SGA Meeting
February 15, 2015
“Things Fall Apart”
As corrected

I. Attendance

Speaker Brady: Since our Press Secretary is absent for a moment, I will take attendance. I think Director of Membership Warren is taking minutes for now.

All members present; proxies for President Custer (Proxy Dylan Gilbert) and Senator Judy (Proxy Evan Allis); Senator Chang resigned.

II. Acceptance of Minutes

Speaker Brady: I believe Senator Hussein has a correction to the minutes.

Senator Hussein: As Director of Membership Warren so beautifully pointed out to me, my name was omitted in the two votes on Bylaws Amendment: Appeals Committee Responsibilities (W2014-SB2). I voted “yes” on both of those and my votes are already reflected in the vote totals.

Senator Hussein: Motion to amend the minutes to add his name to the vote counts on the motion to close debate and on the vote for W2014-SB2.
Senator Gerstenschlager: Seconded.
All aye (Co-Chair Bogin not present).
Amendment accepted.

Senator Gerstenschlager: I also have a motion to amend the minutes. In the discussion on the Resolution for Ice and Snow Event Safety (W2015-SB3), Senator Fisher talked about how he enjoyed slipping and sliding around on the ice. I cleverly retorted that he should restrict that behavior to Kenyon Arena, where it belongs, but that ripost did not make it into the minutes. I felt very slighted by that omission.

Senator Gerstenschlager: Motion to amend the minutes to insert his comment: “That’s great that you enjoy slipping and sliding on the ice so much, Senator Fisher, but we all know you should restrict that behavior to Kenyon Arena, where it belongs.”
Senator Jahan: Seconded.
All aye (Co-Chair Bogin not present).
Amendment accepted.

Senator Jahan: Motion to accept the minutes as amended.
Senator Hussein: Seconded.
All aye (Co-Chair Bogin not present).
Minutes accepted.
III. Announcements

Proxy Gilbert: I yield my time to Chief of Staff Zhang to deliver President Custer’s announcements.

Chief of Staff Zhang: First, I want to thank the First Year Committee for the white roses and chocolates they’ve given us today. Second, as you all know, Senator Chang has taken the semester off for health reasons and is not with us today. I want to thank her for her service to the Senate, and we wish her well on her road to full recovery. My third announcement is that the SGA Reform Working Group held a public forum in the last week of January. In addition to inviting all interested students to attend, we reached out especially to student leaders, and there was an active discussion. We’re working on incorporating the recommendations and suggestions that came out of the forum into our proposal. Coming down pike will be major legislation relating to that work. The last announcement is that Director of Membership Warren and I made trip to Special Collections on Friday to look at the SGA archives. We discovered lots of interesting things, but one thing we found is that many of the conversations we’re having have happened many times before in the past. It’s interesting to see what past SGAs have recommended, and we’ve learned that history is definitely cyclical. We’re engaged in a long battle to make student voices heard.

a. Elections Council Report (Director of Membership Warren)

Speaker Brady: Fantastic. Moving on to committee reports. Co-Chair Bogin is absent, so we are moving on to Director of Membership Warren to give an elections update.

Director of Membership Warren: As you all may now, we are embroiled in the middle of an election season right now. The election to fill Senator Chang’s term as Cook Senator and to elect two new (or perhaps not so new) Feb Senators is this Friday and Saturday from noon to noon. We had a meeting for potential candidates on Thursday evening and Senator Toy was there to talk about what a Senator does and what it is like to be in SGA. We had quite a bit of interest; 8 students interested in the Feb position were there, 3 for Cook, and 1 person who wasn’t sure which he wanted to run for. Presumably he will decide soon, because candidate petitions and statements of interest are due Tuesday at 5:00pm. After that time, the Elections Council will certify the petitions and publicize those to the Febs and Cook Commons. As I said, the election is Friday and Saturday and the new Senators will be seated at our next meeting.

I do want to note that all emails to pre-permissioned lists (class and Commons lists) are embargoed for the week prior to the voting period. If you want to send an email to your constituency, send it to me and Press Secretary Tiberend first so we can approve it. There shouldn’t be any problem, unless you’re endorsing a candidate or something like that.

