

Chief Justice Dwayne Crenshaw
SGA Supreme Court
Djcrensh@uno.edu

October 13, 2022

Dear Chief Justice Crenshaw,

This letter serves as my response to the Protest of the Decision made by the UNO Student Government Association (SGA) Supreme Court regarding case number 122-3. The petition filed by Aaron Jordan requested a full court impeachment hearing of Senator [REDACTED] because he alleged that Senator [REDACTED] admitted to being an addict during the Student Government meeting on August 31, 2022. SGA Supreme Court denied the petition and determined that the facts on which the petition was filed were false. Mr. Jordan has filed a protest of the SGA Supreme Court decision with my office.

The petitioner argues that Senator [REDACTED] stated that she “is an addict” as recorded in the minutes from the SGA meeting on August 31, 2022. The petitioner also argued that Senator [REDACTED] is in violation of the SGA code of conduct which forbids illicit drug use. The petitioner also argues that amending the minutes based on Senator [REDACTED] request violates Louisiana Open Meetings law since the meeting minutes are required to be maintained and that the decision to amend the minutes “injure[s] a public record”.

In considering the protest and petition, I have reviewed the original transcription of the SGA meeting as provided by the petitioner, the transcript of the SGA meeting from August 31, 2022, the audio recording of the SGA meeting from August 31, 2022, and the transcript of the meeting from September 7, 2022 during which the request to amend the minutes was made and approved without objection.

The original transcript provided by the petitioner does transcribe Senator [REDACTED] comment as saying, “I am an addict myself.” When listening to the audio recording, it is clear that Senator [REDACTED] did not say that many words in that specific sentence (I hear two words in that section), but I was unable to determine her exact words due to the voice of another senator being picked up by the audio recording and thus making Senator [REDACTED] exact words indecipherable. Therefore, the evidence does not support an argument that Senator [REDACTED] admitted to being an addict.

During the September 7, 2022, meeting in which the Senator asked to revise the minutes, no Senator objected to the amendment. If any senators believed that Senator [REDACTED] was trying to change the record inappropriately, they would have or should have objected.

The [Open Meetings Law FAQ](#) states that minutes are required for meetings that fall under the Open Meetings Law. However, the FAQ also makes clear that minutes “need not be verbatim transcripts of the meeting and that summaries satisfy the requirement”. [Roberts Rules](#) also provides guidance here: “Minutes are a record of what was done at a meeting, not a record of what was said.”

While SGA has chosen to use the transcript as minutes, it is not necessary and fails to meet the standard laid out by Roberts Rules of Order. Confusion caused by inaccurate transcription or inaudible audio could be avoided by a move to provide summaries of meetings as minutes rather than relying on transcription. I encourage SGA to consider providing summaries as minutes rather than meeting

transcriptions. [Robert's Rules](#) provides guidance on amending minutes, which is common practice for many public boards:

If corrections to minutes are made at the time when those minutes are originally submitted for approval, such corrections are made in the text of the minutes being approved. The minutes of the meeting at which corrections are made should merely indicate that the minutes were approved "as corrected" without specifying what the correction was.

Since the minutes of the August 31, 2022, SGA meeting were amended, the minutes need to reflect that they were corrected. If they do not currently say "as corrected", the SGA secretary needs to make that adjustment to the minutes.

While the audio transcript does not support the petitioner's argument, even if it did, an admission of being an addict would not automatically violate the SGA Code of Conduct. The SGA Code of Conduct states:

7.2. The UNOSGA Code of Conduct is as follows: 7.2.1. Must abide by Federal, State, and New Orleans Laws. ... 7.2.5. The following are forbidden: 7.2.5.1. Conviction of a Felony 7.2.5.2. Criminal Stalking 7.2.5.3. Theft/Burglary/Robbery 7.2.5.4. Battery 7.2.5.5. Rape/Sexual Assault 7.2.5.6. Assault 7.2.5.7. Hazing 7.2.6. Also included are the conviction of: 7.2.6.1. Underage Drinking, 7.2.6.2. Knowingly Aiding in the Delinquency of a Minor, with Regards to Alcohol 7.2.6.3. Destruction of Property 7.2.6.4. Illicit drug use

[Addiction support groups](#) acknowledge that addiction recovery takes work. Individuals who are in recovery often refer to themselves as "addicts". When someone says they are an addict, they are not saying that they are currently using drugs. There is no evidence provided in the petition to support a claim that Senator [REDACTED] is currently using illicit drugs in violation of federal, state, or New Orleans laws or that she has been convicted of illicit drug use. Further, any effort to remove an individual for being a recovering addict (without evidence of current illicit drug use) might violate their rights because substance abuse disorders may be covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Based on the information outlined above, I support and uphold the SGA Supreme Court's decision to deny a full hearing.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Golz, Ph.D.
Associate Vice President for Student Affairs
Dean of Students