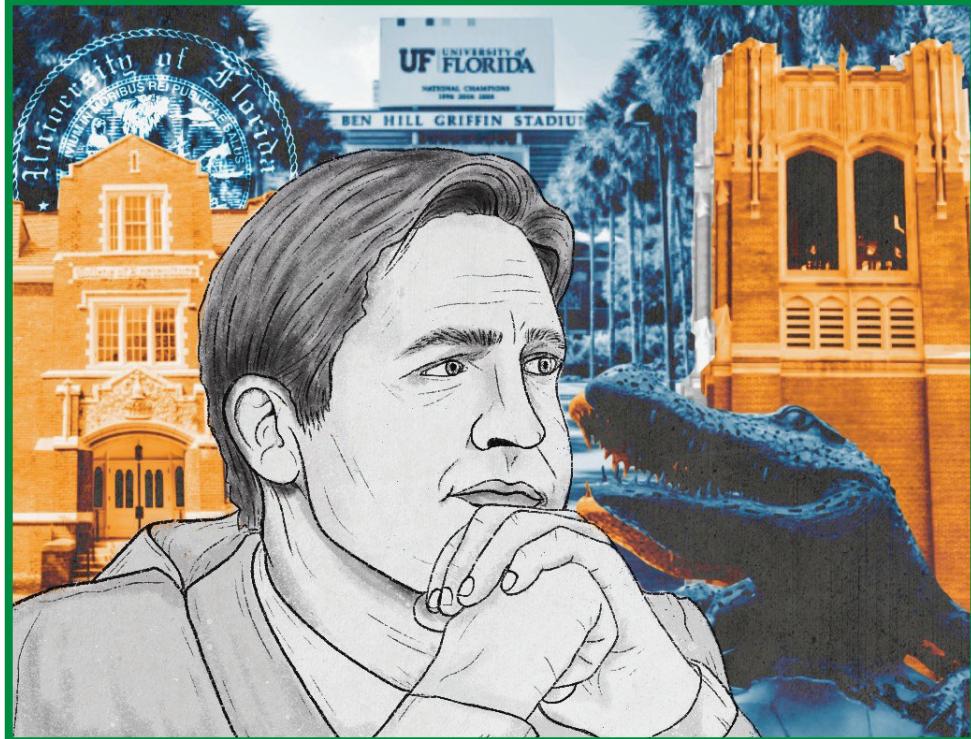


Sole UF presidential finalist Sen. Ben Sasse proves divisive



Minca Davis // Alligator Staff

U.S. Sen. Ben Sasse will come to UF's campus Monday, Oct. 10, 2022, to talk to faculty, students and staff in three forums at Emerson Alumni Hall.

A day in Gainesville with US Senate candidate Val Demings

DEMINGS MADE 6 STOPS AROUND CITY

By Heather Bushman
Alligator Staff Writer

Rep. Val Demings, D-Orlando, had some company when she wrapped up her speech to the crowd at Gainesville's International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers — her first of six stops Saturday.

Demings, the representative for Florida's 10th Congressional District in the U.S. House and a Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate, invited two young girls to stand with her as she closed her speech in the center of the room. They clung to Demings, watching in wonder as she made promises of a better tomorrow.

The affection was welcomed along with a half hour of discussion between Demings and about 50 labor union leaders, union members and Gainesville residents, she said.

"Senate candidates need hugs too," Demings said.

She gave plenty of them on the campaign trail Oct. 7 in a daylong

tour of Gainesville, where she spoke with voters, organizers, activists and local candidates across the city. Demings made the stop almost exactly a month ahead of the general election, where she'll face Republinc incumbent Sen. Marco Rubio in her challenge for the Senate seat.

The labor union roundtable kicked off Demings' day in Gainesville. Attendees asked about her policy points, but the biggest question in the room was clear. They wanted to know: Will she beat Rubio?

The Gainesville tour saw Demings live like a local. She listened and laughed with voters at staple locations like the Pride Community Center of North Central Florida and Grace Marketplace, braved Gainesville traffic amid street closures to catch UF's homecoming parade and even dug into a few slices at Satchel's Pizza.

Churchill Roberts, a UF film professor, said he wants Demings to show some aggression toward her opponent. He's confident Demings

SEE DEMINGS, PAGE 8

Defensive effort saves Florida's Homecoming

Strong outings from Ventrell Miller and Jaydon Hill overshadow sluggish first-half offense. **Read more on pg. 11**



Sasse's gay marriage stance worries LGBTQ community members

UF students and faculty wonder if the senator will address past comments on same-sex marriage. **pg. 4**

Change Party wins big in Student Government — what's next?

Gator Party has long held a supermajority in the UF Student Senate. Students now wonder if the dynamic could be changing. **pg. 5**

SASSE'S STANCES ON ABORTION, GAY MARRIAGE CONCERNING FOR SOME

By Christian Casale
Alligator Staff Writer

The announcement of U.S. Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Nebraska, as the lone candidate to replace Kent Fuchs as UF president caused a stir not only in the university community but also the national political landscape.

Public comments on Sasse's hire ranged from optimistic to fatalistic, from UF students to the chair of the Board of Trustees, from the faculty union's president to the former president of the United States. Search administrators have lauded Sasse's experience in academic and public service, while student groups have blasted the senator for his political stances against same-sex marriage and abortion.

Sasse will visit campus Monday, where there will be three forums for him to take questions from UF faculty, staff and students at Emerson Hall, beginning at 1 p.m. Members of the UF community submitted questions online for the forums through UF's presidential search website. The event will also be live-streamed, according to a UF press release.

A moderator will facilitate the forum, and

there will be no opportunity for public comment.

Sasse is also scheduled to attend private meetings that morning, UF spokesperson Steve Orlando wrote in an email; he didn't specify who Sasse would be meeting with specifically.

Rahul Patel, a UF trustee and chair of the search committee that unanimously voted to select Sasse as their nominee, cited the senator's record of public service, leadership in higher education and advocacy for academic freedom as the qualities that set him apart.

The committee heard from more than 700 potential candidates UF contacted during its more than six-month-long search, according to the press release.

The committee first heard Sasse suggested as a potential candidate at one of the UF stakeholder listening sessions, Patel told The Alligator. Patel said he couldn't recall in which particular sessions, with which particular stakeholders, Sasse's name came up.

Bryn Taylor, co-president of Graduate Assistants United, said her organization is disappointed by UF's choice. Because Sasse isn't from Gainesville or familiar with it, Taylor said he's not representative of UF's student body.

"His actions while in the senate infringe on the wellbeing of LGBTQ [Graduate Assistants],"

SEE SASSE, PAGE 4

UF celebrates Homecoming, gets 'low' at Gator Growl

Festivities back in full swing

By Alissa Gary & Siena Duncan
Alligator Staff Writers

A day filled with food-truck treats, floats and famous performers — just a few of the highlights of UF's 99th annual Homecoming festivities.

After a slow, but steady return to in-person events in 2021 following Homecoming's cancellation in 2020, the parade and other festivities came back in full force. Homecoming festivities initiated the morning of Oct. 7 with a festival, the Gator Gallop run and the annual Homecoming parade. The night was rounded up with an electric performance from rapper Flo Rida and singer Fletcher at the Stephen O'Connell Center.

Set-up for the festival began around 9 a.m., with bounce houses and balloon arches rising up from the ground of the Plaza of the Americas.

More than 20 tabling events for different campus groups dotted the plaza, advertising student org-

anizations and local businesses.

Some had activities planned, like the UF Chemistry Club's slime-making station or the Center for Arts and Medicine crown-decorating stop.

But for some, it also meant sharing their culture.

The Indonesian Student Association dressed in Indonesian sarongs and brought several angklungs, a traditional Indonesian instrument made out of bamboo that is played similarly to Western handbells. That afternoon, they played them for the audience of people dressed in bright orange and blue.

The Indonesian Student Association has attended the festival three times now, ISA president Alfredo Sadriya said.

"I'm really happy to have this kind of sharing with others about our nation," Sadriya said.

By 10 a.m., the bounce houses began to fill up with energetic kids as families started to walk through the plaza. As the people arrived, so did the food trucks: B'z Gelati,

Halo Potato Donuts and Big Island Bowls stopped by to sell ice cream and acai to hungry attendees.

Gainesville resident Jamesha McWilliams made a personal sacrifice for her three kids to be at the festival, she said.

