

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2009-1062

TITLE: Sunshine in the Swamp Act

AUTHORS: Senator Ben Cavataro

SPONSORS: Senator Ben Cavataro and Jonathan Ossip

SECTION 1. TITLE AND FINDINGS.

- A. **Title.** This Act may be cited as the “Open Student Government (Sunshine in the Swamp) Act.”
- B. **Findings.** The Student Senate finds that:
 - 1. In order for Student Government to be accountable to students and to carry out its mission of providing quality services and advocacy students it must conduct itself in a fair, open, ethical, and accountable way.
 - 2. In order to prevent confusion and provide a framework for compliance with state Sunshine Laws on open meetings and public records it is helpful to provide procedural guidelines to assist both the Student Body and its Student Government officials.

SECTION 2. CREATING AN OPEN, ACCOUNTABLE STUDENT GOVERNMENT.

ADDS to Chapter 102 of the Student Body Statutes as follows:

102.2 Definitions and Construction. As used in this title:

- (A) “Official Student Government website” means a website maintained by Student Government at the <http://sg.ufl.edu> domain that is accessible to the public.
- (B) “Business day” means any day of any academic term in which classes are in session, as defined by the Office of the University Registrar.
- (C) “Meeting” means any meeting at which official Student Government business of any nature is conducted or is to be conducted.
- (D) Deadlines, dates, times in this chapter shall be construed to be the minimum internal requirements. If shorter or more stringent requirements are established by state law or University policy, than those requirements are binding.

102.3 Public Notice.

- (A) Notice of any meeting shall be posted in a public place no less than 24 hours before the start of any such meeting.
- (B) A reasonable change in location in the place of the meeting (for example, a change from one room to a different room in the same building) shall not require a second public notice period, provided that the change in location is posted at both the location at which the public notice was previously posted and at the location at which the meeting was originally to be held.

102.31 Place of Public Notice.

- (A) A written public notice of any meeting shall at least be posted at the J. Wayne Reitz Union, in a place where any member of the public may view the posting whenever the J. Wayne Reitz Union building is open.
- (B) Suitable locations include, but are not limited to, the glass doors or windows outside the office of the Center for Student Activities and Involvement.

102.32 Elements of Public Notice

- (A) The public notice shall include at least the date, time, place, and agenda of such meetings shall be incorporated in the notice.
- (B) The agenda shall include the titles or short descriptions of all documents or legislation that are known to the individual posting the notice to be items for discussion, action, or consideration at the meeting.
- (C) Copies of such notices shall be furnished free of charge to any student on request.

102.33 Electronic Posting of Public Notice. In addition to posting in a public place, notice of the following meetings shall be electronically posted on the Student Government website:

1. Regular and special meetings of the Student Senate.
2. Meetings of any committee or body of the Student Senate.
3. Meetings of the Cabinet or executive branch officials.
4. Meetings of the Supreme Court of the Student Body.
5. Meetings of the Elections Commission.

102.4 Electronic Posting of Senate Records.

- (A) The full text of all legislation, written motions, and any other document submitted into the records of the Student Senate shall be posted on the official Student Government website within three business days of the adjournment of the meeting first following submission. Minutes shall be posted three days after those minutes are approved by the Student Senate.
- (B) Student Senate records shall be listed by title or other appropriate short descriptive phrase and shall be indexed or arranged as to be easily accessible.

102.5 Budgets and Financial Material Made Electronically Accessible to Public. The following finance-related material shall be posted on the official government website:

- (A) All Student Government budgets (as defined by Student Body Statute 800.08) for at least the most recent four fiscal years;
- (B) The current Finance Manual (defined by Student Body Statute 215.3).
- (C) All schedules for hearings of the Budget Committee of the Student Senate relating to appropriations to student organizations or academic organizations. Such as scheduled shall posted no less than one week days before the earliest hearing listed on the schedule and shall remain posted until after the last budget hearing listed on the schedule has taken place. A rescheduling of a specific hearing for an organization due to the request of the organization, or because of organization's inability to appear at the previously scheduled time, shall not require a reposting of the entire schedule.

102.6 Election Results and Student Petitions Made Electronically Accessible to Public.

- (A) The results of all general or run-off Student Government elections, as forwarded from the Supervisor of Elections to the Elections Commission for recommendation on validation, shall be posted on the official Student Government website within two business days of forwarding.
- (B) Any initiative, referendum, or constitutional amendment filed or submitted to the Supreme Court of the Student Body shall be posted on the official Student Government website within two business days of being filed or submitted to the Supreme Court.

102.7 Governing Documents Made Electronically Accessible to Public. A copy of the Student Body Constitution, the Student Body Statutes, and the Rules and Procedures of the Student Senate shall be posted on the official Student Government website at all times. Any change to these documents shall be reflected within three business days of the enactment or adoption.

SECTION 2. PROVIDING FOR PUBLIC RECORDS
ADDS to Chapter 103 of the Student Body Statutes as follows:

103.4 Retention of Records. Student Government shall comply with the policies of the University Records Management Program of the Records Management Office regarding retention of records.

103.5 Timely Notice of Status. Student Government shall respond as to the status of all requests for records within two weeks unless a shorter deadline is established by Florida Statutes.

103.6 Open Meeting and Public Records Law Training.

- (A) There shall be at least three training sessions annually of at least one hour in open meeting and public record law, to be held the first week in which classes are in session following May 1, the validation of the results of the fall general election, and the validation of the results of the spring general election.
- (B) Such trainings may either be conducted by the Office of the Vice President and General Counsel or by Student Government office staff, who shall maintain and keep current training materials and curriculum.
- (C) All Student Government officers who have never previously attended such session shall attend the earliest training session held after assuming office, and officers shall be required to sign in to such session.