SGA Meeting  
January 18, 2015

I. Attendance

All members present except Senator Jahan and Senator Gerstenschlager; proxies for Senator Judy (Proxy Allis), Senator Hussein (Proxy Sinks), and Senator de Toledo (Proxy Carpinello).

II. Acceptance of Minutes

Speaker Brady: I’m going to yield my time to Press Secretary Tiberend so she can tell you about a correction to be made to the minutes.

Hannah Tiberend: I just forgot to write the words “VI. New Business” in the minutes. The change would be on page 13 and it would just add “VI. New Business” above the line “c. We The Middkids Update (Chief of Staff Zhang)” and change that “c” to an “a”.

Speaker Brady: I believe Senator Berlowitz has a change to the minutes as well.

Senator Berlowitz: I abstained on the vote for the minutes last time.

Speaker Brady: Motion to accept the minutes with those two corrections.

Senator Berlowitz: Seconded.

All aye.

Minutes accepted.

III. Announcements

a. Student Life Survey Update (Chief of Staff Zhang)

Chief of Staff Zhang: The survey was launched on Wednesday. We had 698 respondents the last time I checked, which is pretty good for it only being up for four days. The goal is to beat President Arnowitz’s formidable number of 1295 respondents. One of the concerns I’ve had so far is gender imbalance. Right now only 36% of our respondents are male. It will be problematic if we try and use this data because it won’t be representative of the student body as a whole. We also don’t have enough representation from athletes in the survey. It’s at 16.5% right now and it should be closer to 28% or 30%. It did start this way last time and ended up less skewed by the end of it. My concern with the men answering the survey is that it has gotten worse in the last couple of days. We already did one big prize draw. The next big draw is on Thursday and then there will be one more after the survey is completed. In terms of the Hunger Games, the Febs have caught up and gone ahead at almost 28%. For the Commons, Brainerd is ahead, but it’s anyone’s game at this point.

Co-Chair Bogin: So Cook is in front of Ross right now?

Chief of Staff Zhang: Yes.
Co-Chair Bogin: Okay, that was just a clarifying question.

Chief of Staff Zhang: If you want a free meal in town, I encourage you to get your constituents to take the survey.

Senator Fisher: Is the restaurant in town President Custer’s choice or the winner’s choice?

Chief of Staff Zhang: It will be a mutually agreed upon restaurant. Our other demographics are pretty good. Slightly more students of color have responded. International students are a little low. The LGBTQ question is an interesting one. About 13% have identified as LGBTQ and that has been fluctuating between 13% and 15%. We are overshooting in terms of those on financial aid. The distribution of majors looks good. Student leaders are overrepresented, but that’s to be expected.

IV. Committee Reports

a. Community Council Update (Co-Chair Bogin)

Co-Chair Bogin: I have pretty much nothing to say. We talked about early arrival for J-Term. There is more coming up, but I have nothing significant to report.

b. Cabinet Update (Director of Institutional Diversity Jeremy Stratton-Smith)

Jeremy Stratton-Smith: This year is going well. It took a while to get a start in understanding the complicated and nonexistent processes related to diversity on this campus. Looking forward to the spring, we are doing a number of panels with faculty and students. We are doing one about diversity and inclusion in the classroom and another workshop with CCI about diversity in the workplace, looking at applying to jobs coming from a minority background. Currently, the MLK Oratorio is coming up. There continues to be action on the student and administrative levels working with students talking about the protests in Ferguson and across the country. Some specific projects to IDC: we’re looking at ways to unify the cultural orgs and we’re putting together a calendar system so people can avoid having overlapping events if they associate with multiple cultural orgs. I’m also talking to the administration about when communication happens between students and the administration and whose voices are heard and whose voices are validated.

V. Old Business

a. Ease of Individual Party Registration Act (Co-Chair Bogin)

Co-Chair Bogin: So this is pretty different than what I originally proposed and I think this is closer to what people were arguing for. I talked to a number of people and I get that we might not want to have an automatic payout. What I was afraid of was that even if the damages are significant, I don’t think that any student should have to pay $5,000. The point of this isn’t to bankrupt them. If it happens that we have to pay $5,000 then we can say that this was a terrible call and we can stop the program. I would rather have that happen than to put a student into debt
because of one party that they had. I see the concern that people would have used the previous version of the bill to throw a rager. I added the line “That in determining the amount of money that will be paid, the Appeals Committee will take into account the extent to which the host tried to mitigate damages as well as the financial ability of the host to pay the remaining damages” and that we will pay 25% of the damages up to $400, which is pretty close to what Senator Vaughan wanted. We want to show that we do want parties to occur on this campus and I am thinking that most of the time they will appeal to the Appeals Committee about how much more they think the SGA should pay. This version of the bill is reflective of where I thought a lot of people wanted it to go.

