SGA Meeting
March 1, 2015

I. Attendance

All members present except Senator de Toledo; proxies for President Custer (Proxy Irene Estefanía), Senator Medina (Proxy Adam Rivera), and Senator Vaughan (Proxy April Poole).

II. Acceptance of Minutes

Senator Fisher: I made two Friendly Amendments to President Custer’s coffee hour bill last week and he didn’t accept either of them, but it was written that he did accept my audacious request to lower the cost to $30 per coffee hour.

Senator Fisher: Motion to amend the minutes to say that President Custer did not accept my first Friendly Amendment to the coffee hour bill.

Senator Toy: Seconded

Ayes: Proxy Estefanía (for President Custer), Senator Jahan, Senator Gerstenschlager, Senator Gogineni, Senator Berlowitz, Senator Toy, Senator Allis, Senator Sohn, Senator Brook, Proxy Poole (for Senator Vaughan), Senator Hussein, Senator Edwards, Senator Fisher, Co-Chair Bogin, Speaker Brady

Nays: None

Abstentions: Proxy Rivera (for Senator Medina)

15-0-1

Motion passes.

Senator Berlowitz: Motion to accept the minutes as amended.

Senator Gerstenschlager: Seconded.

Ayes: Proxy Estefanía (for President Custer), Senator Jahan, Senator Gerstenschlager, Senator Gogineni, Senator Berlowitz, Senator Toy, Senator Allis, Senator Sohn, Senator Brook, Proxy Poole (for Senator Vaughan), Senator Hussein, Senator Edwards, Senator Fisher, Co-Chair Bogin, Speaker Brady

Nays: None

Abstentions: Proxy Rivera (for Senator Medina)

15-0-1

Minutes accepted.

II. Announcements

Proxy Rivera: Senator Medina sent me with a statement to read to you all.

"Hello all, I am truly sorry that I cannot make the meeting tonight. After the Posse Plus Retreat that I have attended with Proxy Rivera, who is in my posse, I fell into a swamp of work the day before an exam, while I must consider my rehearsal schedule, and worst of all, having to do laundry. In all seriousness, this will be my first, and possibly only time requiring a proxy because of the marginality of the case. Mr. Rivera has not only had..."
similar opportunities to interact with our class, but he has also been deeply involved in conversations ranging from inter-culturalism to policy making. Mr. Rivera, as I am assuming you can see, dresses in a way that represents his ability, formal and professional—

Proxy Rivera: Not on Sundays.

—I know he will speak his mind and share his opinions when they are needed."

Proxy Rivera: I haven't been to past meetings so I am going to abstain on some of the votes.

Chief of Staff Zhang: Can you forward that statement to sga@middlebury.edu?

Proxy Estefanía: I yield my time to Chief of Staff Zhang.

Chief of Staff Zhang: I have two announcements. The first one comes from Erin Quinn. They are in the process of getting equipment for the Front Desk at the Athletic Center that students and faculty can check out if they give their ID. Right now he is thinking of getting 6 squash rackets, balls, and goggles, 6 tennis rackets and balls, 4 basketballs and 4 soccer balls. Are there other pieces of equipment that you would want? One word about rental skates, they are working on securing them. They had identified a place to store them in the new Field House but that space was taken. There are only 3 more weeks left where there will be ice in Kenyon so I think instead of trying to get rental skates available for this year it will be more feasible to work on a plan for rental skates for next year so we have time to find a space to keep them.

Senator Jahan: I am so excited. Is there an expected arrival time?

Chief of Staff Zhang: I’m not sure, but it should be in the next couple weeks.

Senator Jahan: So before I graduate?

Chief of Staff Zhang: Yes. The second announcement is a statement from President Custer.

"Good evening, everyone. Although I cannot be with you tonight, I wanted to provide some context as to why I did not include the text of the reform bill that Chief of Staff Zhang will share with you shortly.