McWilliams is a FSU grad, and she wasn't wearing orange and blue. She's taken part in UF Homecoming events in the past, and she's always been tempted to wear an FSU shirt, she said. But she comes because her kids love to watch the parade.

All of her children seemed to be turning into Gator fans, she said, and she joked she's betraying her own alma mater by bringing them to UF Homecoming.

"Living in Gainesville, they're getting brainwashed," she said, laughing. "But I guess [bringing them here] isn't helping."

On the far side of Plaza at 10:45 a.m., almost 500 people lined up with race bibs below a banner labeled 'Start' on one side and 'Finish' on the other.

They were there for Gator Gallop, the two-mile race held during

SEE HOMECOMING, PAGE 5

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Florida gender affirming care policy heads to court this week

GENDER AFFIRMING CARE MEDICAID COVERAGE BAN WENT INTO EFFECT AUG. 21

By Melanie Peña
Alligator Staff Writer

The temporary blockage of a ban on Medicaid coverage for gender dysphoria treatments may be on the table in a Florida court this week.

The Agency for Health Care Administration's ban on gender affirming care coverage went into effect Aug. 21, banning coverage for all treatments of gender dysphoria under the Florida Medicaid program.

These treatments include any procedures that alter primary or secondary sexual characteristics, according to the Florida administrative codes on general Medicaid policy.

Sept. 7, the Southern Legal Counsel and co-counsel filed a complaint against the AHCA and its secretary Simone Marstiller, initiating the process of a federal lawsuit. Sept. 12, they filed a motion for a preliminary injunction, which will see its first day in court Oct. 12.

The SLC's co-counsel include Lambda Legal, the Florida Health Justice Project, the National Health Law Program and Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman.

The plaintiffs in the lawsuit are transgender Floridians August Dekker and Brit Rothstein. Two minors — a 12-year-old boy and a 12-year-old girl who are both transgender — are named as anonymous plaintiffs alongside their parents.

A 2015 survey on transgender individuals in the U.S. found about 82% of people reported seriously considering suicide, and around 40% reported attempting suicide, accord-

ing to the University of California Los Angeles School of Law.

There are 100,300 transgender adults in Florida, according to a 2019 UCLA study.

In June, when the AHCA issued a notice to begin rule-making a Medicaid policy for gender dysphoria treatment, attorney and director of the transgender rights initiative at SLC Simone Chriss said she coordinated thousands of comments in opposition from impacted individuals and medical organizations.

"People are absolutely terrified," Chriss said. "I am not exaggerating when I say at least one parent each day asks me, 'Should I leave this? Should I sell what I have? Should we sell our house, should we sell whatever we can to leave this state, so that I can protect my child from this?'"

The preliminary injunction asks the court to block enforcement of the AHCA's Medicaid policy during the trial because litigating could take years, Chriss said.

"What we don't want is for people to be harmed every day that this rule is in effect and for people to continue being denied care every day," Chriss said.

If the ACHA is successful at the end of the trial, then its policy would remain in effect.

"Stripping those people of life-saving, medically necessary care that their doctors have determined is necessary for them is cruel and inhumane," Chriss said.

Ahead of the court hearing, some Gainesville residents are fearful of the Medicaid policy's impact. One is JoJo Sacks, a specialist at the Santa Fe College LGBTQ Resource Center.

Sacks speaks with students who use gender affirming care such as therapy, hormone replacement therapy



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and surgery to help them feel more affirmed in their bodies. It's an option many people look forward to having, Sacks said.

"People are afraid right now. I feel afraid as an educator who is queer," Sacks said. "It's a hard time for all queer and trans folks. I think a lot of them do feel like they are under attack."

The SLC is also monitoring the Florida Board of Medicine's rule-making process for a standard of care for treating gender dysphoria in children and adolescents.

The Florida Board of Medicine is a separate entity from ACHA and hasn't adopted a standard of care for transgender patients yet. It's creating a standard of care and listening to the opinions of medical experts.

The adoption of a standard of care would prohibit doctors from providing any care that is deemed not the standard of care. Doctors risk losing their licenses if they violate these standards.

The Florida Board of Medicine and the Florida Board of Osteopathic Medicine were set to meet Sept. 30 for a rule-making workshop in Tallahassee, but the meeting was canceled.

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How to register to vote before the November midterms

DEADLINE IS OCT. 11

By Heather Bushman
Alligator Staff Writer

The Nov. 8 general election is approaching quickly, but the deadline to register as a voter is coming up even sooner — this week, to be exact.

Floridians must register to vote by Oct. 11 to participate in November's election. Luckily for those late to the memo, the Alachua County Supervisor of Elections Office offers a variety of quick methods to register, including online and in-person registration.

Alachua County residents will vote in races for governor, U.S. Congress, Florida Legislature, Gainesville City Commission and Alachua County Commission. Other statewide positions like attorney general and commissioner of agriculture are also on the ballot.

Voters must be 18 or older and Florida residents to vote, but residents as young as 16 can pre-register to vote. Potential voters must provide a valid Florida driver's license or another government-issued ID card and the date it was issued, as well as their social security number in an online application form.

The form requires a full name and address in addition to the previous information listed. Once this is submitted, the Supervisor of Elections will review the application for approval. If approved, the resident is officially registered to vote.

Voters looking to change their registration from their previous residence will fill out a similar form. The only difference is simple: It asks for both a former and current address.

These forms are available to submit directly to the Supervisor of Elections website and can be downloaded

as a PDF.

Voter registration forms are available at almost 130 locations across the county, including most schools and libraries. If potential voters want to apply in person, they can access paper forms at these sites.

Potential voters can visit an extensive list of locations to turn in their registration in person, including 11 Alachua County libraries and nine other local agencies that offer voter registration. The election workers at these locations will ask for similar information as the online form.

If voters register by mail, the registration must be postmarked by the postal service by Oct. 11 for the sender to vote in the Nov. 8 election.

Voters can check their registration status through the My Registration Status page on the

Supervisor of Elections website. Here, voters can update their information, confirm their precinct, view a sample ballot and verify impending election dates.

The office has spent the leadup to the general election compiling preparedness guides, Supervisor of Elections spokesperson Aaron Klein said, sending sample ballots to residents and distributing information on how to participate. With plenty of high-profile races on the ballot, Klein said he anticipates significant voter engagement come November.

"The general election brings up a great deal of interest for voters," Klein said. "We're very excited to give them all the information they need."

Whether you're changing your residence or gearing up for your first election, there are plenty of ways to participate. Get those registrations in, and we'll see you at the ballot box.

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Ben Sasse's anti-LGBTQ past recalls deep-rooted history of campus prejudice

Students worry about undoing years of progress

By Alan Halaly
Alligator Staff Writer

In 2015, the U.S. senator who's likely to become UF's next president called the Supreme Court's decision to federally protect the right to same-sex marriage "a disappointment."

Seven years later, many UF students now share a similar sentiment about the UF presidential search committee's unanimous choice to make him the lone finalist for the university's presidency.

The committee announced its recommendation of Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Nebraska, Oct. 6 to the outrage of many in the UF community. As members of the university community gear up for his first campus appearance as finalist Monday, some worry his potential appointment could foreshadow a bleak future for UF's inclusivity toward LGBTQ students and faculty.

Sasse's statement about Obergefell v. Hodges affirms his stance, which is that marriage should be between a man and a woman. His website still lists "the sanctity of marriage" as a top issue.

RJ Della Salle, an 18-year-old UF political science freshman who identifies as gay, said Sasse's comments on Obergefell are troubling. If Sasse were president during his college application process, he would've thought twice about attending UF.

Salle, who lives in the Lavender Living Learning Community for LGBTQ students at Springs Residential Complex, said he plans on attending

a protest scheduled outside of Emerson Alumni Hall Monday where Sasse will speak to faculty, staff and students in three forums.

"We either have someone who's a genuine homophobe as our president or we have a sleazy politician who just says what the people that he's trying to get elected by want to hear," he said.

Prior to spending seven years in Congress, Sasse, 50, was the president of Midland University — a Lutheran college of about 1,600 students. He left the school in 2014 after launching a successful bid for U.S. Senate, also earning reelection in 2020.

Rahul Patel, a UF trustee and the chair of the presidential search committee, has continually denied Sasse's politics factored into UF's decision. More important than being a politician, Sasse's an academic, Patel said, who has no intention of imposing his political beliefs onto the student body.