Senator Gogineni: This isn’t regarding us paying for damages, but last time we changed the word “individual” to “host”. That’s not clarification enough. I don’t see only one or two people wanting to register a party. Is there a system to have a roster of all of the hosts available?

Co-Chair Bogin: The point of this bill isn’t to make a more difficult registration process, but to help make parties happen the way there are. What I meant is that whoever is taking responsibility on the party registration form is who the SGA will go to. I can put registered host(s), will that make sense?

Senator Gogineni: Can all of the hosts have their names listed? Right now, there can only be two hosts, but what if a group of five wants to register a party? Can they all be accountable?

Co-Chair Bogin: That makes sense to me. How would you word that in this though?

Senator Gogineni: I think that would have to be more of a change on the registration form.

Co-Chair Bogin: Can we say host(s) on this bill and then talk to Dean Adams about changing the registration form?

Senator Gogineni: Yes.

Senator Berlowitz: I’m just questioning how useful this will end up being. I recently looked into getting party host trained and I couldn’t because I’m not 21. I just think it’s interesting because the students who can host parties are mostly seniors and most of the seniors that I know would not host parties for the general population. There is a point where that isn’t their social ideal. I just wonder how effective this will be.

Co-Chair Bogin: I agree that there is a limited extent to which this is useful. We did look into the option of lowering the party host age and some other restrictions but we couldn’t because it would be against the law. This bill is coming as a result of one of my constituents saying, “Ben, I tried to host a party as just one person and I couldn’t.” If this helps even one party, I think it’s worth it. I also didn’t think it would take this long. Is this going to fix social life at Middlebury? No.

Speaker Brady: I like the 25%, it’s a good idea that some money that goes out. This body is very cautious about giving out money and that is a good thing, but I think we need to be careful of the reputation of this Appeals Committee. I’m worried that they won’t give out money often or will
be condescending. We want to be here to help kids throw parties. I know we can't put that in this bill anywhere but that's something to think about when this bill passes.

Senator Fisher: I just want to respond to a few things. Overall I think this bill looks a lot cleaner and is a nice compromise. It’s not a perfect bill but I would vote for it as is. Senator Berlowitz, I hear what you are saying but I also think that this is important and a lot of registered parties don’t have alcohol at them. As someone who is not 21 yet, I have hosted some parties without alcohol and they have gone well. I am glad we are here fighting for our right to party and we are fighting hard. I hear Speaker Brady about the Appeals Committee being too stingy. It won’t be a perfect committee but I hope that those on the Appeals Committee can handle appeals properly.

Senator Toy: This is not for unregistered parties right?

Co-Chair Bogin: This is just for registered parties.

Senator Fisher: How many registered parties have alcohol?

Doug Adams: A vast majority of registered parties have alcohol.

Senator Berlowitz: Don’t we have to change the bylaws if we pass this? It’s currently written in the bylaws that “the Appeals Committee shall hear appeals from the Finance and Constitution Committees.”

Chief of Staff Zhang: Yes, probably, yes.

Speaker Brady: Is there a way that we can rephrase this without adjusting the constitution?

Chief of Staff Zhang: Director of Membership, what do you think?

Nick Warren: Yes, there is a way and that is to amend the bylaws.

Chief of Staff Zhang: We can add a clause to this bill that amends the bylaws but then we can’t vote on it until next week.

President Custer: Can’t we just amend this bill and still vote on it this week? We can just put in a Friendly Amendment saying that the Appeals Committee will handle this.

Nick Warren: We can keep this bill as it is and create another bill to vote on next week. That should be fine because we aren’t going to get any appeals in the next week.

Chief of Staff Zhang: President Custer can make an exception for the bill being presented by Thursday. I’ll write up a bill now.

Senator Chang: When it says $400 is that saying that the SGA is willing to pay 25% of $400 at the most or is willing to pay $400 at the most?

Co-Chair Bogin: What about 25% or up to $400?
Senator Toy: I think that changes the meaning.

Senator Chang: I just thought I would point out the ambiguity but I don’t know how to fix it.

President Custer: What if we wrote “25% of the damages or $400, whatever is lower”? 

Senator Fisher: Can we say that that the SGA will pay for 25% of the total damages. This payment will not exceed $400.

Senator Chang: My other concern is that I would be wary about the second part about the ability for students to pay because that is a hard thing to calculate.