Given the required one-week interim between making the text available and voting, it was important to provide the bill tonight so that the Senate will have the option to vote on it next week. However, I did not intend for the bill to receive full debate this evening because of my absence. Rather, I hoped to give everyone a week to read it and consider it before raising objections.

If I had sent it out in full on Thursday, I imagined many would want to raise objections tonight—having had a mere few days to think about the reforms."
I would therefore ask that you table the reform bill so that we can all debate it together during our next meeting, having had a full week to read and consider it."

VI. Committee Reports

a) Dining Services (Executive Director of Food Services, Dan Detora)

Dan Detora: I was invited here tonight to answer any questions that you might have for me. I'm fairly new to the position; I've been here five months. You've seen some of the changes we have made to the dining halls and hopefully those were for the better. We want to continue making changes and working with students to make sure that we are meeting their needs. There are going to be more changes down the road. We are always trying to improve and we do that with student suggestions.

Senator Jahan: I'm a senior and right now the food is at the peak of what it has been since I've been at Middlebury, so thank you for that. I'm just wondering what you did to make this happen.

Dan Detora: We didn't do a whole lot but we added some of the things that were "against the rules" in the past, like having juice and cereal all day and Gatorade. I felt that it was important for us to make those available because it's your dining hall and if you want a glass of cranberry juice for dinner then by all means, you should be able to have that. We want to make as many things available as we can because we know that variety is an issue. Having cereal and those things available all day allow for more variety. We also looked at the flow of the dining halls and tried to move things around. We also added some new menu items. We are trying to utilize the stations that weren't being used before and creating different lines. So far, so good. We are moving in the right direction.

Speaker Brady: I don't know if you get people thanking you personally because they might not know who you are, but thank you. I have heard really great feedback from my constituents.

Senator Gogineni: I had a question about the to-go boxes available at Ross. In the past they were only available when there wasn't enough time to get lunch, so what prompted the policy change?

Dan Detora: We wanted to give students a bit of flexibility. It can also help with seating. I have seen students sitting on the floor when there wasn't enough seating available. Hopefully having these to-go boxes can help with that.

Senator Berlowitz: In the dining halls, there are usually an equal number of forks, spoons, and knives but forks are used disproportionately more than spoons or knives so there end up being no forks, but still plenty of spoons and knives out. I would recommend that you put out more forks in proportion to the number of spoons and knives. Last year, there were always bowl shortages and cup shortages, and I think those have mostly been fixed, but now there are fork shortages. I was also wondering if you could talk about the institution of the swipe system and when that is going to happen and how it will work.

Dan Detora: We are in the process of changing over our china and silverware to something higher quality. We are going to start in Atwater, so they will get a new set and the dishes that are
currently there will move to Proctor and Ross. We are getting more silverware. As far as the swipe system, there is definitely talk about it but when that implementation will come, we are not sure at this point. The new President might have a say in that. In terms of meal plans, there is a big portion of the school that is against meal plans but my personal feeling is that a meal plan is a better system. It gives you so much more flexibility. You can stick with the unlimited plan that you have now or you could only get 15 meals a week but attached to that would be $700 to use in various retail locations. 15 meals a week is a pretty good sum. Maybe you don't get breakfast a couple days or something, but now you have all of this extra money to use at 51 Main or the Grille or other Middlebury owned retail locations. If you're an athlete, you might not want to walk up to the dining hall after practice, so you can eat at the Grille without having to spend any money. Nothing concrete has been determined yet about how the swipe system will work.

Senator Toy: Thank you so much for coming. I've been asking Danny to get you to come for a while. I know that last year the Senate passed a bill saying that we wanted to increase the budget for Dining Services and for that money to be used on real food. I was wondering if you could speak to that.