But Sasse's voting record puts his ideology in clear focus: Sasse earned a 0/100 rating from the Human Rights Campaign, an LGBTQ advocacy group, based on his actions in Congress.

He also dismissed the need for a Respect For Marriage Act — proposed legislation that would make the federal government recognize same-sex and interracial marriages. The bill was just a "bullsh-t" attempt by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi "to divide America with culture wars," Sasse told reporters in July.

"Like every senator, Ben's job was to vote yes or no on legislation on behalf of his state," Patel told the Alligator Oct. 6. "He did that job. But that's not this job. He is putting aside politics and coming back to academia to lead us through this exciting new era."

In a 2018 New Yorker column, Osita Nwannevu noted Sasse often fails to acknowledge that his ideas on same-sex marriage could be contradictory to his mission of facilitating strong families.

Sasse's congressional office didn't respond to requests for comment before publication.

For those aware of UF's well-documented history of systemic homophobia, Sasse's comments are a call back to a time when being LGBTQ on campus put a target on some community members' backs.

The Johns Committee, which was formed by the Florida Legislature to investigate Communist connections to civil rights movements, was an effort supported by then-President Julius Wayne Reitz. Between 1956 to 1965, UF orchestrated targeted attacks on LGBTQ members of the university community, forcing about 15 professors and 50 students to leave campus.

Though not as overt as it once was, similar rhetoric lingers for some like Alex Noon, a 23-year-old second-year UF law student and president of the law school's LGBTQ organization OUTLaw.

He recalled one instance at a Moot Court tryout where he was nearly



Minca Davis // Alligator Staff

Students worry U.S. Sen. Ben Sasse, the UF presidential finalist, brings anti-LGBTQ opinions about the queer community.

forced to argue in favor of

conversion therapy — a topic suggested by students and later approved by faculty.

Also, until he and other queer students protested, the law school mandated a Zoom meeting with Mathew Staver, whose Liberty Counsel firm is proudly homophobic and labeled a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

The university's choice to make Sasse a finalist was disappointing, Noon said, but not surprising. Still, he can't help but feel queer students are at the bottom of UF's priority list, he said.

To queer students, Sasse represents a blatant disregard for their livelihoods, Noon said.

"It blows my mind that this is the sole person that they came up with," Noon said. "I could probably go downtown on a Thursday and find someone better."

Another law student — Jenna Clatt, a 24-year-old third-year who identifies as queer — said Sasse's comments on Obergefell show a clear disrespect for the rule of law.

*Read the rest online
at alligator.org.*

*Christian Casale contributed
to this report.*

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Community voices concerns

SASSE, from pg. 1

GAs that can become pregnant and GAs with limited access to health care and child care," Taylor said, referring to Sasse's stances on abortion and gay marriage.

In 2015, Sasse spoke out against the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Obergefell v. Hodges, the landmark case that federally protects same-sex marriage, saying that marriage is meant to bring together a man and a woman so children can have a mother and a father. In June, Sasse celebrated the Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization decision that eliminated federal protections of abortion access.

In a statement Oct. 6, Sasse said he had resisted the pursuits of different universities for the past two years, but he couldn't resist the offer to come to what he called the "most interesting university" in the U.S.

"The caliber of teaching and research at UF is unmistakable, carried out through the core principles of shared governance and academic freedom," Sasse said. "I'm thrilled about the opportunity to work alongside one of the nation's most outstanding faculties."

Patel declined to comment on the specifics of when Sasse was first contacted by the search committee for the presidency, when he interviewed for the job or when he agreed to move forward as the nominee — citing the new Florida transparency law, which has largely allowed the presidential search to occur behind closed doors.

UF's Board of Trustees will interview him in a live-streamed session at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 1, in Emerson Alumni Hall.

Raised in Nebraska, Sasse attended Har-

vard University as an undergraduate and later received a doctorate in American history at Yale University. He pursued teaching at the University of Texas while advising private equity clients.

From 2010 to 2014, Sasse served as president of Midland University — a Lutheran school in Nebraska that serves more than 1,600 students.

In 2014, Sasse won Nebraska's U.S. Senate election; he was reelected in 2020. In both general elections, Sasse won every county in the state.

As the closed-off process of selecting a UF president perpetuated fears of a political appointment, the selection of a Republican U.S. senator by a search committee was chaired by Patel, a Republican donor. Patel was selected to chair the committee by the Board of Trustees chair Mori Hosseini who has close ties to Florida's Republican governor, which has raised eyebrows about outside political influence.

The search committee noted early in the search that a crucial leadership characteristic of UF's next president is they "will not use the University of Florida as a platform to advocate for personal political viewpoints."

While many may feel choosing a politician makes the process' conclusion inherently political, Patel stressed the search committee doesn't see it that way.

"The committee unanimously believed that Dr. Sasse is first an academic, who happens to currently hold political office," Patel said.

Sasse beat out 11 other final candidates, nine of whom were presidents at research universities, according to UF's press release. Sasse was the 35th most conservative U.S. senator from 2019 to 2021, according to GovTrack, a

government transparency analyzer.

However, Sasse drew the ire of many in his party for voting to convict former President Donald Trump in his 2021 Senate impeachment trial for inciting the Jan. 6 insurrection.

"Like every senator, Ben's job was to vote 'yes' or 'no' on legislation on behalf of his state," Patel said. "He did that job. But that's not this job — putting aside politics and coming back to academia to lead us through this exciting new era."

The announcement has since evoked a strong reaction from campus groups.

UF organizations have planned a protest, dubbed "Fuchs the Replacement" at 2:30 p.m. Monday to oppose Sasse's candidacy outside of Emerson Hall, where several of the public forums will take place. The coalition released a statement Oct. 8 condemning Sasse's hiring.

"A community that is still recovering from last year's academic freedom scandal, continued censorship, and other politically-motivated actions deserves a president who will unite and heal," the statement read. "Not divide and hurt."

Not every UF student is ready to picket outside Emerson Alumni Hall.

Matt Turner, president of UF College Republicans, defended Sasse as a candidate and criticized the planned protest in a statement Friday morning.

"Senator Sasse seems to have several qualities that would make him an effective president for all students, regardless of their political affiliation," Turner said. "Protesting somebody purely because there is an R next to their name cuts directly against the principles of tolerance and merit-based evaluation."

Patel has maintained that Sasse's days as a political actor would be behind him as UF president and the senator will have a wide appeal.

"I think his intellectual curiosity, his be-

lief in the power of American universities to change lives, his vision, his humility, his integrity, his incredible, personable nature and his deep concern for humanity are all traits that I believe students will resonate with," Patel said.

Paul Ortiz, president of UF's United Faculty of Florida and history professor, said the decision is up to Sasse whether he can conform to UF, not the other way around.

UF's known for its prowess as a research university that defends intellectual freedom, Ortiz said.

"We're going to continue to do that, so it's really up to Senator Sasse," Ortiz said. "He's the one who's going to have to learn. He's going to be the one that has to learn our culture."

Ortiz also said he's critical of the lack of transparency in 2022's presidential search compared to 2014's — which ended in the selection of President Kent Fuchs. In 2014, candidates were named throughout the process for faculty to independently vet and consult the search committee on, leading to three final candidates that October.

Ortiz positively acknowledged Sasse's recent statement in support of academic freedom, which the professor said is the kind of stance that would allow the senator to work out as the university president. But Ortiz said whoever lives in the president's manor is far less important to the university than its students, faculty and staff.

"Whoever happens to be president, or provost or the chair of the Board of Trustees, doesn't matter to my students on Monday afternoon, when they're preparing for their mid-term exams," Ortiz said.

Makiya Seminera contributed to this report.

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What Student Government election results mean for Student Senate's future

CHANGE'S NEAR ONE-THIRD CONTROL CAN SHIFT TRADITIONAL SENATE PROCEEDINGS

By Alissa Gary

Alligator Staff Writer

Throughout its campaign, Change Party had its sights set on winning one-third of the Student Senate. During the Fall 2022 Student Government elections, it finally met that goal — growing its minority caucus from eight senators to 31 and shrinking Gator Party's supermajority control.

Change gained 27 seats, and Gator earned 22 seats in the Oct. 3 election, with one tie in the Family Housing seat. Liberation Party won no seats.