Co-Chair Bogin: I think I’m going to leave it in. That’s not my favorite part of the bill but if I hear from other people that they don’t want that in there, I would take it out.

Senator Chang: I think it’s weird that we think we have the ability to do that.

Senator Berlowitz: I agree with Senator Chang.

Senator Toy: I would like to make a Friendly Amendment to take that out. You don’t want to be on the Appeals Committee and have someone come to you telling you about how they are on financial aid when we have no way to verify that or know how much someone can pay.

Co-Chair Bogin accepts Senator Toy’s Friendly Amendment.

Co-Chair Bogin: I was just thinking about how I don’t want the Appeals Committee to charge someone a ridiculous amount.

Senator Chang: So you’re looking to hold the Appeals Committee responsible?

Senator Berlowitz: I think you can just remove the part about the financial ability of the host.

Senator Chang: Maybe add “and other factors”.

Chief of Staff Zhang: Other factors that they deem relevant?

Co-Chair Bogin: I think if they’re considering something, they probably have deemed it relevant.

Senator Chang: Motion to vote on F2014-SB18.
Co-Chair Bogin: Seconded.
All aye.
Motion passes.

Vote on F2014-SB18.
All aye.
F2014-SB18 passes.

VI. New Business
**a. Constitutional Amendment: Effective Dates of Constitutional Amendments (W2015-SB1) (Director of Membership Nick Warren)**

Nick Warren: This is very straightforward. Currently the constitution says that constitutional amendments take effect the semester after they are passed. This just says that constitutional amendments can have an effective date in case it needs to happen sooner.

Senator Berlowitz: Can I make a Friendly Amendment to change the date from January 18, 2014 to January 18, 2015?

Nick Warren accepts Senator Berlowitz’s Friendly Amendment.

Speaker Brady: We can’t vote on this until next week, so make sure you talk to him before next week if you have any questions or concerns.

**b. MiddExpress Prices Update (Senator Medina)**

Senator Medina: I spoke to Dave Cannistra who is in charge of MiddExpress, Crossroads, and the Grille in regards to the post on We the Middkids about lowering the prices. He showed me a lot of invoices. The post on We the Middkids definitely had some exaggerations--there was nothing near a 300% price mark up. I will be receiving invoices on Wednesday or Thursday to check that fact. What he told me is that those three stores lose $50,000 a year and they can’t decrease the prices because Middlebury needs to pay their employees. My boss told me that the Grille is for the students and it isn’t profiting. What I will do is get those invoices and see what I can do to make them public.

Speaker Brady: It would be great if we can get that posted on We the MiddKids as well.

Chief of Staff Zhang: Senator Medina, will you send me a blurb on that to post on We the MiddKids?

**c. MiddRides (Speaker Brady)**

Speaker Brady: MiddRides wasn’t working last night and I had some angry people saying that the SGA should do something about this.

Senator Gogineni: I have Dana Silver ready to make a MiddRides location app to see where MiddRides currently are. That way if someone is at Crossroads and there is a MiddRides on the way to the Library, they can walk over there to make it more efficient. It wouldn’t change when MiddRides runs because that’s a problem with employees and we don’t have control over that. When it is running it will be more efficient though. I am still waiting on Officer Gaiotti who wants proof that this app would help the student body. I asked Chief of Staff Zhang to put some questions about MiddRides and that app on the survey so we can use the data from that.

**d. Bylaws Amendment: Appeals Committee Responsibilities (W2015-SB2) (Chief of Staff Zhang)**
Chief of Staff Zhang: I have added the phrase “as well as any other responsibilities that the Senate imparts to it.”

Senator Berlowitz: Is that good enough? The sections on the Finance Committee and Constitution Committee are quite specific about the process.

Chief of Staff Zhang: We can add something about the process.

Senator Berlowitz: The bill didn’t specify anything about the hearing process. It isn’t clear what is worthy of an appeal and what the process looks like. We can’t vote on this today anyways.

VII. Adjournment

Senator Berlowitz: Motion to adjourn.
Senator Toy: Seconded.
Ayes: President Custer, Senator Gogineni, Senator Berlowitz, Senator Toy, Senator Medina, Proxy Allis (for Senator Judy), Senator Sohn, Senator Brook, Senator Vaughan, Proxy Sinks (for Senator Hussein), Senator Fisher, Proxy Carpinello (for Senator de Toledo), Co-Chair Bogin, Speaker Brady
Nays: None
Abstentions: Senator Chang
14-0-1
Meeting adjourned.