In addition to the Feb and Cook elections, we also have an all-student referendum on the four constitutional amendments you passed in January; that election will also be this Friday and Saturday from noon to noon. An email to all students will be sent publicizing that on Wednesday. I know that last year when there was a constitutional referendum, senators sent emails to their constituents letting them know about the amendments and saying that the Senate spent a lot of time on them, thought they were important, and that everyone should vote for them.
You might want to do something similar this week; just run your email by me and the Press Secretary first for approval. I’d be happy to take questions if there are any.

Senator Toy: Last year, someone sent out an email to us for us to pass on to our constituents. Would you be able to do something like that explaining what the amendments are, which we can adapt and send out to everyone?

Director of Membership Warren: Yes, I can write something up and send that to you all.

Senator de Toledo: With the amendments, how many students have to vote for them to pass?

Director of Membership Warren: They pass if a majority of students voting approves them. There’s no minimum turnout required.

b. Constitution Committee Report (Director of Student Organizations Zack Isaacs)

Speaker Brady: Next, Director of Student Organizations Zack Isaacs is giving the Student Orgs Review Report.

Director of Student Organizations Isaacs: Hi everyone. To introduce myself a little, my name is Zack Isaacs, I’m a senior Feb, I have been on the Finance Committee since my second term here and I am the Constitution Committee Chair and Director of Student Organizations.

Speaker Brady: I would like to point out that we’ve been having very terrible weather. There’s that.

Director of Student Organizations Isaacs: To start off, the Constitution Committee is made up of 11 members: 2 first years, 2 second years, 4 third years, and 3 fourth years. I’m the chair, which is a nonvoting member who facilitates discussion. I also have regular meetings with Associate Dean of Students for Student Activities JJ Boggs. The Committee has three main purposes: first, we approve or deny applications for new student orgs. This year we approved 4 new student orgs. Our second task is the mid-year review of student orgs, which I’m presenting today. The third task is to determine the recipients of certain annual awards to students, faculty, and staff.

Now, more about our first task: approving new student orgs. Whenever someone decides they want to start a new organization, they make an application that is sent to Student Activities. The full Constitution Committee only hears the application if it’s approved by the Student Activities Office. Student Activities looks to make sure the org’s constitution is within Middlebury College’s guidelines, that the org doesn’t exclude anyone and is safe — we have a legal counsel to help check on those things. If Student Activities approves it, the group is invited to meet with the Constitution Committee. We have some criteria they must pass: the organization must be original; we check to make sure there’s not another group with overlapping purpose. There also has to be enough student interest in terms of number of people, and a diverse group of people interested in this organization.

The 4 new organizations we approved are the American Enterprise Institute, Storytold, Midd Acro (an acrobatics club), and Middlebury Smash Club. Two applications were just approved by Student Activities: Middlebury Aviation Club, which had lots of liability concerns.
but we’ve resolved those; and Women in STEM, in which not just women would be allowed to join. In addition, there are three orgs on the docket awaiting JJ’s approval.

Now on to the Mid-Year Review: this is to make sure that the Student Activities Fee is allocated efficiently; to trim the fat. 95% of orgs pass this test. The review is on a three-year cycle, so every club is reviewed once every three years, with about a third of all clubs reviewed in a given year. The Constitution Committee split up into groups of 2 or 3 people and determined which groups were obvious passes. We debated the ones we weren’t sure about. Of the 15 of those, 5 we will ask to talk to because of a bad recommendation from the Finance Committee or because their cluster manager reviewed them poorly.

The third task of the Constitution Committee is the annual awards, which happen at the end of the spring. We give many awards to organizations, and for outstanding work by faculty.

Senator Berlowitz: What is defined as bad programming?

Director of Student Organizations Isaacs: If an org’s events are poorly attended, if there’s some hiccup in the process with Student Activities. (Like, for example, retroactive spending, which is spending without Finance Committee approval and then afterwards asking for money with the expectation that it will be approved. That is frowned upon.)

Speaker Brady: Can you give some insight into how student orgs have been growing? Is the fat ever trimmed?

Director of Student Organizations Isaacs: We haven’t put the axe down on anyone yet. By the time a club has been cut off, there have been 4 emails sent from the Constitution Committee and a formal meeting with the Committee in addition to them giving a formal application to us.

C. Community Council (Co-Chair Bogin)

Speaker Brady: Now let’s move back a bit and let Co-Chair Bogin speak.