The Family Housing seat was divided with one vote cast for the Gator candidate and one for a write-in candidate — Change didn't slate a candidate for the seat. Senate will vote on the tiebreaker at the Oct. 11 general meeting.

A total of 9,858 votes were cast between both voting days Sept. 27 and Oct. 3. Voter turnout was about 16.1%, a 2.5% increase from last year's 13.6%, according to election results and 2021 university data.

Change swept Districts C and D, as well as Graham, Hume, Infinity, Keys, Lakeside, Murphree, Springs, Tolbert and Yulee areas. Gator took Districts A, B and E, along with Beaty Towers, Broward-Rawlings and Jennings areas.

Districts flipped from Gator to Change control include District C, three seats in District D, Graham, Infinity, Keys, Murphree, Springs and Yulee.

Before this year, the largest independent party to challenge Gator's control was the Inspire Party, which won 26 Senate seats Fall 2019. Inspire disbanded after the Spring 2020 election, and Change filled its spot as the minority party Fall 2020.

Change's platform includes 24-hour libraries and additional sustainability initiatives across campus. Gator's platform featured an initiative to donate unused Flex Bucks to the Field & Fork Pantry and create student meet-and-greets with guest speakers and performers. Their full platforms were released online in September, a week before elections began.

To achieve their platform goals, senators write and propose legislation to be voted on by the Senate. While some pieces of legislation require a simple majority to pass, others require a two-thirds supermajority, including votes to pass a resolution and approve a Supreme Court justice.

Senate votes are calculated from the number of senators



Sophia Abolfathi // Alligator Staff

Members of Change Party celebrate several Senate district wins at the Reitz Union, Monday, Oct. 3, 2022. Change Party won 27 seats and Gator Party won 22.

present. For example, if 60 senators are present at a meeting, then a majority vote requires 31 to pass, and a two-thirds vote requires 41 to pass.

Although one third of a full 100-person Senate would require 33 Senators, anywhere between 28 and 33 Senators serves the one-third's purpose, Senator-elect Mohammed Faisal (District D-Change) said.

Six of the 100 Senate seats are currently vacant, according to the Senate roster. Senate rarely sees perfect attendance at regular weekly meetings, according to the Senate meeting minutes, further lowering the threshold of senators needed to represent one-third of those present.

Change plans to use their larger caucus to force more debate over legislation. In previous meetings, motions to previous question — which end debate — have passed with overwhelming votes from Gator senators. The motion is typically passed to expedite the meeting, Sen. Oscar Santiago (District D-Change)

said.

Now, Change has the chance to block the motion from passing with one-third dissent, forcing debate to continue.

Debate allows senators to better understand the legislation they're voting on, Santiago said, as well as increasing accountability among elected officials.

"Students really want accountability within our student leaders," Santiago said. "I think that having these debates will be crucial towards that goal."

Santiago is also hopeful the minority caucus will see more committee assignments in the coming semester, though they said they find it unlikely.

Committee members are nominated by members of the Replacement and Agenda Committee and approved by a majority of the Senate. Currently, all but one committee seat is held by a Gator senator.

Minority caucus leader Faith Corbett is the only Change senator, as a mandated part of the Replacement and Agenda Committee.

"A committee completely dominated by the majority party is not representative of our student senate and shouldn't be what determines whether or not our bill goes to the floor," Santiago said.

Sen. Grace Shoemaker (Engineering-Change) teared up election night when she realized the possibilities that opened for Change after winning seats Monday. She said it was insane that Change's vote might not be overwhelmingly suppressed by Gator's anymore.

"This is crazy," Shoemaker said on election night. "We can finally debate, which is nice."

Gator doesn't plan on changing its Senate strategies after this election, said Gator campaign manager and Senate President Elizabeth Hartzog.

The Elections Commission met Oct. 6 to hear election complaints: two from Change against Gator, and one from the Supervisor of Elections against Liberation. Both Change charges were dropped prior to the meeting. Liberation wasn't present at the meeting and will face a \$5 no-show fee. The commission also validated Election Day votes.

The election results will be certified by the Senate at the Oct. 11 meeting. The meeting is open to the public and will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Senate Chambers, found on the ground floor of the Reitz Union.

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Day filled with excitement

HOMECOMING, from pg. 1

UF Homecoming celebrations for decades. It followed a route that looped through campus and finished back at the plaza.

The race offered prizes for first, second and third place, as well as a prize for best costume.

Although organizations like the UF Florida Running Club treated the race as training — President Hannah Hosay was part of the first group to finish, coming in around the 12-minute mark — many others ran for fun. Some people roller skated or rode bikes. Several pushed infants in strollers or ran with their dogs.

Don Prokes, Sandy Wetherhold, Judy Ford, Nancy Besley and Jeff Davis have run in the Gator Gallop for the past four years together. All in their 70s, the majority of them are UF alumni.

The route this year was nicer compared to past races, Prokes said, as they saw more of the campus through shadier spots. The group intends to keep coming to the Homecoming celebration and 'power walking' for years to come.

"We hope we can do this for another 30 years," Prokes said. "Because we'll all be 100."

Around 11:20 a.m., parade floats waited bumper-to-bumper in the crowded Norman Hall parking lot. The floats' leaders chatted among themselves, taking group photos and preparing for the procession to come.

A total of 137 floats were themed and built by various on- and off-campus

Gainesville organizations, according to parade directors. Just some of which appeared this year were the UF Special Olympics, Planned Parenthood and Girl Scouts.

Will Munro, vice president of UF Special Olympics, said he hopes to spread their message of inclusion with the UF community.

"The vision behind 'what is inclusion' is exactly what you're looking at here," Munro said. "It's walking — walking as one."

Just as the parade was about to kick off at noon, observers gathered with picnic blankets and lawn chairs on the sidewalk along 13th Street.

Katie Mizerak, a 31-year-old UF alumna, was raised in Gainesville and grew up attending the Homecoming parade. This year, she carried on the tradition by bringing her own daughters — dressed in Gators cheerleader costumes — with her.

Later that night, the O'Connell Center shook to the dance-hit discography of Flo Rida, the headlining artist for this year's Gator Growl. Former Gators quarterback Danny Wuerffel hosted, and singer-songwriter Fletcher opened the show.

The gates to the O'Connell Center opened for Gator Growl at 6 p.m. — just as the hour hit, the line at the gate spanned across the front of the arena and wrapped around the corner. Attendees purchased tickets to the event online beforehand, with options to stand in the pit or to sit in upper levels.

This was the first UF Homecoming for 45-year-old alumna Kristina Thomas' children, Justin and

Jimmy, but hardly the first for Kristina. She looked forward to seeing Wuerffel, who

she said she met several times while she was in college.

"Nothing beats anything in my life, except for the birth of my children, than being here for five years," Kristina said. "This was the time of my life."

At 7 p.m., the lights dimmed and the show started with a video introducing the audience to the event, followed by the national anthem, sung by Julia Webster.

Six minutes later, Wuerffel made his first appearance as host.

He joked Olivia O'Brien, the opening artist originally scheduled to perform, was missing because it was too difficult to find on-campus parking. In reality, the Gator Growl staff said her absence was due to unforeseen circumstances, which led them to bring Fletcher as a replacement.

Fletcher took the stage to perform her set at 7:23 p.m. She wore purple cargo-style pants and a black top, which was on the verge of slipping off all night, she announced to the crowd. Among her most well-known songs was "Undrunk," during which several students stood up and sang along.

Between sets, Gators cheerleaders led the arena in common gameday traditions, chanting "Let's go Gators!" and swaying to "We Are the Boys from Old Florida." Wuerffel filled in the role of Mr. Two Bits, pointing and calling to different sides of the area in preparation for Saturday's Homecoming football game.

The Dazzlers dance team also performed a brief routine to excite the crowd.

As the intro to "Good Feeling" — one of Flo Rida's most popular songs, with more than 400 million streams on Spotify — played, the crowd stood, chanted Flo Rida's name and waved their hands in the air to

summon him out.

Donning a white Gators basketball jersey, a black leather vest and black jean shorts with silver-and-gold jeweled chain accessories, Flo Rida came out from backstage at 8:48 p.m. He was greeted with screams and excitement that shook the O'Connell Center floor.

Rida was accompanied by two background dancers, two background singers, rapper Oya Baby and a DJ. His set featured Billboard chart-toppers like "Whistle," "Low" and "Wild Ones."

