



SGA Statement Regarding the Comptroller's Report

This statement is regarding the *Special Report: Sex Week at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville*, published by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office on Wednesday, February 20th. We have read the report, reviewed the suggested policies, and acknowledge the potential effects of the University's response on the student body. The purpose of this statement is to convey what the Student Government Association is doing to support and advocate for students.

If you would like more background information on the Student Programming Allocation Committee (SPAC) process and why the Comptroller's report was initiated you can view a brief synopsis on a separate post on our media.

On Thursday, February 21st, SGA leadership met with the Interim Chancellor, Vice Chancellor for Student Life, Dean of Students, and Vice Chancellor for Communications to discuss the university's response and gather information on how this report and suggested policy changes will affect student programming.

During this meeting, we expressed student concerns and frustration over the perceived loss of student-led programming, targeted attacks on SEAT programming, and confusion over the next steps for our campus.

The following are our key takeaways from this meeting:

- Based off of the policy considerations presented by the Comptroller's Report, the university has decided that the SPAC process will be terminated ***and replaced*** with a different system to ensure student led-programing can still occur on campus, with greater administrative oversight.

- The Chancellor has stated that student programming already funded through the SPAC process for Spring of 2019 will still take place.
- The new process to replace SPAC has not been created yet and the format is still unknown, but this issue will be a top priority for administration and SGA in the coming months.
- These policy changes will affect solely the funding process for student-led programming.
- Student-led programming and events are protected under free speech, but funding from the university is not guaranteed.
- A formal proposal for this new funding process will need to be presented and approved during the **Board of Trustees Meeting on June 21, 2019**.
- We were one of several student organizations that met with university administrators on Thursday, February 21, 2019, and organization leaders from some of our major programming bodies on campus have been in direct contact with the administration.

SGA's stance **is and always will be to support students**. We disagree with some of the verbiage used in our university's response to this report. We do not believe any student-led program is an embarrassment to our university. We believe that the sex education provided by SEAT is a vital resource.

We recognize the SPAC process has flaws and needs to be reevaluated, but we want students to be able to lead that process. **We hold the belief that student programming was created to empower and positively impact students; therefore, students should be the primary decision-makers when determining what programs occur on campus.**

Moving forward, SGA plans to continue these conversations with university administrators and to ensure students' voices are heard during this process. We asked for and received confirmation at this meeting that students will be an integral part of the new process for distributing funds.

Additionally, SGA will be taking the following action items:

- On **Tuesday, February 26, 2019**, the SGA Government Affairs Committee will be hosting an **Open Town Hall with Interim Chancellor Wayne Davis from 5-6:30 pm** in the Student Union Phase II, room to be determined. All students are welcome and encouraged to attend and engage in dialogue with the Interim Chancellor.
- SGA Leadership and the SGA Government Affairs Committee will be **traveling to Nashville, Wednesday, February 27, 2019**, to lobby legislators by advocating for student issues, including student-programing.
- We will be **opening a form no later than Wednesday, February 27, 2019**, where students can share personal stories, explaining how student programming has positively impacted their experience. These responses will be sent to the Board of Trustees

members, encouraging them to support student programming and student autonomy in the funding process.

- SGA President, Vice President, and Student Services Director will be **traveling to the next Board of Trustees Meeting on Friday, March 1, 2019**, to advocate for students.
- We will be compiling a comprehensive list of suggestions from members of student organizations on what they would like the new funding process to look like. We will be **sending out a google form no later than March 1, 2019**, to start collecting responses. The information gathered will be translated into a report and presented to university administration.
- We will continue to support and stand alongside our student organizations like SEAT as we believe that educating our student body on their sexual health and creating a campus environment which fosters diverse ideas and programming is paramount to the success of our university.
- We will be in direct contact with student organizations, meeting regularly throughout this process to keep students informed and provide all the information we know.

Please reach out to sga1@utk.edu, sga2@utk.edu, and sga3@utk.edu, with any and all questions, as well as recommendations. We want to collaborate with student leaders to ensure we represent student voices to the best of our abilities.

Sincerely,

Ovi Kabir, Student Body President

Haley Paige, Student Body Vice President

Maddie Stephens, Student Services Director