Dear UCF Students,

As we inch towards Spring Break, and finals are soon to follow, I want to share a message with all of you. Since Jarell and I were elected on April 1, 2015, we have been working to deliver on the platform points on which we ran our election. Today’s message will be an update to UCF students, a recap on all that Student Government has accomplished and provided, and ways to get involved!

First and foremost, our platform

We have been checking off points as we go throughout the year, and you can see for yourself on our website! We have provided a platform tracker on ucfsga.com that gives details of what has been accomplished so far and what we are working on.

Today, I am going to give you a closer look at things that are in process, but not finished. In order to increase inclusivity between different UCF campuses and provide resources to regional campuses, Jarell and I have visited Rosen to table on behalf of SGA and assessed the resources that they have been provided. We have also talked to Regional Outreach Services (ROS) and brainstormed the possibility of having shuttle transportation from regional campuses for major campus events, such as Spirit Splash and Knight-Thon. We are currently looking at this exciting opportunity and hope to report back more soon!

Another point from the Your Campus section of our platform was to provide phone-charging stations in the Student Union. We are excited to announce that by the end of this semester we will have charging stations that will charge Android and iPhone devices while also locking for security. We have also added 10 stops to the KnightLYNX weekend route, furthering our commitment to making sure our students stay safe.

During our time in office, we have continuously lobbied on behalf of student safety, including the addition of cameras in UCF parking garages. Parking and Transportation Services is overseeing this process with the help of the Police Department and the current plan includes cameras being placed in Garage B and the installation of license plate readers. We are excited to continue our advocacy for student safety throughout the duration of our term.

One of my personal priorities as President has been Knightro’s Suits – a program to provide a professional clothing rental system from Knight’s Pantry. I am thrilled to announce that after multiple meetings with the Knights Pantry staff, we plan to launch this new resource by the end of the semester!

For more information and platform updates, please visit http://ucfsiga.com/branches/executive/platform-tracker/.

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Another duty, Florida Student Association

A duty and honor of each Student Body President in the state of Florida is serving as an active member of the Florida Student Association (FSA). This board consists of all 12 Student Body Presidents for the State University System (SUS), representing, more than 300,000 university students. As Internal Vice Chair, I have traveled to the University of North Florida, the University of Florida, Florida Atlantic University, Florida International University, Florida Gulf Coast University, University of South Florida, and Florida Polytechnic University, to discuss student issues and best practices for our student government. As a Board, we approved and lobbied for a legislative agenda in Tallahassee. Rally in Tally was held on Feb. 10 and included lobbying for three student issues and two Board of Governor’s legislative budget requests. The three student issues comprised of expanding Florida Bright Futures Scholarship to summer hours, decreasing the excess credit surcharge rate, and supporting Senate Bill 954/House Bill 7019, which relates to postsecondary access and affordability. The Board of Governors Legislative Budget Request items related to mental health counseling services and campus safety and security. It has been an honor to serve with a group of motivated, dedicated Student Body Presidents, and to represent the State of Florida University students.

UCF Cares, So Do We

Reaching all students has been a passion and priority. As the first administration to partner with UCF Cares, we have been able to reach students who have felt overlooked and neglected in the past. It was my priority this year to reach and provide our services to people that we do not always reached. Our partnership has resulted in providing LYNX passes and assisting the hardship of our homeless student population. This has been the most humbling and directed service of my position.

An expanded Student Union, Students’ Voices

The Student Union expansion, through a new contract with Aramark, brings exciting possibilities to the Heart of Campus. As SGA President, it is my duty to fairly and accurately represent student voices, and I have done just that throughout the process by requesting that a diverse group of students be selected for focus groups. As a result, the Student Union released an SGA-promoted survey, resulting in more than 7,400 responses. I was elected to protect the interests of students - only students. I am committed to my role and committed to ensuring students’ voices are heard throughout this process.

Knights on The Mall, A New Leadership for UCF Athletics

I think I speak on behalf of the entire UCF community in welcoming our new Athletic Director, Danny White, and our new head football coach, Scott Frost. I was humbled to be involved in the Athletic Director search and am excited to see what this great leadership team, along with the new recruits, will do for UCF athletics! As many people know, this was also the inaugural year of Knights on the Mall.
Charged with the task of creating a safer and more inclusive tailgating environment, this season ended with the least amount of incidents and police activity in the history of tailgates on Memory Mall. To ensure voices are heard, the Student Union also conducted a survey for all participants and we are already making changes to reflect this feedback.

**Activity and Service Fee Budget Hearings, Your Student Dollars**

Annually, a group of student leaders are brought together to allocate the money collected through the Activity and Service Fee. This group of students is comprised of elected SGA officials as well as student-at-large positions. Throughout the budget hearings, it was my priority to look at all budget requests thoroughly and advocate for the best use of dollars. I also spoke in favor of tightening department budgets before agencies, ensuring that student dollars continue to be spent on students. The Activity and Service Fee Committee approved the 2016-17 Activity and Service Fee Budget, and it will now be presented as a Bill to the Student Senate this semester. It has been an honor serving and representing students on the Budget Committee for the past two years. For more information about this committee, please contact Chair Benjamin DeStefano at sga_asf@ucf.edu.

