

SR: Talk to me about your decision not to rerun for senate president. What were some of the thoughts going through your head when you decided that you were not going to run for another term?

KR: When I first wanted to be senate president I had a lot of ideas of how to improve Senate and I just wasn't able to do any of it this semester. I did a lot of really great groundwork over the summer with my cabinet. And when I hoped to get into phase two and start getting things done, I couldn't even really start 'cause we started school the last week of August, then September was great and Oct. 1 when Joe talked to me about a concern and then the next day in the morning he filed a noncompliance. And it just consumed all of October and then a second noncompliance was filed in the middle of October, then it was withdrawn. And then a third noncompliance was filed earlier this month and so all of my time was getting consumed with trials, producing evidence, getting ready for hearings, making an opening statement a closing statement, having different meetings with the director and advisor, and really just trying to make sure that the business of Student Government was really being handled. And it just really distracted a lot my time from really doing the best as senate president and I didn't really foresee the noncompliances coming to an end as much as I hoped they would. So I thought it was best that I stepped down just for the sake of Student Government and the legislative branch because I just wouldn't be able to serve properly as senate president having to constantly go through hearings.

SR: So why didn't you foresee the noncompliances coming to an end?

KR: Just how the decisions were being made with the judicial complaints and what was being found in merit and what wasn't being found in merit. It seemed that the system was broken and I wasn't getting a fair process. So for the first noncompliance, for Chapter 408.4 Section A, the part with the 11 days, it says the Constitutions and Statutes chair has to give me the updated statues and then I have 11 business days to give it to the webmaster. And so how I read it is, in a way, the Constitutions and Statutes chair doesn't have a timeline. So, it just says he has to give it to me. And then I have 11 days. And then the webmaster doesn't have a timeline. So it went from vague, 11 days, vague. But we've always been really proficient. Over the summer that was our biggest priority was updating all the records. Part of that was just something we wanted to do and then I later learned, in October, that actually the State Attorney's office had called the university. They had learned about different things that weren't up to date and so that was part of why we were told to make sure it really happened. Past administrations just, I guess, let it slide. But we just really wanted the website to look really nice. So we did that. So we already had a pretty efficient process. It was more word of mouth but we were all just, you know, 'Where is this? Where is that? It's been a while.'

When the trial came, they kind of twisted the words. It was decided that in that 11 days it meant it had to be updated and posted to the website even though that's not what the actual Constitution said. And so that really kind of blew my mind because the attorney general, the prosecution, argued that 11 days meant five plus five plus one. And he was referencing an earlier section in

the constitution where I, as a senate president, have five business days after the senate passes to give it to the student body president. Then the student body president has five days to either approve or veto. And then, he's saying [the remaining one day] is to get it online. And that's fine and dandy and all but I'm not a mind reader and I wish that that was communicated to me before any noncompliance hearing.

So when I was found in violation on the first trial, I was really shocked because the Constitution and Statutes say that the only 11 days I have is to give it to the webmaster and the webmaster doesn't even have to post them, unfortunately, because it doesn't say anything about it. And we don't have a webmaster. That used to be a position under President Fassi's administration and I argued in court that that just shows that yes our Constitution and Statutes are vague. There's little weird things that don't exist anymore and it doesn't reflect the processes that we do today.

For example, the director of communications has web access and the senate secretary has web access. Two people have web access, but which one is the webmaster? And are their jobs really delineated. The senate secretary, we tried to remedy that situation over the summer and we just said, 'Because she has web access, she's responsible for posting things to the website.' But we didn't give her a timeline there either. And I agree, we're all about efficiency. We're all learning how to legislate too. We're college kids and it's really great that we get this opportunity to do this, but it seemed harsh for the first to not really follow what was written. To interpret that this 11 days meant so much more than what was actually written. And to not even get a chance to change it. So it was interesting that the punitive action was then to change the confusing statute.

Then the second noncompliance was filed two days after the justices issued their decision, their written decision, and this time for an outdated Policies and Procedures. I was like, 'Oh man. Like they just gave me the decision. Let me catch my breath.'

Then it got withdrawn and it seemed like everything was calming down. And we wrote, the attorney general wrote an omnibus bill to create a process outlining it. Awesome. Went through the Constitution and Statutes Committee, got to Senate. There were tweaks here and there. I motioned to extend the timeline from the, I believe... I forget what the timeline was but I wanted it to be 16 because the number of days that Joe and I have cannot be changed unless it's a constitutional referendum and that change wouldn't happen until the Spring 'cause all constitutional referendums have to be voted on by the students. So already, Joe and I consumed ten days. We're much more efficient than that. We normally get it done, me at most three days on my end, he at most three days on his end. But the fact that we get extra days is just a safety net. I recommended it be five days for myself, five days for the president, three days for the Constitution and Statutes chair to make any changes and three days for the webmaster to upload, creating 16. There was a lot of discussion."