Dan Detora: We just agreed to the real food challenge which says that we will have 30% real food by next year, which is really aggressive, and that we will have 50% by 2020 which is extremely aggressive to the point where I'm not sure if we could even do it. To get to 30%, its fairly easy, just basic product switch outs so we are working on that now. Our budget has increased. It's going to cost us an additional $80,000 to get us to that 30% mark, but the President has signed off on the real food challenge so we are in the process of getting there. The real food folks are updating the calculator and have been looking at invoices. We are moving forward. Both Patrick Norton and President Liebowitz signed the commitment which is really big and exciting. However, 50% in winters like this could be very much a challenge.

Senator Allis: I was going to ask about the swipe system as well, so I'll pass.

Co-Chair Bogin: This is a pretty mundane question, but is there a story behind the popcorn in Proctor? I think it's great, just wanted to know if there was a story behind it.

Dan Detora: I think they over-purchased popcorn for Winter Carnival so we're still trying to get through it.

Senator Hussein: There have been rumors about physical changes coming to Atwater Dining so I was wondering if you had any updates on that? Also there have been talks about creating a recipe book with recipes from parents of students, so you could you talk about that?

Dan Detora: In Atwater we don't have any changes that I am aware of. There is a potential of getting a hydroponic system in Atwater to use to grow different spices and things like that. Have you seen the hydroponic system in Two Brothers? We've talked about that but not about any other changes. The recipe book is starting this summer. We are going to send a mailing out to parents and then they can send us a recipe from home that is their kid's favorite. We will then reproduce the recipe in the dining hall and label it "So-and-so's Favorite Meal." I've done this at other schools and we'd invite the parents to the meal. Sometimes they come and sometimes they
don't. At the end of the year, we would compile it all into a cookbook and all of the participating people would get a copy.

Proxy Rivera: In the meal plans, would those retail stores be only the ones that are affiliated with Middlebury?


Senator Berlowitz: I have a question that came from one of my constituents. What is the logic on chicken thighs versus chicken breasts?

Dan Detora: There is no logic besides from a budget standpoint. We are looking to make some of those changes to the budget. I didn't have control of this year’s budget but we submitted the budget for next year.

Senator Berlowitz: Could we move the old waffle makers that were in Ross to Proctor?

Dan Detora: We could definitely get waffle makers in Proctor. I just don't know where we would put them but we could find a place.

Co-Chair Bogin: I don't know if anyone has mentioned this to you but the water doesn't come out well of the water dispenser in Proctor. The one with the SoBe Life Water.

Dan Detora: The smaller one? Is it recent that it hasn't been working? There is a compressor in there that is broken. Pepsi actually owns the machine so they were going to come and fix it but I will make sure that it happens.

Senator Toy: Is there a way that students can give feedback? I think that a lot of students have ideas but don't go out of their way to say them.

Dan Detora: We do have a feedback system on our webpage and we just started a Facebook page so you should check that out. But I agree that we should have a comment board, we had those at my other schools.

Senator Gogineni: Why are utensils placed in certain locations? In Ross, the forks are next to the honey and the tea, which doesn't make sense to me. Why are things placed where they are?

Dan Detora: We wanted to get more of a scattered system so that a person could go right to the soup station without having to wait in line and they can get a spoon and their soup at the soup station. I don't know why the forks would be by the honey though, so I will go check that out.

Senator Hussein: Is there any way for the start of lines to be more clear? There are separate lines so that everyone doesn't have to stand in the long line even though people do that anyways. It might be nice to have a better visual so that they know where the different kinds of food are so that they don't end up standing in a line and realizing "wait, I don't want that."
Dan Detora: That's a great point and I'm working on that. I submitted a proposal to Patrick Norton for us to get digital signage. I think that would help certainly in Ross, which is the worst in terms of flow and it drives me crazy. We could potentially have digital signs on some of the pillars that say what is at each station. I don't know when we would finalize that but we are looking into different systems. We also generate a ton of paper so this would eliminate that.

Proxy Estefania: There have been talks of moving all of the language tables to Proctor, is that going to happen?