One special audience member, 19-year-old UF history freshman Ryan Scott, was called to the stage because it was his birthday the day before; he said he hadn't celebrated yet, so his special treatment at the show was like a gift. Rida asked Scott to stand in the DJ booth and help him start playing "Whistle."

Toward the end of the show, Scott was also specially picked to keep Rida's Florida jersey as a souvenir of the night.

"It was so much fun," Scott said, holding up the jersey. "I don't know how to put it into words."

Although Rida himself didn't attend UF, he frequently mentioned his twin sister did, explaining his close ties with the university. He went as far as to compare UF to his own home — removing his shirt and shoes to "get comfortable" during the show — which led up to his performance of "My House."

Rida closed the show just after 10 p.m. with a performance of "What a Night."

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99th annual Homecoming events return to the Swamp



Ashleigh Lucas // Alligator Staff

Members of the UF Homecoming parade wave to people on the sidewalk on Southwest 13th Street Friday, Oct. 7, 2022.



Alan Halaly // Alligator Staff

The Florida Dazzlers on top of a firetruck waves to the crowd during UF's Homecoming parade Friday, Oct. 7, 2022.



Rae Riiska // Alligator Staff

Flo Rida performs at Gator Growl for UF's Homecoming at the Stephen C. O'Connell Center Friday, Oct. 7, 2022.



Rae Riiska // Alligator Staff

The Gator Marching Band performs in the UF Homecoming parade Friday, Oct. 7, 2022.

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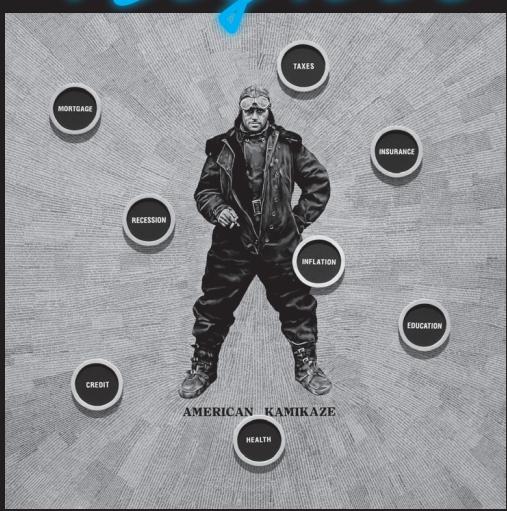




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Moderately progressive platform

DEMINGS, from pg. 1

will serve well in the Senate, but he said she needs to lean into an offensive strategy to get there.

"I think that Val Demings is the best hope that the Democrats have of winning a major seat in Congress," Roberts said. "The Republicans, they produce some really slick ads, and I think the Democrats should do the same."

Demings highlighted her background in public service as a former social worker and the first female chief of the Orlando Police Department, and she said she'd continue to promote the public good if elected. She spent the day meeting with people from all corners of the city, reiterating her promise to advocate for all Americans at every stop.

Demings marveled at the stained-glass windows, garden spaces, modified plane and specialty pizzas throughout a tour of Satchel's. Not an hour later at the Pride Community Center, she moved some listeners to tears.

The center, which was vandalized Sept. 24, hosted Demings and about 15 of its volunteers. She condemned hate crimes and championed diversity as the country's greatest strength in a brief speech, which made some attendees visibly emotional.

As a Black woman and the daughter of a maid and a janitor, Demings said she understood how it feels to be counted out.

"I remember the world saying to me as I was growing up in Jacksonville, 'You're the wrong color. You're the wrong gender. Y'all don't have any money. You're never going to amount to anything,'" she said.

Listeners like Jane Spear, a 78-year-old former Planned Parenthood employee and Gainesville resident, said Demings' speech reinvigorated her. An activist and advocate

of LGBTQ rights for almost 30 years and current president of Gainesville's PFLAG chapter, Spear said she's grown cynical of political promises, but she said Demings' energy and positivity bolstered her belief in a successful election.

"I'm tired," she said. "She made me feel better about the fact that I still have to fight and that we're going to win."

Demings is running on a moderately progressive platform that emphasizes bipartisan action and compromise. Her bipartisan politics have resulted in legislation like the Enhanced Background Checks Act, a bill that increases the minimum amount of time a firearms seller must wait for a background check to return before completing the sale.

Not all Democratic voters are thrilled with Demings' middle-of-the-road approach. RJ Della Salle, an 18-year-old UF political science freshman and volunteer with City Commission candidate James Ingle, wants Demings to push for expansions to Medicare and other progressive legislation.

But with a Senate of 50 Republicans, 48 Democrats and two independents, Della Salle said he'll take any level of liberal to move the majority to the left.

"With the gridlock that we have, just being a Democrat is kind of enough," he said.

Demings capped off her Gainesville tour with a stint as a featured speaker at the Get Out The Vote rally at the Cotton Club Museum and Cultural Center, where local candidates, elected officials and community members gathered to discuss the upcoming election. In an impassioned address, Demings encouraged attendees to participate in the upcoming election and convince those around them to do the same.

Legislation like the Respect for Marriage Act, the John Lewis Voting Rights Act and the Women's Health Protection Act all lie dormant



Ashleigh Lucas // Alligator Staff

U.S. Rep. Val Demings talks to UF students at Plaza of the Americas Friday, Oct. 7, 2022.

in the Senate. This election, Demings said, will determine whether these bills are confirmed into law or go to "the graveyard" to die as failed or suspended legislation.

Demings shouted to the point of strain — an emphatic display of passion that listeners like Vivian Filer appreciated.

Filer, the 84-year-old founder of the Cotton Club Museum and chair of its board, said Demings has inspired her for years. She's known of Demings since she was police chief in her son's home of Orlando, and she was pleased with her work as a member of the House Judi-

cary and Intelligence Committees to impeach former President Donald Trump.

"I love that she's a fighter," Filer said. "I love her forward thinking."

The crowd agreed. Demings received a standing ovation for her speech, but not before she incorporated some call-and-response into her closing remarks.

"When the people show up," she prompted. The audience responded in earnest.
"We win."

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Voters ask for climate action after Hurricane Ian

CLIMATE CHANGE COULD HAVE INTENSIFIED IAN, EXPERTS SAY

By Fernando Figueroa & Heather Bushman

Alligator Staff Writers

Vance Herbener's hometown of Port Charlotte was in the path of Hurricane Ian's Sept. 29 sweep of Southwest Florida.

The 21-year-old UF environmental science senior and external vice president of the UF Environmental Science Alliance saw the community, which is about 40 minutes north of Fort Myers, left in shambles. It was leveled mostly by wind damage that left entire buildings as nothing more than debris drifting through the flooded streets.

The sight isn't something Herbener will soon forget, he said. "It's heartbreaking," he said. "I grew up there."

The storm, one of the fourth-strongest to ever hit the state along with Hurricane Charley in 2004, is just one sign of a shifting Florida climate. As sea levels rise and temperatures climb, the effects of climate change continue to become evident across the state.

In the general election, calming these consequences is a top priority for climate-conscious Florida voters like Herbener. Candidates across the aisle have proposed legislative and executive action in response to mitigate these effects and prepare the state for the worsening conditions of climate change. But some voters say it isn't enough as researchers warn of the impending consequences of a shifting climate.

Although experts say climate change doesn't directly cause hurricanes, Esther Mullens, a UF professor who studies extreme weather and climate dynamics in the geography department, said the September hurricane may owe its severity to the climate crisis.

Evidence that climate change raises the frequency of hurricanes isn't definite, Mullens said, but early studies of Hurricane Ian indicate higher atmospheric temperatures may have intensified the storm's rainfall.

As Florida recovers from the hurricane, Gov. Ron DeSantis has mobilized state rescue and relief efforts. President Joe Biden has praised DeSantis for Florida's aid distribution, adding they were "completely in lockstep" despite existing political tensions.

Former Rep. Charlie Crist, the Democratic gubernatorial candidate and DeSantis' opponent in the general election, said he was confident in the combined capacity of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the state and the federal government to lead recovery efforts.

"It's all hands on deck at a time like this," Crist said. "It's what people need."

Attention is on the environment in the wake of the hurricane, but voters like Bob Tancig say climate change should always be a higher priority. Despite immediate effects, Tancig, a 69-year-old member of the Climate Reality Project and Gainesville resident, said most people don't consider climate change to be as drastic of a crisis as it actually is.