A motion was made by Chairman Baker to override President Turner's veto on Nov. 10. It was on the agenda under new business that night but due to the meeting being adjourned too early, it was never heard.

The Constitution and Statutes chair didn't update the Constitution for it to be posted online with the title 13 revisions and it wasn't caught until the timeline had ran up. Senate President Ramirez updated it because Gloster was not in office at the time they realized it needed to go up.

But of course, the executive was watching.

And so a third noncompliance was filed.

The attorney general called it a mockery of Student Government that, you know this is a persistent problem and this has happened now four times. And these have all been very different instances so it's really unfair of him to say that this is happening over and over.

SR: Do you think that Constitution and Statutes and Policies and Procedures contradict themselves?

KR: Definitely. I think that there's a lot of, unfortunately, contradictions in all our governing documents but that's really because we just have all these different students coming though and when you make one change to one thing, changes aren't made to everything else as they should.

The former attorney general [said] that the Constitution is the skeleton, the Statutes are your muscles and then all your Policies and Procedures are the flesh. And she would always cite, 'You know it's weird that our Constitution keeps growing in size. Does the United States Constitution grow in size?' No. It's really brief, super to the point and very clear. Everything else then just expands upon it.

SR: Was there ever any talking letting you know that this was going on? Did you ever get a chance to try and remedy the problem?

KR: So on Oct. 1 was a Wednesday, it was also the night that Tim Augustine was talking at the Robinson theatre and my class gets out at 5:45 but it got out early so I went back to the office and then Joe was there before he went to the speaking engagement. So he came by my office to say, 'Hey. I have a concern. There's this 11 day thing. Can we talk tomorrow?' and of course I was looking at him like, 'What? I know all my time lines.' But I was just like 'Yeah. Absolutely. When are you free?' And we set up for 3:30 the next day. We set it up, he brought the concern to me and I created the calendar event on our Outlook and I just put it as Records Concerns. And at 9:08 am, official noncompliance was filed. And I was dumb struck. I was like "No. What, what? I thought we were gonna talk.' I was really sad so I cancelled our meeting because I thought,

'Well, okay, well he kind of got the ball rolling. I guess he doesn't want to meet.' He still came by my office at 3:30 when we scheduled saying 'Hey. I saw you canceled our meeting.' And of course I'm looking at him like, 'Yeah. You filed a noncompliance.' He's like, 'Yeah.' 'Why? I thought we were meeting?' 'Well I thought I'd put it in writing.' 'Uh huh. You could've not though.' 'Well you messed up.' 'Uh. I don't think so. I read your noncompliance and this is how I'm reading it.' And then it just got into an argument from there.

It was just really troubling. All I ever wanted to do was just make sure stuff gets done and if there really is, if I really am a bad senate president, I kind of went around like a little nut. Like, 'Where did I go wrong? Like tell me I'm wrong. And no no, I see where you're coming from.' No so I am justified. Why is this happening?

It caused a lot of stress and a lot of, some heartache because in a way, it really just showed that everything is vague and it could've been discussed but it wasn't. So, Kind of for my peace of mind I also wanted to step down as well because it was taking away from my studies. The first noncompliance happened during midterms. It was bad midterms. And when the attorney general said we have to have legislative cabinet elections again, I was like, 'Oh my gosh. Something's happening again' And if there's another noncompliance, it's gonna be during finals week this time. And it just showed me like, 'Holy smokes, you know. They're just gonna try everything possible. I don't know what's going on with this.'

SR: How have your fellow senators reacted?

KR: It's been really interesting. I'm probably really naive when it comes to Student Government. At least I was when I started all of this. You know, why aren't we all just friends? We're all here to serve the students. It was very naive thinking because politics gets thrown around, that work, like a very bad thing. But it is true. I had a teacher one time who described politics as any interaction between two human beings. And I really like that definition because I think that it encompasses everything that happens. There's friendships, there's in a way loyalties. There's so many things that are going on that factor into how people saw what was going on. A big part of it was I would have liked to talk to the senators more, probably, and I didn't. I would kind of speak to them as a whole and be like, 'This is what's going on.' By doing that, Joe in emails that he sent to all senators was able to say, 'Look at her. She's putting her fault on all of you. That's not fair to you.'

And I'm like, 'Whoah. You're good.' That's not my intent at all and I thought I was very clear in saying that. This is us as a legislative branch and what's happening now looks like an intimidation, political move. Because the legislative branch has the most power. They have the final say on everything. So the executive branch would want to have as much favor with the legislative branch as possible. So that's how I saw the issue immediately. I don't know what is trying to be put down the works, but I'm always going to tell them what's going on. So that's how it got painted like that.

There were some senators who immediately came. 'I did nothing wrong. This is your fault.' I'm like "Yeah, yeah. You never did anything wrong but I didn't do anything wrong either.' And then, 'I'd love your support.'