Co-Chair Bogin: Sorry for being late. We had an exciting week and I’m looking forward to an exciting next few weeks. We recommended that the administration look at early arrival for J-term. At the end of our discussion there was a consensus that there was an issue and it was more a matter of inconvenience for people who live far away. At the same time, we talked about Facilities and staff coming back early and not having any break throughout the year, since Winter Break is often their only break time. We haven’t recommended anything in particular but recommended that the Vice Presidents look at it and get back to us by April as to their solutions.

Also, in the coming weeks we are talking to Director of Academic Affairs Cate Costley and Honor Code Committee Chair Alison Maxwell, who are leading the Honor Code Committee, to talk about their proposal for two amendments to the Honor Code. That’s also coming to Senate next week and there will be a lot to discuss about that for next Senate meeting. Both amendments to the Honor Code constitution would require two-thirds turnout and a two-thirds vote of students. That would require lots of forums — fora I guess would be the plural of that — and discussion and publicity. The hear of the issue is to have a biennial vote on the Honor Code and there would potentially be two votes. The first is “do you like it/would you like to revise it.” If enough people want to revise it, it would go through a revision process and then another vote
where students would vote on whether to approve the revisions. The second issue is on whether
to include the Community Standards in the Honor Code and making it a more cohesive Honor
Code. We can talk about that next week.

We will be talking about smoking; we formed a subcommittee to look at the smoking
issue and we’re working them into the agenda soon. What we’ll be considering is whether we
should enforce smoking policy with fines; including fines for smoking in residence halls as part
of fire safety. We’ll recommend that the SGA along with the Staff and Faculty Councils consider
whether those bodies would like to ban smoking. It sounds strong but many colleges have done
that. That would be a multiyear process. Frankly it would affect staff more than anyone, and
Language School leadership said we would lose faculty over that because many come from other
cultures where smoking is more prevalent.

Director of Sustainability Integration Jack Byrne will also be coming in to talk about
sustainability stuff that is going on. Lots of things on the Community Council agenda and I’m
happy to answer any questions about any of that.

d. Final Survey Report (Chief of Staff Zhang)

Speaker Brady: Let’s move on to the final survey report.

Chief of Staff Zhang: I’ll give a brief report about the conclusion of the survey. We received
1,438 responses, which is more than 150 more than President Arnowitz and Chief of Staff Esten
got two years ago. We’re pretty satisfied about that. In terms of demographics, the two concerns
about the response rate of men and varsity athletes improved but we were short on men at 40.8%.
I hope we will be better on that in the future and will have to think of strategies to improve that.
The varsity athlete rate creeped up 22.1%, which isn’t that far from the actual percentage of
28%. Obviously we will have to keep those biases in mind when we present this report to the
administration and others.

The prizes were good incentives. Congratulations to Senators Toy, Hussein, and Medina
for winning the Hunger Games. I’ll coordinate your prize with President Custer soon.

I put the raw data through Stata, breaking down every question by every demographic.
Senator Toy helped me with that. I haven’t had time to look at that in detail but do let me know
what breakdowns you want to see, including perhaps ones that aren’t obvious. Obviously the
questions about sexual assault we’ll break down by gender; questions about academics we’ll
break down by major, etc. Let me know what you want and I’ll distribute those results to
interested members of the community. I think the survey has yielded some useful data, especially
the student government section. The Campus has been interested in the results and there will be
big center spread in this week’s issue.

My last point is: let this data inspire legislation for you. It isn’t just for President Custer’s
use or for the administration’s use. It’s for you if there are issues you want to take up. Questions?

Senator Berlowitz: I would like to see how the demographic breakdowns break down against
each other, like how many people of each year against race. Also, was the final prize drawing
sent out?

Chief of Staff Zhang: Yes, the drawing results were sent to the prizewinners, but not to all
students.
Senator Toy: Can we get a document like this with all the open-ended responses?

Chief of Staff Zhang: Yes, if you want to. I think those are in Dropbox for President Custer. There are a lot of responses, so just know that you’ll be getting a ton of things, but I can send that out to you.

Senator Vaughan: Can we get the ESG/divestment question broken down by grade level?

Chief of Staff Zhang: Yes.

Senator Gogineni: For the demographic breakdown, can we see the Thanksgiving break question by geographic location?

Chief of Staff Zhang: We don’t have that information, on where people’s homes are.