**Time to hear from our Executive Cabinet, Did you know?**

- Our Facilities, Transportation, and Safety Coordinator, Nick Larkins, increased Knight Flight ridership by 62%. Did you know that he also formed the Chief’s Advisory Committee to discuss campus safety problems, solutions, and concerns?
- Our Health and Sustainability Coordinator, Emily Dovydaitis, partnered with departments for an event, ‘Be Aware, Show you Care: Field of Memories’, to raise awareness about mental health. Did you know that she has also hosted events to raise awareness about stress relief to help during finals week?
- Our Director of Campus Life, Gulreen Kasoo, distributed more than 3,000 free student tickets for Light Up UCF. Did you know that we will be passing out more than 10,000 tickets for Universal Knights this Spring?
- Our Diversity Initiatives Specialist, Jessica Momorie, hosted six more diversity focused than last year, with over 500 students participating in the events. Did you know she hosted an event, ‘Where is UCF?’ that allowed our campus to see how diverse our students are?
- Our Community Outreach Specialist, Cymone Forde, at which students fed upwards of 300 less-fortunate people during a community event, the Ephraim Project, this semester. Did you know UCF students, with SGA, held this same event last semester and fed upwards of 200 people? Did you also know that more than 50 students participated in a SGA event, Fleece It Up, to make 45 blankets for the Ephraim Project and Knights Pantry?
- Our Academic Affairs Specialist, Binita Devkota, hosts Brain Food events throughout the semester that feeds roughly 300 students per event. Did you know that during the Fall’s Kram for the Exam, we provided study materials and snacks to over 500 students?
- Our Scholarship Chair, Binita Devkota, helped award more than $30,000 in scholarships during the fall semester. Did you know that there is over $20,000 in scholarships available for the Spring semester?
- Our Legislative Affairs Coordinator, Tyler Yeargain, increased voter registration through TurboVote by nearly 1,500% from last year. Did you know he hosted two student-led lobbying trips this year? Did you also know that our UCF Day at City Hall had over 30 students and our UCF Day at the Capitol had over 50 students in attendance?

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• Our Director of Student Affairs, Zachary Lampman, brought Knack, our official tutoring resource, to campus and provided free sessions to students. Did you know that by the end of this semester you will be able to rent portable wall outlets from the library thanks to his hard work?

• Our Website Coordinator, Victoria Proetsch, created our platform tracker to ensure transparency for SGA. Did you know that the SGA website has a new, more modern design that will increase student access? (PS we are rolling it out next month!)

• Our Marketing Specialist, Ashleigh Taylor, and Director of Communications, Lauren Olevitch, have teamed up to create SGA Punch Cards, a chance for students to attend SGA events in order to receive a Universal Knights ticket without waiting in the line.

• Our Deputy Chief of Staff, Shelby Graves, oversees our mentorship program, SBPAC, and together they collected 650 toys for children at Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children during the holiday season.

• Our Comptroller, Benjamin DeStefano, oversees all financial matters of Student Government. Did you know we allocated more than $1 million through the Senate’s Financial Allocation for Organizations Committee and Conference, Registration, and Travel Committee?

• Our Attorney General, Rodolfo Padilla, also serves as the Judicial Advisor to assist students through the Student Conduct process. Did you know he also sees new student organizations’ constitutions before they are approved by the Office of Student Involvement?

• Our Chief of Staff, Chris Clemente, created the Cait and Jarell Platform Tracker to keep students up-to-date with goals and initiatives. Did you know it is his responsibility to coordinate with all cabinet members for their events and services?

• Our Vice President, Jarell Jones, partnered with LGBTQ+ Services to plan and execute its first event with SGA. Did you know that he oversees the internal workings of the Executive branch?

I want to take this time to sincerely thank all of the members of the Executive Cabinet, and all members of UCF Student Government Association. Cabinet members that were not listed above include: Francheska Aristy, Graphic Designer; Minerva Moreno, Graphic Designer; and Rachel Additon, Public Relations Specialist. Without the work of this incredible team, I would not be able to accomplish half as much and for that, I am truly appreciative.

Your Future in SGA, How to Get Involved

Here at UCF, SGA welcomes any interest and involvement! We have three branches, modeling the United States Government, which provides multiple outlets for involvement. The Executive and Legislative Branches hold annual elections. The Student Body President appoints the Judicial Branch in concurrence with the Student Senate. Each branch also has their own mentorship program that is coordinated by respective members of that branch. Currently, there are openings in the Legislative Branch (Student Senate) and the Election Commission. To find out more information about these positions, please check the SGA website. To apply for these positions, please fill out a general application on the SGA Executive Branch’s Knight Connect page.

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Rounding out my tenth month in office, it is amazing how quickly this year has gone by. Before we know it, this semester will come to an end. It has been a great honor to represent this University and all of my amazing peers. I give shorter, frequent updates relating to all SGA business to the Student Senate on Thursday’s at 7 p.m. Please feel free to reach out to me personally with any questions, comments, or concerns! My email is sga_pres@ucf.edu.

Go Knights, Charge On!

Cait Zona
Student Body President