Some senators have been nice but because this immediately shown as like, 'This is against Kaitlin.' I think it's human nature. You don't wanna, kind of, put yourself with a sinking ship. So as much as some senators privately cared for me and want the best for me, they're not going... they didn't feel as brave publicly doing something because, well, they have future career ambitions and I could possibly taint that for them if they wanted to help me.

So if there was a bigger pool of support, I think then that fear would have been smaller. But because Joe is so charismatic, Joe made his side very clear. And I made my side very clear. There was like two camps going on. There were senators resigning. Senator Talley, Senator Shakelford. Senator Talley came and spoke last night. And she used to be the senate chaplain. And I thought it was interesting that she said I tried to manipulate her when I was just trying to make sure she was following with the... She has to give a nondenominational invocation and she has to receive interfaith training. And were kind of the only two things I was always following up on her. So I was really confused but I didn't want to look unprofessional and kind of just be like, 'I don't know where you're getting that from.' 'No. I've got emails. You sent me emails. You've told me to my face.'

So, that's kind of like where the senators have gotten. It's gotten really polarized, really fast. Like, reflecting our national government, which shouldn't be happening at a learning institution. We don't want to be reflecting what's going on at a national level. But it did. And so, you've got the one end, like Senator Talley, former Senator Talley, accusing me of all kinds of things. And in my mind kind of just going on with what's been happening where I feel like the victim. And it's just kind of continuing like, 'You're the mess up. You're the mess up.' And I'm like, 'Oh my gosh. No, no, no.'

Or other senators who see it how I see it with the facts of what things say and they're just kind of confused. So I think that the camp that sees where I'm coming from is also split. They're confused as to why it's getting this far and why there are Spinnaker articles and what's going on. And then a smaller half is, 'Aw man. That's not fair.'

SR: How do you think what's been going on for the last two months will affect your future career?

KR: The super bright side is that I'm so glad I've gotten this experience in, like this training ground environment. Like this political simulation. So happy that I didn't have to go out into the real world and face the real house of cards. That would've been really, really bad. Because then that would've been like a real paycheck and like the house over my head. I think if I didn't have my family, and if I depended on the senate president paycheck that could've been my reality, of 'Oh no, oh no. I need this.' But thankfully, I have family support.

And I don't think this is going to affect me negatively. I'm just so grateful that, in a way, that this experience has been given to me. I'm learning how maybe I should have handled things differently here, how to handle things here. Maybe to more clear. In the most recent hearing, where I was found in violation for Shomari not uploading within the 11 days, they said that you know it comes down to leadership. So I'm happy to, like, learn different leadership skills. I thought that talking to him once or twice, you know, following up on him with a casual instead of coming down on him was sufficient because that's what's worked in the past. So I thought it was bizarre that this happened. But, if Shomari became the person where I needed to follow up with him every day or every two days, every few hours, I could've made that adjustment. I just don't think that I was given that chance.

I look forward to finish my term as a senator and helping in any way possible and improving our system so this confusion does not happen. Based on just everything that's happened to me alone, I feel like there's enough legislation that I hope to propose just so that this doesn't happen to anyone else. So that no one else falls in the traps of they seem to contradict. So let's clear that up.

SR: How is it working with your advisors?

KR: My meetings with them were in October, really all of October. And then, their advice was, 'Just do your best. Unfortunately, this process is already started. And we see where you're

coming from and hopefully the justices can make a fair decision.' They, I think, are in a very interesting position because they don't want to sway what we do. They really want us to do whatever... How I want to that is, they really want us to just really own our position. Like really own our position. So when they're giving advice, they don't want to be telling us what to do. They don't want to give us any predestination or anything. It's really your own thoughts. And so they're just very, 'Yeah this is happening.' And I'm like, 'Yeah. Man...'

SR: Why did you decide to endorse Chase Baker?

KR: Out of everyone... In a way it relates to your previous question about the camps. Chase omits all this. Has only improved himself in his own position. He hasn't allowed any of this to stop him, similarly to how I never wanted the noncompliances to stop what I wanted to do as Senate president. Unfortunately, it just consumed so much of my time. He, at least to the best of my knowledge, didn't get involved with this back and forth. And I'm very impressed with what he's done as the university student affairs chair. And I think he's very diligent and really by the book but also very friendly. There really needs to be a friendly face in student government. And I also really like that a lot of the senators feel very comfortable with him. I think he just had all the qualities that I was hoping the next senate president could have. I think it also helped that he received the most votes by the students in the past election. He seemed like the best fit. He was both very friendly, very professional and a hard worker. And it seems like someone the entire senate would be comfortable following his lead.

SR: Do you think that, now that you've stepped down, will Senate start coming back together?

KR: I definitely think we'll be able to come together. I play all these worst case scenarios now and it's funny visiting our Constitution and Statutes and seeing what could be done. And I'm like, 'Wow. That could happen. Okay so now that's a worst case scenario option.' I think, maybe if I go to propose legislation, depending on when and if this is truly moved, on I may get, like, a bias. But that's the worst case scenario that I have in my head right now.