V. Old Business

a. Salting Resolution (W2014-SB3) (Senator Gerstenschlager)

Senator Gerstenschlager: Chief of Staff Zhang and I met with Assistant Director of Facilities Services for Maintenance and Operations Luther Tenny and Horticulturist Tim Parsons Thursday and had a productive conversation on how salting and plowing are done on campus. Plowing is a priority and the College hits the hot spots first. Emma Willard House, the CFA, and other locations where professors will be driving to get done first. Then plowing the big paths Bihall to Ross, for example. It’s clear they’re communicating with Public Safety when a big weather event is coming. Then Public Safety is communicating to us. Chief of Staff Zhang and I need to meet with Public Safety so there are not too many all-student emails sent with redundant information. We have to take a look at that.

Senator Jahan: One idea is about the Midd Alert system — could they use that if there are things happening like an ice event?

Senator Gerstenschlager: We didn’t look at that.

Senator Hussein: We already have an interactive map online, is it possible to overlay information about what paths are cleared there? That way, if people are interested they can go to the website but not everyone gets bombarded with emails. The map is at go/map.

Speaker Brady: I would be interested in going with you to talk to Public Safety as well. Senator Gogineni and I are talking about Middrides not operating on the weekends with the cold weather and we think that is something the Senate should address. We can team up.

Co-Chair Bogin: There’s a decent chance Public Safety won’t want to do that, because of email fatigue. They could update something online — a document instead of emails.
Senator Gerstenschlager: Yeah.

Senator Vaughan: Or instead could Facilities just communicate with us directly? And not through Public Safety.

Senator Gerstenschlager: That is a good question.

Senator Gerstenschlager: Motion to table W2014-SB3.
Senator Jahan: Seconded.
Ayes: Proxy Gilbert, Senator Jahan, Senator Gerstenschlager, Senator Gogineni, Senator Toy, Senator Medina, Proxy Allis, Senator Sohn, Senator Brook, Senator Vaughan, Senator Hussein, Senator Fisher, Senator de Toledo, Co-Chair Bogin, Speaker Brady
Nays: None
Abstentions: Senator Berlowitz.
15-0-1
W2014-SB3 tabled.

VI. New Business

a. Resolution in Opposition of Tuition Increase By > CPI + 1 (S2015-SB1) (Senator Berlowitz)

Senator Berlowitz: The goal of this resolution is to increase accountability of the Board of Trustees when it comes to prices. Increases in the Comprehensive Fee affects everyone, not just those on financial aid. That affects all of us – even those on financial aid because it creates a divide between those on and not on financial aid. There is no real accountability for the Board of Trustees. This is not a transparent process. No one else is looking at the budget. We have no clue what are the increases in operational costs – I want students to be able to vouch for the Board of Trustees and check their work.

Let me highlight some of the “whereas” clauses. It is a long list of indictments against the Board of Trustees and administration. The fact that tuition is double what it was in 2001, which is shocking, and that is not all due to inflation. I was really incensed when they buried the information that tuition would go up more than in past years. The email was sent over Feb break, the information was buried in the middle of the email, and it had a boring subject line. I would not have gotten to the bottom and past “enhanced risk management” if I wasn’t on my couch at home scanning the email with nothing else to do. I don’t think the Board of Trustees has gotten adequate pushback for how they presented this announcement. When they say no decision has been made yet, that presumably means students have a period of time when they can be involved to try to change the policy, but they tried to hide it and that is disingenuous.

For students, this is affecting their families. The College is determining families’ need, which is not necessarily their actual need. Some families take out predatory loans to make up the difference. Their argument that if we increase tuition we can increase financial aid is circular and bad; then we’ll need to increase tuition so we can increase financial aid again and this is bad circle to get into. I didn’t approve of the argument that Middlebury was the most expensive of our peers when we started the CPI+1 policy, so then we can abandon when we’re 18th. The
commitment here is being cheaper than the rest and not making college affordable, which is what the College should actually be aiming for.

Now the “be it resolved” clauses. The first denounces the lack of input of students into the pricing process. The second denounces the administration’s keeping students out of the decision-making process generally. The third recommends the Board of Trustees find other ways of cost-cutting. I think there is a lot of privilege that is not looked into. There are other ways costs can be cut. Saying operational costs are greater so we must increase tuition isn’t enough. Why are these operational costs necessary? Are they? It would be great if someone else looks into those questions because I don’t trust the Board of Trustees.

