

FAMU Senate bill sparks student transparency debate

By Starr McKay | Staff Writer



TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — A proposal in the Florida A&M University Student Senate aimed at increasing transparency and student access to legislative proceedings did not pass during recent consideration, but it has sparked ongoing discussion about how student government communicates with the student body.

The Student Inquiry Bill, authored by Senator Myia Tucker and sponsored by Chairwoman Braclet, sought to change Senate procedures to allow students to more easily engage with legislative activity.

While current student senate rules allow individuals to speak during a lobbying and speakers forum, there is no structured system for students to submit questions or seek clarification during meetings.

The bill proposed creating a Google Form at the start of each student senate meeting so students could submit questions. It also called for Florida A&M Senate leadership and the Student Relations Committee to review submissions and determine which questions would be addressed during proceedings.

According to the bill, the intent was to improve transparency and increase student engagement with the legislative process.

It also referenced Chapter 1100 of the Student Body Statutes, which outlines requirements for public notice and access to legislative materials, raising concerns about how Senate agendas and bills are currently shared before meetings.

During public comment, Amany Hilario, a second-year political science student, said students often do not receive enough time to review legislation before votes take place.

“This is not about changing the structure that already exists, but how consistently the current expectations are being carried out in practice,” Hilario said. She added that agendas are often released shortly before meetings, limiting student input.

Hilario suggested posting agendas at least 48 hours in advance and providing live streaming or recorded access to student senate meetings to improve visibility.

Other students said they are largely disconnected from student senate activity.

“I honestly did not even know there was a student senate or what they do,” said Marcus Ellington, a freshman business administration major from Georgia. “Most students are not paying attention because it feels far removed from us.”

Ellington said greater transparency could change that.

“If students could actually see what is happening, more people would care,” he said.

Some students said the proposal, even though it did not pass, highlighted an ongoing need for communication.

“I think something like that would help students understand what is going on,” said Nia Robinson, a junior public relations major from Florida. “A lot of decisions affect us, but we do not always see the process.”

The Student Inquiry Bill was introduced by Senator Tucker and would have amended Section 5.07 of the Student Senate rules governing the order of business. It ultimately did not pass in Senate proceedings.

FAMU Student Government Association leaders have not issued a public statement regarding the decision.

For Hilario, the conversation remains important.

“It is about making sure students are not just represented but actually informed,” she said.