Dan Detora: That is an ongoing discussion with the faculty and I will be setting up a meeting with them about that in the next couple of weeks. The idea is to move them all to Proctor. We had Redfield Proctor looked at by the fire marshal and we can fit 105 people in there. That could fit everyone for language tables. We just need to coordinate with faculty. We also bumped up the budget for language tables so I'm hoping that the faculty will agree to Proctor.

b) Community Council Update (Co-Chair Bogin)

Co-Chair Bogin: Community Council was in executive session for the entire time last week so I can't actually talk about it. I do have something else on my mind that I briefly talked to Danny about. I know that Senator Gogineni and Senator Toy are working on the MiddRides app and the Comp-Sci Club is actually working on that app and I'm part of the project and will be coding for them. I'm assuming that they asked you and talked to you about this, but I just want to clarify exactly what this app would do. I'm not trying to cut you out of this, but I could get back to them with this information from the Senate of what people want from the app, and we could get started on it.

Senator Gogineni: Chief of Staff Zhang and I met with Public Safety, specifically Lisa Burchard and Officer Gaiotti. The idea we had was something interactive where students can input their location and the dispatcher can update the app with where the van is. Both sides have control to say where the van is or where they want the van to be. Something like that is what we had in mind.

Proxy Estefania: Does anyone know why the system hasn't been working lately?

Chief of Staff Zhang: This is one of the issues that we brought up with Public Safety and it's Saturdays that are the problem. They are having trouble hiring someone who is committed to working the Saturday night shifts. They've even tried to hire students for the weekends which is something that they haven't done before and they got no applications. Dan Gaiotti said that they have someone that they are just doing the paperwork for now, so MiddRides should be up and running for the rest of the year starting next Saturday.

Speaker Brady: So not this Saturday?

Chief of Staff Zhang: Next Saturday.

Co-Chair Bogin: One more thing. I didn't want to pretend to know more than Dan Detora in front of him, but about the chicken thighs versus chicken breast question: chicken breasts get dry
quicker. It is easier to keep chicken thighs warm without them getting dry. That's at least why Atwater serves chicken thighs instead of chicken breasts.

c) Finance Committee Bi-Weekly Report (Treasurer Gratch)

Treasurer Gratch: There isn't that much exciting to report from the last three weeks. We met with a bunch of clubs and they were all New Money Requests. We had two ICF requests, which is the Innovation Collaboration Fund so we had groups coming in together, which is great. We stop accepting New Money Requests this year on April 1st, so that's only three more meetings. If you know any student organizations who will want funding before the end of the year, remind them of the deadline. We will also be sending an all-school email. We are currently accepting applications for the Finance Committee. They are due tomorrow and we have 22 so far. We are only accepting applications from Juniors, Junior Febs, Freshman, and Freshman Febs. I am also going to be meeting on Thursday with Katy Smith-Abbott, Derek Doucet, JJ Boggs, and President Custer to discuss club sports funding for next year; it's been a big issue.

Senator Berlowitz: I was just wondering if you could talk about what the last event is that is being sponsored by seven organizations?

Treasurer Gratch: I don't want to ruin the surprise if it is a surprise but it's a performance that they all wanted to support.

Co-Chair Bogin: How are we doing money-wise?

Treasurer Gratch: I don't know how specific President Custer would want me to be but we are in a really good place. We aren't close to running out of money. These are pretty liberal allocations, we have been able to fund things in full. We don't have too much money but we are in a really good place.

Senator Toy: Can you speak about the meeting about club sports and what you're thinking or want to get out of it?