The fourth clause recommends the Trustees consult students on tuition increases by working with a new Comprehensive Fee Committee or other body. Holding a forum on tuition increases won’t work; most students won’t have much to add beyond “don’t increase tuition,” which is why we used to have a Comprehensive Fee Committee that advised the administration on what to change the Comprehensive Fee to, and then the administration compromised with the students. The Committee fell into disuse because of the commitment to CPI+1 in 2010, that made it unnecessary and it was finally eliminated in Director of Membership Warren’s bylaws bill in the fall. The Comprehensive Fee Committee was removed from the bylaws because fell into disuse but it is time to be necessary once more. If the door is open to increases greater than CPI+1, then the Committee should fall back into use.

The fifth clause recommends that there be a student on the Board of Trustees. Someone who’s active in the student body should be there to speak on their behalf, and say “students won’t like this, this isn’t a good change for us.” The sixth clause is about publicizing Trustee decisions so issues like this where they bury the issues don’t happen again. I’m basically proposing those “Be it resolved” clauses and Senator Toy is co-sponsoring. The plan is to hopefully pass this in Senate. I don’t want to go complain to the administration on my own because it will seem like I’m just a gadfly. If SGA says this, it carries weight with the Board of Trustees. I hope we will pass this and present to the Trustees. I’m willing to work on this and move on to creating the Comprehensive Fee Committee and limit increases to what they need to be, with a second set of eyes representing the student body.

Senator de Toledo: This is very well crafted and clearly took a ton of time, that’s awesome. I support the idea of more accountability on tuition because I agree it shouldn’t just be the Board of Trustees. But there are two reasons I don’t support this bill. First, I don’t believe this is the right approach. This is a very adversarial tone to take with a body we have no power over. Probably they will raise tuition regardless of what we say. Probably we won’t be able to change what they’ve put in process. They have more power. We’re students but to pit ourselves against them, say “denouncing,” this doesn’t seem a productive relationship. If we go and say “we’re concerned, we’d like to see…” They haven’t been as receptive as we’d like but that doesn’t seem productive. It would publicly put ourselves against the Board of Trustees and if they do this anyway we look weak, like we got squashed.

Second, I don’t think raising tuition is a bad thing. I have had experience in private education, both here and elsewhere, and it’s a hard line to follow. The majority of students don’t have financial aid. Middlebury is very expensive. But for the 52% who are paying full tuition, in reality lots of people are on the bubble, but a lot of people can afford it. Whereas for people on financial aid, if tuition won’t go up, the College can’t offer need-blind admission as the email says, and that will really affect people on financial aid. The reality is this is a cost thing.
Education costs are rising and one school can’t change that. I like the part of this bill about how we need more input, but I don’t think increasing tuition is a bad thing.

Senator Berlowitz: Thank you for your response. I hear your points and we can try to work on the adversarial language after this meeting. I would say that the student body has throughout this year had a strong reaction against the administration acting without student input over and over. It’s not just this year, too. At a certain point, we have to say enough is enough. The goal of this bill is to put back in place a process that used to exist, not creating something new. We as a student government and student body have refrained from having this input because the price was fixed to CPI+1 but before that, student government had a distinct role in the process and the goal is to put that role back in place. If there is a way to change the language slightly to have your support I could do that.

Senator de Toledo: I really like the process idea but I don’t support a bill that goes against raising tuition.

Speaker Brady: I echo Senator de Toledo about the adversarial language. I support bringing the Comprehensive Fee Committee back, I think that is fantastic. Have you talked to President Custer since he’s President and his job is to carry out our legislation?

Senator Berlowitz: No.

Speaker Brady: I would definitely think President Custer would echo some of the same sentiments. Because we have no hard power over them, our best bet is creating institutions and we have to play nice to do that.

Senator Toy: When we went over this, we wanted to craft it to say we’re not against increasing tuition but against increasing tuition beyond CPI+1 without student input. I was wondering if a certain sentence made you think that we were against increasing tuition at all.

Senator de Toledo: I think the title makes it seems like this is against increasing tuition.

