

# SGA questions Cheek, passes housing bill

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Before hitting the interstate for Thanksgiving break Tuesday evening, Student Government Association's senate branch found itself in a position to question Chancellor Jimmy Cheek about latest news to hit UT.

It was announced Tuesday that the UT Athletic Department will keep \$6 million a year for the next three years, money that it had previously been donating to the academic side of the university.

After Athletic Director Dave Hart announced the firing of Derek Dooley following a 41-18 loss at Vanderbilt earlier this month, the UT football program is searching for its fourth head coach since 2008.

Cheek supported the rechanneling of the funds in a Tuesday press release, and was present at the SGA senate meeting where he was interrogated by students.

"I was impressed by our senators," SGA president Adam Roddy said. "They didn't hold back. They asked some really tough questions, some even admitted prior to asking, 'this is going to be a tough question.' And (Cheek) responded incredibly well actually. He addressed them and he didn't beat around the bush."

But the meeting wasn't without interruption.

"(Cheek) received a phone call and said 'Ah, Dave Hart can wait, I need to talk to (the) senate right now,'" Roddy said. "So that was a pretty cool moment."

"That's what he told us," Roddy joked. "Maybe it was Jon Gruden, I don't know."

In the Tuesday release, Cheek remained committed to bettering academics at UT and he reassured the SGA members of that on Tuesday.

After the meeting, Roddy told The Daily Beacon that he feels like most students understand the decision.

"Nothing will be taken away from anything on campus," Roddy said. "Athletics will simply be retaining the money, and the university will be seeking other ways to ensure that our academics here will keep going forward."

## Gender Neutral Housing Bill Passes

After Cheek spoke, SGA debated and successfully passed Bill 0113, "Bill to Promote Gender Neutral Housing at the University of Tennessee."

The bill passed by a margin of 27-18 with two abstentions, making it one of the more tightly contested pieces of legislation in recent SGA history.

"I was not surprised that it was close,"

said senator Jacob Clark, the author of the bill. "But I was also not surprised that it passed. I expected (it) to pass but be fairly close. It was maybe a little closer than I would have liked for it to have been, but I'm not shocked."

The bill calls for the university to work toward a plan to implement gender neutral housing by the fall of 2014. Under Clark's proposal, students would have to specifically ask to be placed in gender neutral housing, meaning that traditional residence halls would still be the default for students living on campus.

"The same bill has already passed the Residence Hall Council (URHC) and now it's passed senate," Clark said. "And I've already been able to speak with the housing director, Frank Cuevas, and with Vice Chancellor (Tim) Rogers. So now we start to do more research and maybe figure out a way to collect data specific to (UT) and what would fit here, what would and wouldn't work here."

"We need to get even more student input and make sure we have an inclusive voice, and then we can move forward."

For more information on the potential implementation of gender neutral housing at UT, an earlier Daily Beacon article is available [online at http://utdailybeacon.com/news/2012/nov/8/sga-considers-gender-neutral-housing/](http://utdailybeacon.com/news/2012/nov/8/sga-considers-gender-neutral-housing/).



File Photo • The Daily Beacon

Chancellor Jimmy Cheek sat down with SGA Senate members on Tuesday, Nov. 20.

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