Treasurer Gratch: I have been speaking with JJ a bunch about club sports because they cost a lot more than other student organizations on campus and we think it isn't necessarily our role to be funding things beyond in-season operating expenses. For example, Crew requested $26,000 from us for two new racing shells. They are doing a great job, but we aren't in a place to give them $26,000. There have been talks in previous years and last year there were some negotiations but those ended up with unknowns about capital expenses, like racing shells, and depreciation, so I'm hoping to resolve some of those unknowns. If you have any ideas about this, let me know. The meeting isn't until Thursday.

d) Intercommons Council (ICC) Mid-Year Report (Jewel Chen)

Jewel Chen: Hi, I'm Jewel Chen, and I have the Intercommons Council Mid-Year Report to present to you. Typically, Atwater gets the least of the money and Ross, Cook, and Brainerd take a good chunk of the pool fund. Bite of Brainerd was happening in here yesterday. Viva Ross Vegas is on March 14th. The Bluegrass Festival is sometime in late April/early May. The
meetings have dropped now to only once a month because the allocation is more or less complete.

Chief of Staff Zhang: I just wanted to give some more context for Chairwoman Chen's report. Last year President Emeritus Liddell passed a bill so that the ICC will have to give a Mid-Year Report to the Senate because they get such a large chunk of the SGA Budget. They have $45,000 in their pool fund and there isn't a lot of oversight so that's the reason that she is here presenting to us today.

Speaker Brady: Can you give us some context for the amount of money spent on the events and how many people are actually coming to them?

Jewel Chen: Each commons comes to the ICC with a proposal for the event and the amount of money that they get depends on the number of people they expect to attend. Some events require more money like the Holly Ball in Atwater had alcohol so we were willing to give a certain amount of money to that but Bite of Brainerd didn’t have alcohol. Bite of Brained had more than 500 people attend. Raise the Volume drew in a lot of people. V for Vendetta drew in around 50-75 people. Brainerd Fall Festival had a good turnout as well. We are working with MCAB to get the word out about events.

Speaker Brady: Is there anywhere that you have hard numbers about how many people came to the events?

Jewel Chen: Each commons is responsible for the money that they take and how they allocate it. I can get the numbers for you later but I would have to reach out to the commons heads and those who were coordinating the events to get those numbers.

Senator Hussein: How much time is spent actually allocating the budget versus time spent working on increasing the efficiency of the ICC and structural changes? Do you even have time to discuss those things?

Jewel Chen: We actually have been discussing the structure of the ICC and what the purpose of the ICC is and what it should be. Currently it has been for events that the commons don't have money for but most of them are traditions associated with the commons. We still have several months left so we are going to be talking about the structure and what we look forward to in the next couple of years.

Senator Fisher: Thank you for the great presentation. I have an aesthetics question about the graphic in the left upper corner. I didn't think we had lasers and fog blasters. That's not on Middlebury's campus, correct? Okay, just wondering because if we had those fog blasters I would want to know.

Senator Gerstenschlager: That was at the tailgate; it got a lot of noise complaints.

Senator Berlowitz: I know that the Brainerd Fall Festival last year was directed just towards Brainerd students. But since this is the ICC, the events should be directed to all students so I was wondering how successful they were at drawing a crowd bigger than just the one commons?
Jewel Chen: We actually had an MCAB representative, I think she's the Vice President, Kelsey, at every meeting and we worked with MCAB to advertise our events. There was a good showing at the Fall Festival, Halloween Dance and Midd's Got Talent from all the commons. For V for Vendetta, the Ross co-chairs reached out to different organizations on campus to advertise their event. Raise the Volume was a great event and was even better this year than last year. We want to get students from all commons at the events.

V. Old Business

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

Senator Gerstenschlager: As Senator Gogineni mentioned, Chief of Staff Zhang and Senator Gogineni and I met with Public Safety and what we want is a more efficient way to communicate weather conditions. We could blast everyone with an email but then we get email fatigue. We want to save emails for important things like -23 degree wind-chill. I don't know if you have Google Chrome but there is a little bell that has weather reports and it's powered by the Weather Service. What types of blast would we want to send out? There could be a way to incorporate it on Middlebury's homepage or the SGA website. It could be something minimally intrusive that you can seek out if you want to.