"They talk about the climate crisis as one of these wicked problems, that the impacts are far to the future, and it'll affect somebody else far away," he said. "There is this sense I think people have that, 'Well, it's no big deal. What's one or two degrees?'

But those one or two degrees are a big deal, Tancig said.

The reality of the climate crisis is immediate, Tancig said. The damages brought by Hurricane Ian aren't anomalies — they're the new normal, he said. Soon, Tancig said, severe storms will become commonplace.

Marshall Shepherd, director of the Atmospheric Sciences Program at the University of Georgia, said several factors affect a hurricane's severity. These storms thrive in warm, deep ocean water, which Hurricane Ian accessed once it reached the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, Shepherd said.

The Gulf of Mexico is one of the areas most affected by a warming climate, Shepherd said, with water temperatures rising.

Rapid intensification cannot conclusively be attributed to climate change, but hurricanes are rapidly intensifying at a higher frequency, he said.

Irrespective of all these factors, storms will create a greater storm surge due to rising sea levels from climate change, he said.

Florida also suffers from the expanding bull's eye effect, which considers the number of people who have moved into harm's way. As development increases, more people will be concentrated in larger areas, leading to more severe damages to people and property, Shepherd said.

However, the political reality is that elected officials will con-

tinue to rebuild because that is what their constituents want, Shepherd said. Forcing people out of their homes has been ineffective historically, but rebuilding without proper adaptation techniques will inevitably land residents in the same position year after year.

Adaptation strategies face consistent and divisive challenges in Florida. In 2020, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers proposed a sea wall along six miles of Biscayne Bay in Miami. The decision received backlash from residents and climate scientists alike, and the plan to build the wall was scrapped.

In fact, sea walls might enable further intensification of developments in low-lying coastal areas leading to greater storm exposure, according to a report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Experts have also proposed rewilling the coast, not subsidizing coastal insurance and developing sustainable communities further inland, known as strategic retreat, as adaptive solutions.

Jordyn Golden, a climate activist and UF sustainability studies senior, said strategic retreat would prevent fatalities in barrier islands such as Sanibel, where the storm surge and winds were so severe they collapsed the only bridge into the island.

"I don't think that they should be building on barrier islands that are naturally there to protect the state," Golden said.

While extreme weather is a concern, voters like Tancig say clean energy is key to combating the climate crisis. He doesn't advocate for living in caves or going completely powerless, but Tancig said he wants to see Florida make the transition to renewable energy in the face of global warming.

"We want to maintain this quality of life, this standard of living, but it has to be with clean energy," he said. "The energy we're using now is having these consequences."

Less than 5% of Florida's total energy output comes from renewable resources like solar power, and the state alone accounts for 7% of U.S. nonrenewable energy output as of 2020, according to studies from the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Florida also doesn't have renewable energy standards, which require utility and power companies to generate a certain amount of energy from renewable sources.

Read the rest online at alligator.org.

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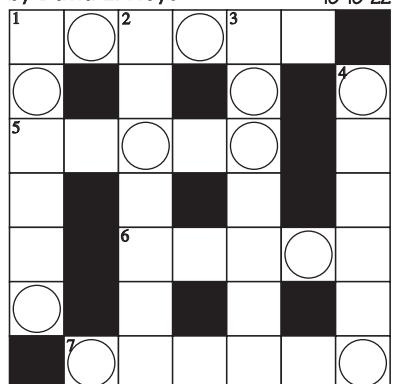
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by David L. Hoyt

10-10-22



ACROSS

- 1. Material
- 5. White ____
- 6. Best ____ (award)
- 7. Take care

DOWN

- 1. Certain spore maker
- 2. Army unit
- 3. Passivity
- 4. Rare

CLUE: _____ was founded as a port by Captain Juan de Garay in 1580.

BONUS

ANSWER

CIRBAF
SENIO
RATCO
EARBWE

ANSWER

GFNSUU
BIEDARG
NIAEIRT
CECSAR

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Electronics



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SLMYI IPG CJHW; IPG MRIJBQI

GARGEIQ JI IM EPSHUG; IPG

VGSKJQI SWOYQIQ IPG QSJKQ.

— CJKKJSB SVIPYV CSVW

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answer on page 10

Release Date: Monday, October 10, 2022

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol and Joyce Nichols Lewis

ACROSS

- 1 Aid and ____
- 5 Garbage
- 10 Finish third
- 14 White House no
- 15 Biblical prophet
- 16 The "P" of IPA
- 17 "Plus some other folks" abbr.
- 18 "Spider-Man" trilogy director Sam
- 19 The "Y" of YSL
- 20 Like passwords that likely won't work if Caps Lock is on
- 23 Easter egg dip
- 24 "____ only a game"
- 25 Try to buy, at an auction
- 28 "The Lord of the Rings" beast
- 31 Invite for Zion Church letters
- 36 Question from a store clerk
- 39 Requirement
- 41 Fit for a monarch
- 42 Jellystone Park bear
- 43 "Star Wars" character from an underwater city
- 46 Mahal
- 47 Negro Leagues legend Buck
- 48 Chicago summer hrs.
- 49 Writer Mario Vargas ____
- 51 Garden plot
- 53 "Hamilton" Tony nominee Phillipa
- 54 Film that doesn't make much money
- 61 Chicken cordon ____
- 63 Finish second
- 64 Bicycle wheel
- 65 Payment to a landlord
- 66 Ingested
- 67 "Did you ____?!"
- 68 Voting no
- 69 Stockholm native
- 70 Cubicle fixture
- 37 The "A" of 3-Down
- 38 Great Plains grazer
- 40 Smallest country on the Horn of Africa
- 44 Longtime "Jeopardy!" host Trebek
- 45 gin fizz
- 50 Hit high in the air
- 52 Puzzles (out)
- 53 Play division

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

F	O	G	S	E	E	D	Y	H	T	T	P	S
A	S	L	E	X	T	R	A	O	H	A	R	A
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I	N	I	T	A	L	F	O	O	D	E	N	S
C	A	N	I	S	M	A	J	O	R	L	A	M
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10/03/2022

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43			44					45	46			
47				48				49	50			
			51	52				53				
61	62			63				64				
65				66				67				
68				69				70				

10/10/22

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

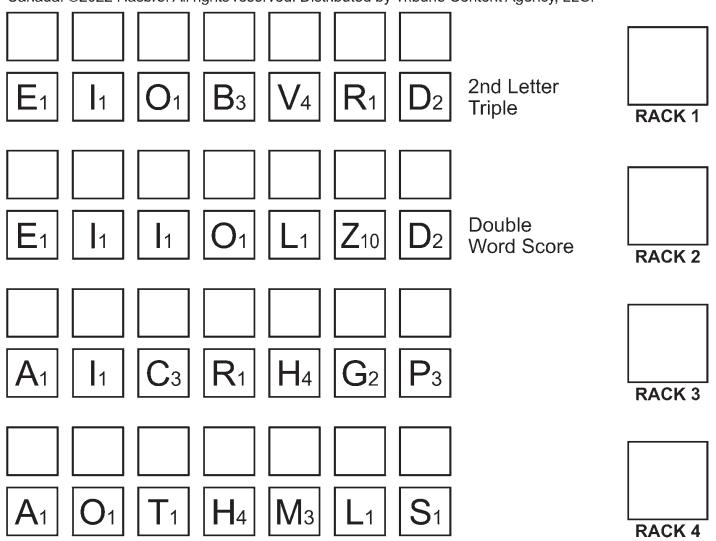
2			3	6				

SCRABBLE[®]

Crossword Game

G R A M S

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PAR SCORE 160-170
BEST SCORE 231

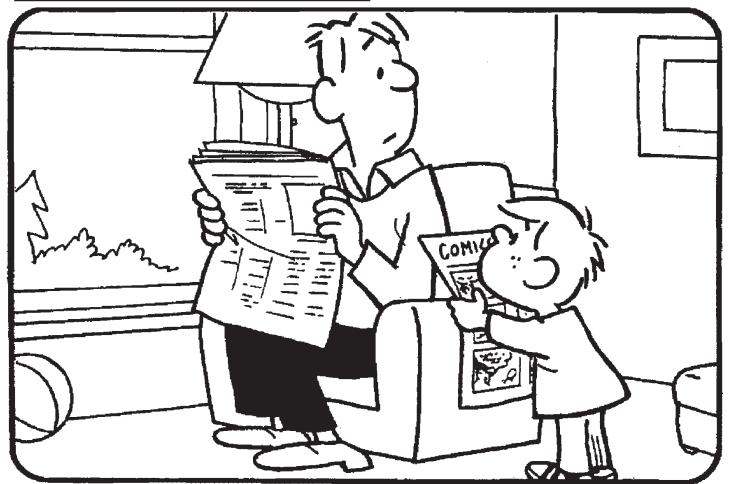
FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. Finally, 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All the words are in the Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, 5th Edition.