Co-Chair Bogin: Others have already said a lot of what I wanted to say. I particularly like the “consult the student body” language. The “Comprehensive Fee Committee or other representative group” is another great clause. I’m not sure if I can vote for this or not. I have a problem with the clause after that – asking for a representative on the Board of Trustees. We kind of have that now and that’s not the way to get it. A lot of people are working on that and this is antagonistic. The clause after, relating to publicizing, I agree this was in the middle of the email, but “report on recent Board of Trustees meeting” was the subject and yes, you had to read the whole email but that’s not a high barrier to entry if you have to read the whole email to learn what they’re doing. I’m not trying to be sassy. I don’t think that’s doing a particularly bad job of publicizing. Maybe over the next week you want to make this more about CPI+1 and the Comprehensive Fee Committee, and include a bylaws amendment recreating the Comprehensive Fee Committee.
Senator Berlowitz: I’m willing to strike that clause. But I wanted to bring it up for discussion with more voice.

Senator Vaughan: Two points. First, the last time the Comprehensive Fee Committee formed it formed organically out of students, kind of like Midd Included. Once this committee is formed, how will it be institutionalized – how students are chosen is the biggest question. Will they apply to SGA? Will we appoint them? How do we know what the student body feels about this, what criteria to use? Will this be a committee of senators?

Second, I understand the critiques of the adversarial language but to go back to the tailgating issue when students were reacting authentically, the administration did respond. I think it is okay to reflect the emotion we have at times. I do want to push back a little bit about one thing I’ve noticed the administration does. When there are hard decisions, they have they throw in “oh, if we don’t do this we’ll cut financial aid.” That’s pretty unfair and not necessarily true. They do that to defend their decisions, but there are so many things they could cut first and would and did during the recession, so we need to be cautious of that. We have the power to push back without sacrificing financial aid.

Senator Fisher: Thank you for presenting this, this clearly shows you put thought and energy into this. On the adversarial tone, I appreciate that – this is bold and that is good. Substantively I can’t disagree with this bill much more. I think increasing the divide or rift between students on or not on financial aid – that divide is actual whether perceived or not. Over half of students’ families here deemed to pay $60,000 to come to school. The situation exists whether perceived or not – it’s not a compelling argument that that divide will be perceived to expand if this happens. Maybe we should try to talk about that divide and fix it because it exists.

I think if you take the College’s principles behind our financial aid system and extend it to its fullest extent, every student but one should be on financial aid. You pay what you can pay and you come here. That’s not going to happen because it’s not rational but if you extend the logic of the institution – need-blindness and meeting 100% of demonstrated need – I don’t think there’s anything wrong with raising tuition if you supply 100% of demonstrated need. Whether or not you can come here is not based on what a family makes but what you’ve done in your life to get here. I don’t see anything wrong with increasing tuition if that’s the case.

Senator Berlowitz: I’m not opposing increasing tuition. The bill title is misleading there. The bill got toned down by Senator Toy from its original draft. I’m not saying we shouldn’t increase tuition. I don’t trust the Board of Trustees to decide unilaterally without others looking at it. Corruption is when one person is overseeing the budget and no one else is looking at it. If your family contribution will not stay the same and your family can’t make that contribution already, then that’s an issue.

Senator Fisher: Yes, we have excessive privilege here and I often say here that we can stop sanitizing the college experience. The truth is we live like gods in some ways and we don’t have to do that. I know the formula the financial aid office uses doesn’t always work. But this bill attacks the principle that there shouldn’t be too much of a tuition increase. I don’t see why we shouldn’t increase tuition by any amount, except for that we’re in a marketplace of other schools. If you can afford to pay $200,000 or $5,000, that’s what you should pay.
Proxy Allis: Essentially what you’re narrowing your idea to is not as controversial as what the conversation has become. Reinstating the Comprehensive Fee Committee will at least create a sense of ownership over this process. What Senator Fisher said I agree with on many things. On the issue of language, I agree. If you want to take a more adversarial tone – that’s not something you should not do, but the way to get consensus is maybe to play nicer. These almost amount to conjecture, not just adversarial language – like the thing about the buried email.

Senator Hussein: That’s exactly right. We should move away from the idea of rejecting tuition hikes and more see this as a useful spark. This bill has a spirit of collaboration in it. I commend you for this being so well crafted and the research that went into this. The question is how can we move forward productively? I recommend that now we’ve had this discussion, all the things we’ve said that will hopefully be included in the minutes, as I’m sure they will, now let’s engage in the administration and have productive conversations. We don’t have to pass this for those to be productive. Take this hopefully now better-developed idea and the spirit of the bill, President Custer’s ideas, and that’s the most productive way to go forward.