Co-Chair Bogin: The Comp-Sci Club is looking for projects and an app like this would be totally up our alley.

Senator Jahan: Are you the president of the Comp-Sci Club?

Co-Chair Bogin: Definitely not.

Senator Gerstenschlager: That's nice to know. Do people like the app idea, and what would be the most useful way to do this?

Senator Gogineni: We also discussed having students be able to post the conditions on campus and other people being able to follow that like a twitter account.

Senator Jahan: Like Yik Yak.

Senator Gerstenschlager: I don't know if you have heard of Waze but it's a navigation app that alerts you of traffic accidents, police officers, or objects in the road and it crowdsources that information. So if Karina were to notice an icy patch while she was on her way to the mods, she could crowdsource that information and say that there is an icy patch near Giggle Pit and then everyone would know.

Senator Fisher: It sounds like this would be really helpful and I am happy for that. I'm not trying to be the grouchy guy. I bet I'm the only one who calls the National Weather Service Hotline every day. Another danger with slippery ice other hazardous conditions is that if you are staring at your phone the whole time, you won't see the ice in front of you. We should be careful of putting more things into the digital world.
Adam Rivera: How effective is crowd polling in general? What is its general effectiveness? Sometimes Waze will say that there is a police officer when there isn’t one so I’m happy, I’m going 90, and then two minutes later there is one.

Senator Gerstenschlager: Police officers move, ice doesn’t.

Adam Rivera: But if I’m walking by Warner and the app says that there is a lot of ice and there isn’t any?

Senator Gerstenschlager: The danger would be that there is ice there, not that there isn’t.

Senator Berlowitz: I love Waze, it’s the best GPS app out there. In general I have found that it is accurate. The reason that Waze works is that it’s okay to have a GPS running and it also tells you things. I don’t know that it translates here because you hopefully don’t need GPS to get from Bi-Hall to McCullough. If you don’t have the app open, it won’t do you any good.

Hannah Tiberend: You also have the option to up vote or down vote something on Waze, so if our app says that there is ice somewhere you could say “no, there actually isn’t ice” or “yes, there is ice here.”

Speaker Brady: It seems like the discussion that we are having now could be held outside of the Senate. We have more things to get through so I would recommend that we table this bill.

   Senator Gerstenschlager: Motion to end discussion and table W2014-SB3.
   Senator Jahan: Seconded.
   Ayes: Proxy Estefania (for President Custer), Senator Jahan, Senator Gerstenschlager, Senator Gogineni, Senator Berlowitz, Senator Toy, Senator Allis, Senator Sohn, Senator Brook, Proxy Poole (for Senator Vaughan), Senator Hussein, Senator Edwards, Senator Fisher, Co-Chair Bogin, Speaker Brady
   Nays: None
   Abstentions: Proxy Rivera (for Senator Medina)
   15-0-1
   Motion passes.

b) Compensation for Minute-Taking Act (S2015-SB7) (Senators Gerstenschlager and Berlowitz, Nick Warren)

Nick Warren: I don't think we should take a great deal of time to talk about this especially because there are more important things on the agenda and I would like to hear President Custer's opinion on this. My experience taking minutes at the other meeting was very enlightening and I think that having a record of things that are said at Senate and Community Council meetings are important. I went into the SGA archives and reading minutes from past years and there have never been minutes as detailed as we have this year. I would have loved to seen some of the reasoning behind the votes at the meeting in 1969 when the SGA called for students and faculty on the Board of Trustees, for instance. I think that if we want to continue to
have such detailed minutes like we have now we should advertise and attract someone with the
skills to do the job.

Senator Fisher: Once upon a time Senator Fisher was a proxy for Press Secretary Gratch and I
can say from personal experience that it is edifying and humble work. At the same time, cash
rules everything around me. I don't think we should work on this now for the reasons that
Speaker Brady mentioned.