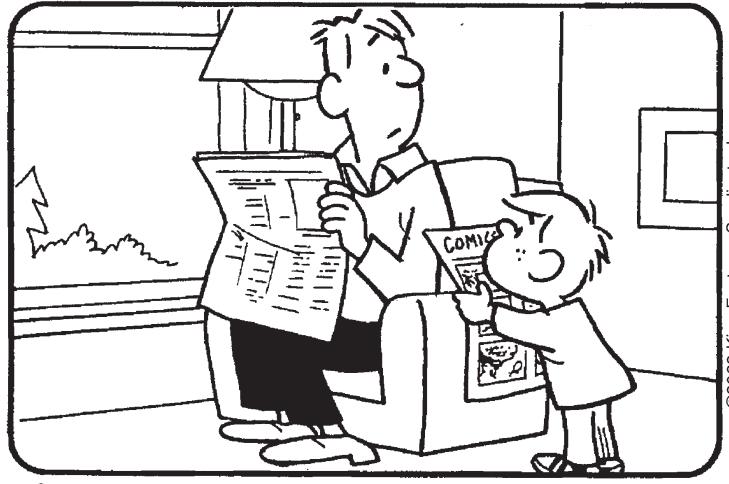
solution below

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Ball is slimmer. 2. Hand is hidden. 3. Paper has fewer pages. 4. Shirt is moved. 5. Picture is missing. 6. Footstool is missing.

CryptoQuote solution

TO CHANGE, THE REALIST ADJUSTS THE SAILS. — WILLIAM ARTHUR WARD
THE PESSIMIST COMPLAINS ABOUT THE WIND; THE OPTIMIST EXPECTS IT

ScrabbleGrams solution

ScrabbleGrams solution													
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PAR SCORE 160-170													
TOTAL 231													
S ₁	H ₄	A ₁	L ₁	O ₁	M ₃	RACK 4 =	11						
G ₂	R ₁	A ₁	P ₃	H ₄	I ₁	RACK 3 =	65						
D ₂	O ₁	L ₁	I ₁	Z ₁₀	E ₁	RACK 2 =	84						
O ₁	V ₄	E ₁	R ₁	B ₃	I ₁	RACK 1 =	71						

Sudoku solution

4	9	8	3	5	6	1	2	7
6	5	1	7	8	2	9	4	3
3	7	2	9	1	4	5	6	8
9	4	5	6	7	3	8	1	2
7	1	3	2	9	8	4	5	6
8	2	6	4	5	1	7	3	9
5	3	9	4	6	7	2	8	1
1	6	7	8	2	5	3	9	4
2	8	4	1	3	9	6	7	5

13

Wanted



St. Francis House

— transitions to end homelessness

St. Francis House is a homeless shelter located in downtown Gainesville.
Our mission is to empower families with children to transition from homelessness to self-sufficiency by providing case management, housing, food, training and educational resources in a secure environment.

If interested in volunteering please contact the volunteer coordinator at 352-378-9079 ext 317 or sfhcoor@stfrancis.cfccoxmail.com

St Francis House depends on monetary support from individual donors and community businesses in order to provide meals to the homeless and the hungry.

To make a donation by mail, please send checks payable to St. Francis House P.O. Box 12491 Gainesville FL 32604 or our website at Stfrancishousegnv.org

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CNA Prep Classes from GatorCNA.com
12-5-16-16

18 Personals

When you're stuck out in Oz and you need cash to get home, click your heels three times and think of Best Jewelry and Loan. 523 NW 3rd Ave 352-371-4367 12-5-16-18

19 Connections

The end of the term and the end of your rope, Best Jewelry and Loan is the needy Gator's hope! 523 NW 3rd Ave 352-371-4367 12-5-16-19

20 Events/Notices

When cash is low and the bills seem out of reach, Best Jewelry and Loan is the surfer's "PAWN BEACH". 523 NW 3rd Ave 352-371-4367 12-5-16-20

More events in the next column →

21 Entertainment

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20

Events/Notices (continued)

NOTICE OF ON-SITE/VIRTUAL HYBRID PUBLIC MEETING

The Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area announces a hybrid-on-site and virtual public meeting via communications media technology to which all interested persons are invited.

DATE AND TIME: October 24, 2022 at 3:00 p.m.

ON-SITE John R. "Jack" Durrance Auditorium, County Administration Building, Gainesville, Florida

VIRTUAL: Audio/Video - Cox Channel 12 and the Alachua County Video on Demand Website [[link below](#)]

www.alachuacounty.us/video

PURPOSE: Regular Business Meeting of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area

A copy of the agenda may be obtained by visiting our website at www.ncfrpc.org (click Metropolitan Transportation Planning) or may be seen posted at 2009 NW 67th Place, Gainesville, Florida one week prior to the meeting.

Due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area will conduct a hybrid on-site and virtual meeting via communications media technology. As part of the general public access, the meeting is televised live on Cox Cable Channel 12. However, live public comment is taken on-site only. On-site public participants are encouraged to wear a face-covering mask at all times. For on-site public comment, participants will be prompted and should follow the direction of the Chair to participate. In addition, the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area accepts written comments received no later than one business day prior to the meeting through email (escalante@ncfrpc.org) or postal mail (2009 NW 67th Place, Gainesville, Florida 32653). On-site participants should state their names and limit comments to three minutes. The public is encouraged to submit any written or photographic documents prior to the meeting to escalante@ncfrpc.org. Any questions regarding participation should be directed to the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area Office at 352.955.2200, extension 114.

Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, familial status, religious status, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact Michael Escalante at 352.955.2200, extension 114, at least 48 hours prior to the public meeting. 10-10-1-20

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Sports

MONDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2022
www.alligator.org/section/sports

FOOTBALL

Miller, Hill pick up slack in Gators Homecoming win Pair of defensive studs played their best games of the season

By Joseph Henry

Sports Writer

Veteran linebacker Ventrell Miller and redshirt sophomore Jaydon Hill, who played in just his second game since returning from injury, stole the show for the Gators during their Homecoming game against the Missouri Tigers Oct. 8.

Florida's leading defenders showed the signs of skill and promise that UF head coach Billy Napier had talked about all along. Postgame, he hailed Miller and Hill as two of the Gators' best players. Florida will be in need of their elite play once again Saturday, as they welcome the Tigers, this time from Louisiana State, to the Swamp.

Miller, the heart and soul of Florida's defense, recorded double-digit tackles for the fourth time in his UF career. The redshirt senior was all over the field, to the tune of 10 solo tackles, one assist and two for loss. Miller seemed to be involved in nearly every stop down the stretch.

Hill, who missed all of last season after tearing his ACL during camp, made the seventh career start against Missouri. The cornerback's time at Florida has been strenuous, but it paid off in big ways against the Tigers. Hill made two game-changing plays: a 49-yard pick six in the first quarter and another interception in the fourth.

They were the first interceptions of his collegiate career.

"It is something I'll never forget about ever," Hill said.

Hill's moment was a big one for all of those who had been by his side through his recovery.

"It feels great to see him make some big time plays," Miller said. "He has been working extremely hard."

Napier, who won his first Southeastern Conference game against the Tigers and snapped a six-game conference skid, was complementary of Hill and his grind to get back on the field.

"He's got passion about this game. I always felt like, watching him in spring ball, he was one of the best players we had," Napier said. "That showed up today."

Napier has praised Miller — his "quarterback of the defense" — all season. The one game Miller missed against South Flor-

ida, the UF defense was gashed for 402 yards, including 286 on the ground. His absence was also felt when he exited the Gators' road matchup with Tennessee the following weekend.