Senator Gogineni: I have a question for Senator Toy on how a tuition increase would affect people on financial aid.

Senator Toy: It’s not going to at all. It said that in the email. They calculate how much your family can pay.

Senator Brook: The spirit of this came out of you reading an email that didn’t highlight things you thought it should, but if I put myself in the shoes of Admissions and we say we’re going to raise tuition, I’d probably have a ton of students at my door objecting. I object to the last line about publicizing. We need to have a conversation with Admissions and the administration because there are boundaries they have to keep.

Senator Berlowitz: Some of that was the Comprehensive Fee Committee idea. You can’t just hold a forum, so we can have thoughtful discussion and people don’t just show up at the door and say “we don’t like tuition increases.” Student voices should be included in the process and students who should be giving input need to represent the student body and have knowledge of the actual budget. Arguments like “increasing operational costs” are not specific enough to explain why it’s going up. That fact that no students were involved at all means I don’t trust it.

Senator de Toledo: To put it in perspective, the approximate revenue yearly from tuition is $95 million. $49 million is granted in financial aid. More than half of tuition revenue is in financial aid grants.

Senator de Toledo: Motion to table S2015-SB1. 
Senator Gerstenschlager: Seconded.
Ayes: Proxy Gilbert, Senator Gerstenschlager, Senator Gogineni, Senator Medina, Proxy Allis, Senator Sohn, Senator Brook, Senator Vaughan, Senator Fisher, Senator de Toledo, Co-Chair Bogin
Nays: Speaker Brady
Abstentions: Senator Jahan, Senator Berlowitz, Senator Toy, Senator Hussein
b. Thanksgiving Break Extension Resolution (S2015-SB2) (President Custer)

Speaker Brady: The next item on the agenda is that President Custer wanted to present on Thanksgiving. I yield to Chief of Staff Zhang.

Chief of Staff Zhang: I want to introduce this and then table for more substantive discussion when President Custer is here. As you know, a major part of President Custer’s campaign platform was Thanksgiving break extension, getting rid of the Monday and Tuesday of Thanksgiving week. We wanted to wait for the survey statistics before considering this. I’ve spoken to JJ Boggs about how we would proceed if we pass this; she suggested we talk to the Calendar Committee. That’s right, there’s a Calendar Committee that proposes the academic calendar. The Board of Trustees has the power to approve or suggest changes. If the Senate feels this is something we’d support, that’s how that might go. The 2016-2017 calendar has been tentatively approved, so we might have some influence there. Once President Custer feels better, he can present this formally.

Senator Toy: I see statistics from the survey are included in this bill relating to adding two days to the beginning of the semester. I think it would be better to just say, “extend break by a week.” Who knows what could happen by adding days to the end.

Co-Chair Bogin: We could just vote on it without knowing what the administration’s reaction would be but I would love to hear that. I think Dean of the College Katy Smith Abbott is in charge or at least on the Calendar Committee. I would like to hear what she thinks and what the committee reaction would be. It’s no small feat to add two days to the beginning of the year. It would be a huge deal, not that it can’t be done – anything can be done if there’s enough will behind it.

Proxy Allis: I have a friendly amendment to add the word “to” to correct a typo.

Proxy Gilbert accepts Proxy Allis’ friendly amendment.

Co-Chair Bogin: Motion to table S2015-SB2.
Senator Gerstenschlager: Seconded.
All aye.
S2015-SB2 tabled.

c. Coffee Hour Resolution (President Custer)

Speaker Brady: Now on to the Coffee Hour Resolution. I yield to Chief of Staff Zhang.

Chief of Staff Zhang: We should table this until President Custer is back.

Senator Gerstenschlager: Motion to table the Coffee Hour Resolution.
Co-Chair Bogin: Seconded.
Ayes: Proxy Gilbert, Senator Jahan, Senator Gerstenschlager, Senator Gogineni, Senator Berlowitz, Senator Medina, Proxy Allis, Senator Sohn, Senator Brook, Senator Vaughan, Senator Hussein, Senator Fisher, Senator de Toledo, Co-Chair Bogin, Speaker Brady
Nays: None
Abstentions: Senator Toy
15-0-1
Coffee Hour Resolution tabled.

VII. Adjournment

Senator Senator de Toledo: Motion to adjourn.
Senator Jahan: Seconded.
All aye.
Meeting adjourned.