Senator Fisher: Motion to end discussion and table S2015-SB7.
Senator Berlowitz: Seconded.
Ayes: Senator Jahan, Senator Gerstenschlager, Senator Gogineni, Senator Berlowitz,
Senator Allis, Senator Sohn, Senator Brook, Proxy Poole (for Senator Vaughan),
Senator Hussein, Senator Edwards, Senator Fisher, Co-Chair Bogin, Speaker
Brady
Nays: Proxy Estefanía (for President Custer)
Abstentions: Senator Toy, Proxy Rivera (for Senator Medina)
13-1-2
Motion passes.

VI. New Business

a) Senate Reform Act (S2015-SB9) (President Custer, Chief of Staff Zhang)

Chief of Staff Zhang: I sent this out not that long ago so most of you probably haven't had a
chance to look at this. It is probably one of the most significant bills that the SGA has seen in
recent years. The Reform Group has been working on these for a semester and discussing these
ideas. These are coming from President Custer, myself, Speaker Brady, Senator Fisher, Senator
Vaughan, Senator de Toledo Senator Sanders, and Harry Zieve-Cohen, who is a senior and
member of the SGA Reform Working Group. The comprehensiveness might surprise you but
these are a preliminary series of reforms that the Reform Group has endorsed. As President
Custer said in his statement that I read during Announcements, he would like to table this so that
we can have a full discussion next week. If you have questions, email President Custer or talk to
him in person when he returns on Tuesday night.

Proxy Estefanía: Motion to end discussion and table S2015-SB9.
Speaker Brady: Seconded.
Ayes: Proxy Estefanía, Speaker Brady
Nays: Senator Berlowitz, Senator Brook, Co-Chair Bogin
Abstentions: Senator Jahan, Senator Gerstenschlager, Senator Gogineni, Senator Toy,
Proxy Rivera (for Senator Medina), Senator Allis, Senator Sohn, Proxy Poole (for
Senator Vaughan), Senator Hussein, Senator Edwards, Senator Fisher
2-3-11
Motion defeated.

Senator Gerstenschlager: I would like to propose a Friendly Amendment to the footnotes. It says
that 5 of the 17 current members of the Senate were engaged in uncompetitive elections. It
should say 7.
Proxy Estefanía (for President Custer) accepts Senator Gerstenschlager's Friendly Amendment.

Senator Berlowitz: Motion to end discussion and table S2015-SB9.
Senator Gerstenschlager: Seconded.
Ayes: Proxy Estefanía (for President Custer), Senator Jahan, Senator Gerstenschlager, Senator Gogineni, Senator Berlowitz, Senator Toy, Senator Allis, Senator Sohn, Senator Brook, Proxy Poole (for Senator Vaughan), Senator Hussein, Senator Edwards, Senator Fisher, Co-Chair Bogin, Speaker Brady
Nays: None
Abstentions: Proxy Rivera (for Senator Medina)
15-0-1
Motion passes.

b) Resolution to Increase Counseling Staff (S2015-SB8) (Emma Erwin and Co-Chair Bogin)

Emma Erwin: This is my first appearance at the SGA. Over the last semester, I've talked to various deans, officials, faculty, students, and members of counseling staff about the need for counseling and ability that they have to address that need. The overwhelming response is that the counseling staff is at capacity and the number of clients is increasing each semester. More and more students are reaching out and asking for help and it ranges from everyday stress to more serious issues. Nationwide, trends are showing that the number of college students seeking counseling is drastically increasing as is the seriousness of the issues at hand. The counselor's time fills up very quickly. I can't remember but I think that there are only two or three full time counselors at Parton. Everyone else is just part-time or interns or part-time interns. It's hard for the staff to receive the amount of students at the times that the students needed it. Students have reported to me that they have sought out counseling but couldn't get an appointment for two to three weeks. If someone is seeking out counseling for the first time, they might not want to acknowledge that it is a crisis situation. Not being able to get an appointment for three weeks is devastating to hear and super unhelpful. One way that the staff alleviates the influx of students is by directing the students who need to see someone more frequently to in-town counselors, so now off-campus they are also at capacity and that is a huge issue. This issue is to increase the funding for the counseling staff so that they can at least add one more full time staff member.

