarding process.
- Kat urged Senators to meet with Arthava and sign up for CUSA.
- Kat introduced Dr. Heather Wagoner as the new Senior Advisor to USS. Dr. Wagoner went on to introduce herself where she explained her role and thanked Senators for acting in their role.

6. Presentation

VT Engage Civic Engagement Opportunities

Billy McKeon, Civic Engagement Coordinator with VT Engage, Hannah Banks, Director of Hokies Vote Caucus, and Riley from VT Engage presented on civic engagement opportunities within VT Engage. Hannah gave background on what Hokies Votes Caucus before

Billy took over and explained what the *Ut Prosim* Student Impact Grant is, and the criteria applicants need to be considered for it.

Riley and Hannah then presented on the importance of voting and the different ways students can vote, including different modality, times, and location. They further highlighted upcoming voting deadlines, and the materials students need to become eligible.

Hannah pivoted to explain what the Town Hall Student Summit is, including background on the event, important deadlines, and benefits from participating.

7. Other Items

- Town Gown Meeting Summary
- Lindsay provided background on what Town Gown is before explaining the local governance structure of the Town of Blacksburg.
- Find Your Type of Senator Activity – USS Bylaws Article V
- This activity was led by Gavin and consisted of Senators finding other Senators throughout the room that represent the same consistency. He then urged them to look over Article V of the USS Bylaws and discuss amongst themselves how they would like to collaborate.
- Speaker of the Senate – USS Bylaws Article V: Section 4
- Lindsay explained what Speaker of the Senate is as outlined in the USS Bylaws Art. V: Section 4 and opened the floor for discussion to see if Senators wanted to host an internal election for a new Speaker of the Senate.

- One Senator expressed that they liked the idea and thinks the Senate should move forward with an internal election.
 - Lindsay then asked the Senators to raise their hand if they want to host the Speaker of the Senate process this year, but only a few Senators raised their hand. It was then decided to continue discussion further.
- A Senator asked for clarification if the Speaker of the Senate is still required to have two monthly meetings with the Cabinet. Lindsay responded in the affirmative and explained the importance of the required meetings. Another Senator agreed with Lindsay's point but expressed concern with the Speaker being too embedded within the cabinet.
- A Senator offered their opinion and explained that they don't see the need for the role and emphasized that overall communication needs to improve. Multiple Senators agreed and suggested the cabinet do more direct outreach with Senators before meetings.
 - After this discussion, the majority of Senators present confirmed they didn't see a need for the Speaker of the Senate role this year.
- Issue Case Scenario Activity
- This activity was led by Lindsay and consisted of Senators doing an issue case scenario activity where, within groups, Senators had to find the best course of action and the right person to contact. Cabinet members acted as administrators in which Senators had to present their scenario and the solution their groups decided on.

8. Public Forum

- A Senator promoted an event that the Pride Council is hosting next week for bisexuality awareness day where they will be handing out candy.
- A Senator had a question toward Rob, and if there was anything of note, he gathered from his meeting with the Police Chief. Rob explained that the Chief won't budge on Flock Cameras as a whole and suggested Senators center their discussions around changing the Camera Vendors. The materials shared with Rob during his meeting with the Chief will be emailed to the rest of the Senate.
- A Senator is doing a leadership program called "Let Us Lead" and asked any Senators to see them if they are interested in joining.
- The Director of Government Relations introduced themselves and promoted NAACP's first general body meeting later in the week.
- The Senate Rep. for BOC promoted the BOC Showcase happening later in the week.
- Atharva asked all Shared Governance appointees and USCO Senators to meet with him after the meeting.
- Jungwoo asked Senators to read over questions from their onboarding and submit any questions to their committee chair as it will count toward their office hours in September.
- Lindsay will set up a meeting with HokieAI to meet with the Senate in the coming weeks.

9. Announcements

- None.

10. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m.