"Ventrell is productive as a player, but it is more impactful than just the production," Napier said. "The guy is inspirational relative to his example, his consistency as a person, his leadership, his presence. He makes other people around him better."

The two performances highlight a defensive outing that saw Florida swarming in Missouri's backfield. The Gators recorded four sacks and 13 tackles for loss, their most since the 2019 season opener against Miami.

Despite the statistics, Napier wasn't fully pleased with his defense, and he harped on the team's inability to limit the Tigers on third and long. Missouri was nine of 17 on third down, compared to the Gators' three of 11.

"[The defense] made progress relative to the challenge that



Rae Riiska // Alligator Staff

Florida redshirt sophomore Jaydon Hill runs back one of his two interceptions against Missouri for a touchdown Saturday, Oct. 8, 2022.

Missouri presents," Napier said. "The gap integrity with all the outside zone, the shots. We kept everything in front of us for the most part."

Offensively, Florida did next to nothing in the first half, running 18 plays for a sluggish 65 total yards. The second half was a different story, however, as the Gators began to break off chunk plays. On UF's first two drives of the second half, running backs Montrell Johnson Jr. and Trevor Etienne took touches 41 and 39 yards respectively.

The limiting off the offense through the first 30 minutes set it up for success the rest of the game, Napier said.

"We had a lot left," he said. "Some of those same concepts we just were a little more precise. I thought a lot of our guys up front did a good job.... Obviously, you could see the backs got it to the second level."

Redshirt sophomore quarterback Anthony Richardson continued to show flashes while also making some errors. He passed just 14 times, with eight completions for 66 yards, a touchdown and an interception.

On top of the pick, Richardson fumbled in the second quarter. It's his fifth game in a row with a turnover. After the game, Richardson said he's concerned with the issue, not because it's happening, but because Napier stresses the importance of playing a clean game.

"We have not executed our formula to win games at the rate at which we desire at any point," Napier said. "I think we are very much a work in progress."

Another SEC opponent comes to Gainesville this Saturday — the LSU Tigers. During last year's game against LSU, specifically the second half, Richardson began to breakout. The performance led to him to his first career start against Georgia the next game.

This season's matchup pits two first-year SEC coaches against each other in a storied rivalry; LSU head coach Brian Kelly and Napier both hold 4-2 records and face grueling schedules in the later months of their seasons. A win in the cross-division clash Saturday would be a major boost to either the Gators' or Tigers' confidence.

The game at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium is slated for 7 p.m. and will broadcast on ESPN.

@Josephhenry2424
jhenry@alligator.org

VOLLEYBALL

No. 15 Gators outlast LSU in 5 sets to secure weekend sweep

FLORIDA NEARLY LET ITS 2-SET LEAD SLIP AWAY

By Ethan Eibe
Sports Writer

Playing the same opponent two days in a row is never an easy task in volleyball. Both teams have an opportunity to adjust from the previous day's result and implement a new strategy.

For a moment on Oct. 9, it seemed the Louisiana State Tigers had solved the riddle of the Florida Gators. Down two sets to none, the Tigers stormed back to force a winner-take-all fifth set.

The No. 15 Gators (13-3, 5-1) claimed the 15-point finale to win

their second game of the weekend (25-18, 26-24, 25-27, 21-25, 15-9) against LSU (10-8, 4-4).

Sophomore outside hitter Merritt Beason matched a career-high 21 kills, while junior outside hitter Sofia Victoria, senior outside hitter Marina Markova and sophomore middle blocker Gabrielle Essix all provided double-digit totals in the category. Essix led the way defensively, racking up 10 blocks. The Gators held LSU to a .168 hitting percentage while putting up a .213 figure themselves.

"The back-to-backs are brutal," head coach Mary Wise said. "I felt like this group showed so much resilience on a night where Merritt carried us for a long time."

Wise believed the story of the game was the play of junior middle blocker Nnedi Okammor, he said, who came off the bench in the fifth set and provided two key blocks to help close the match out.

The Gators continue Southeastern Conference play on the road Oct. 14 and 15 against the Mississippi State Bulldogs. It will be another two-game challenge in Starkville, Mississippi. The first match is scheduled for 9 p.m. Friday and will be broadcast on SEC Network.

Read the rest online at alligator.org/section/sports.

@EthanEibe
eeibe@alligator.org

SOCER

Tessa Barton, Josie Curtis find new home in Gators soccer team

2 TRANSFERS
STUCK IT OUT AFTER TONY AMATO'S FIRING

By Jackson Reyes
Sports Writer

It can be a leap of faith for college athletes to enter the transfer portal.

After the NCAA updated its transfer rule allowing incoming student athletes to play for their new school immediately, there's been a major uptick across collegiate sports in the past couple of years. The Gators soccer team saw 12 players enter the transfer portal in the off-season after former UF head coach Tony Amato was fired from his position.

Florida relieved Amato from his position after complaints from players revealed inappropriate comments about their eating habits surfaced, according to a WUFT article. He coached the team for one season and finished 4-12-4, the worst record in school history.

Despite the coaching change, UF players Tessa Barton and Josie Curtis remained committed to transferring to Florida.

Curtis, a junior defender from Florida Gulf Coast University, and Barton, a senior forward from the University of Colorado, both committed to the Gators while the team was still coached by Amato. However, the coaching

SEE SOCCER, PAGE 12

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For updates on UF athletics, follow us on Twitter at @alligatorSports or online at www.alligator.org/section/sports.



Transfers turn page

SOCER, from pg. 1

change didn't deter them from their move to Gainesville.

Curtis wanted to remain in Florida after entering the transfer portal, she said. She reached out to schools throughout the state, but she said it was Amato and his staff who invited her to visit.

The offer stood out to her, she said, despite her season-ending injury in a match against Florida during her sophomore season. She fell in love with UF after her visit, she said, and was thrilled to join the Gators.

Curtis joined the team last Spring and began her Florida tenure under the old staff. However, after Amato, she said she was worried about who would be the next coach.

"Everybody was definitely on edge," Curtis said.

New head coach Samantha Bohon and her staff did a great job of taking charge of the team and personally connecting with the squad, Curtis said.

"You knew they wanted that connection, which was really nice to know," she said.

Curtis has made an immediate impact for Florida as a workhorse, starting in all 13 matches this season.

Barton, a Colorado native, played three seasons for the Colorado Buffaloes before embarking on a new phase of her college soccer career. She initially wanted to stay close to home, but she said she hit a point in her career where she felt brave enough to enter the transfer portal.

"It was scary," Barton said. "It takes a lot of nerve and just trust in the process."

She always knew about UF due to its prestigious football team and athletic department, she said. Her parents had purchased a house in Orlando, which made the move more plausible. It was her visit to Gainesville, however, which secured her commitment, she said.

Getting to play in the Southeastern Conference stood out to her as an immediate benefit to her transfer, she said.

"I think the SEC is a powerhouse," Barton said.

Before Barton could join the Gators, Florida let Amato go. Her last call with the former coach was five minutes before he was fired, she said.

"That was a shock," she said. "I started freaking out."

Barton thought her decision on where she would play next was final, but Amato's exit



Ryan Friedenberg // Alligator Staff

Senior forward Tessa Barton (8) and junior defender Josie Curtis (9) stand side by side before Florida's match with Arkansas Thursday, Oct. 6, 2022.

left her in limbo, she said. She constantly reached out to UF Athletic Director Scott Stricklin to find out who the next coach would be, Barton said.

Upon hearing Bohon would be the next coach, Barton sent out several emails to get to know her. Bohon asked Barton to visit UF again.

"I knew right away when I met Sam, she was someone I wanted to play for," Barton said.

Barton said she's enjoyed the time she's spent under Bohon and appreciates how she has taken time to get to know Barton and understand her personally — all while Bohon was going through her own transition to UF.

It was exciting to add Barton to the Gator family, Bohon said.

"[Barton] shares the values of being a good teammate, working diligently and investing in the growth of this program," Bohon said.

Barton was nervous when she first arrived on campus, she said, but her new friends and the coaching staff helped ease her nerves. Her parents' support also helped her overcome her anxiety. Her parents' Orlando home is still several hours away, but she said they still make an effort to attend her matches.

Barton has missed some time this season due to injury but has played in 11 matches, starting in seven of them. She's contributed two goals and an assist.

Curtis and Barton will look to build a solid foundation for the Gators as the team transitions out of one of the worst seasons in program history.

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