Co-Chair Bogin: So this bill is coming at the perfect time because Katy Smith-Abbott is going to Staff Resources partly because of this and she can ask for more resources for a counselor and I think that having us say that this is something that students are also acknowledging the need for will be helpful. It would be great if we could pass this tonight.

Senator Berlowitz: I'm wondering if one is enough. If we aren't committing to anything, I think it should be as many new staff members as is necessary. Is one enough to solve the problem? If three are needed, then we could say that and the administration could bargain it down.

Co-Chair Bogin: Could we change the language so it just says in order to increase capacity and doesn't specify how many?
Emma Erwin: We want as many as we can get. There are a lot of factors that go into it such as the number of offices, but I'm happy to support us getting as many as we can. I'm happy to make changes to this.

Co-Chair Bogin: Let's change the last be it resolved to say "be increased in order to increase capacity for student clients."

Senator Allis: I just want to voice my support for this bill, particularly from a personal place. Two years ago I was in a dark place with depression and drug stuff and I had to leave for a bit. I tried to reach out and catch myself but I had the same issue where Parton said that they wouldn't be able to see me for weeks. I went into town and contacted seven or eight people but they all said that they couldn't take on any new people. Thank god that I had the resources to get out of that, but for someone else facing a crisis emergency situation, not being able to see a counselor is a real problem. This is something that deserves our attention immediately.

Proxy Rivera: I'm not familiar with the spacing in Parton, but where would we put them?

Emma Erwin: There are multiple people on staff who are not actually full time. There is someone who comes in one day a week and someone who is an intern and doesn't have a psychological degree or license. We might transition those interns into full time professionals.

Chief of Staff Zhang: President Custer wanted to see if you would be open to inserting the word "should" so that it would read less like a demand because we don't have the power to command the stakeholders here.

Proxy Estefanía: Friendly Amendment to add the word "should" to "should be an increase" and "staff should be increased."

   Emma Erwin and Co-Chair Bogin accept Proxy Estefanía’s Friendly Amendment.

Senator Gogineni: I have a random question. I know that most people probably want one-on-one sessions but have the counselors thought about group sessions?

Emma Erwin: I've had several discussions with them about that and they advertise groups but no one responds to them. I actually just created a group through the Resilience Project which is a student initiated group and we sought out a counselor. I think that's the best way to do it and it's gained more interest than a group run by counseling.

Senator Jahan: I just want to commend you on everything you have done via the Resilience Project, thank you very much.

   Senator Jahan: Motion to end discussion and vote on S2015-SB8. Senator Hussein: Seconded.
   Ayes: Proxy Estefanía (for President Custer), Senator Jahan, Senator Gerstenschlager, Senator Gogineni, Senator Berlowitz, Senator Allis, Senator Sohn, Senator Brook, Proxy Poole (for Senator Vaughan), Senator Hussein, Senator Edwards, Senator
Fisher, Speaker Brady
Nays: None
Abstentions: Senator Toy, Proxy Rivera (for Senator Medina), Co-Chair Bogin
13-0-3
Motion passes.

Vote on S2015-SB8.
Ayes: Proxy Estefania (for President Custer), Senator Jahan, Senator Gerstenschlager, Senator Gogineni, Senator Berlowitz, Senator Toy, Proxy Rivera (for Senator Medina), Senator Allis, Senator Sohn, Senator Brook, Proxy Poole (for Senator Vaughan), Senator Hussein, Senator Edwards, Senator Fisher, Co-Chair Bogin, Speaker Brady
Nays: None
Abstentions: None
16-0-0
S2015-SB8 passes.

VII. Adjournment

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