SGA Meeting  
April 5, 2015

I. Attendance

All members present; proxy for Senator Vaughan (Proxy April Poole)

II. Acceptance of Minutes

Senator Berlowitz: On page 9, Senator Gerstenschlager and I did not except a Friendly Amendment, we accepted a Friendly Amendment.

Senator Fisher: The meaning was changed in a couple of the things that I said. Speaking on LaundryView, it says that I said “The survey says” but I think I said something along the lines of “The survey says this one’s a winner.” Also, I said “Someone I respect very much once said communities come into being for the sake of living and continues to exist for the sake of living well” and the first part of that wasn’t in there. I want it to be clear that I didn’t make that up and that I’m quoting someone, however mysterious it might be.

Senator Toy: This is silly, but for the motion to vote on hanging up Billy Jacob’s artwork, Senator Berlowitz motioned and I seconded, not the other way around.

Senator de Toledo: Motion to accept the minutes as amended.  
President Custer: Seconded.  
All aye.  
Minutes accepted.

III. Announcements

President Custer: As you know, Nathan Alexander, a sophomore in Ross passed away this week. I’d like to take a brief moment of silence to remember him. Thanks, everybody. I have two SGA related announcements. The first is that the MiddCourses campaign for the spring is up and running. Next week is when everyone will register or start the registration process so encourage your friends to check out MiddCourses to get a better idea of which courses they want to take. The next announcement is about elections. Director of Membership Warren has settled all the details and the timeline will be sent out shortly. Encourage your friends who you think would do a good job to run. As you know, there was a less than great turnout last year in terms of candidates. We need to show the administration that last year was a fluke year and that there is interest in running and participating in the SGA. The best way to do that is by encouraging your friends. Look out for people that you think you would make good Senators or a good President or Co-Chair.

IV. Committee Reports

a. Community Council Update (Co-Chair Bogin)
Co-Chair Bogin: We recommended that Thanksgiving break be extended in support of the SGA resolution. We talked about student-owned spaces on campus and the idea of art and art in public places. We also talked about opening up facilities to faculty and staff during breaks when they are closed. What we found was that they are mostly open already. The hours are slightly reduced but they aren’t as closed as faculty and staff thinks they are. We also started talking about alternative sanctions, like service requirements instead of fines. It has come up before but staff had a problem with it. We have someone talking to all of the stakeholders and working on a proposal. We’re also going to be talking more about surveillance cameras. This has come up for multiple years and the recommendation has always been to talk about it next year and vote on it then and this is the year!

President Custer: Does anyone have any strong feelings on security cameras? I know it will come up in Community Council so I would like to know what you think the student body thinks on this issue.

Co-Chair Bogin: Can I preface that? A lot of people have very strong opinions on this issue and some of them are uninformed. There are also informed strong opinions. I just want to give some basic context. The locations are still up to debate but I think the initial proposal would have cameras in front of the dining halls watching backpacks and watching the entrance of the library. There was a huge spike in thefts this year. I think there have been 22 backpacks stolen in 2015. We would also probably have them in front of vending machines. I don’t know about the vending machine in Bi-Hall, but the ones in residence halls that have been broken into many times. When everything is stolen, they charge the students who live there. I’m not necessarily in support of cameras by the vending machines but there are good reasons to have them.

Senator Allis: I’m inclined to support them for the reasons you said. The last time we talked about this, I got a lot of feedback from my constituents who had very negative reactions. Because of that, I think it’s really important to disseminate as much information as we can. When Luke Carroll-Brown was SCOCC, there were concerns that if Public Safety looked at the videos and saw potentially underage students drinking a beer or students smoking a joint, then they would have to investigate that. I think that gets into problematic territory.

Co-Chair Bogin: I’ve heard that too. I think that if they saw a solo cup they wouldn’t be able to do anything but if they saw someone they knew was underage holding a beer, they might be obligated by the law to look into it. I agree that it’s questionable and that it’s not something the cameras are meant to address.

Senator Brook: I talked to Doug Adams about this and he said that the ones near the vending machines would be motion censored. Would all of them be that way?

Co-Chair Bogin: I’m not sure.

Senator Brook: I would be interested in that instead of using all that power for all that time.

Co-Chair Bogin: I should also say that these cameras wouldn’t be monitored but would only be used if there were an incident.
Senator Toy: I completely agree with Senator Allis. The vending machine has been broken three or four times in Pearsons. It’s ridiculous that I have to pay for whoever is doing this. It’s extremely annoying because there can be cardboard over the machine for a month at a time when people break them.

Senator Fisher: In an attempt to legitimate my remarks responding to what Co-Chair Bogin about most people having non-legitimate visceral reactions, I have had my bike stolen and my guitar stolen on this campus. Putting on my Ross hat, this morning I walked down my hallway to see the telephones off the walls and other dorm damage. We don’t have snacks anymore in Ross because people kept smashing the glass. These are serious issues on campus that cameras might litigate. At the end of the day however, I’m against cameras because they won’t fix the problem even if they make these events happen less. When I give tours I talk about how great the community is here, and I mean everything I say on my tours. Community does matter and we don’t have to a perfect community because those don’t exist, but this is as close as anything. Community exists here and people do look out for each other. I think that we should focus on living up to that idea. The implementation of security cameras might be a Band-Aid for a deeper wound. I’m speaking abstractly here because I’m not totally sure what the “problem” is.

Senator Berlowitz: I agree that another conversation needs to be had. I’m also questioning how effective this will be. If you take someone’s laptop from the Library, you’ll probably just put it in your backpack and walk out and the camera won’t capture any of that. I’m not sure how helpful they will be in solving issues of theft. I like the idea of having a conversation of how to live up to our community standards like Senator Fisher said.

Senator Jahan: One place that it could be useful to have cameras would be in parking lots. It can be kind of scary being in the parking lots alone at night. I also know a lot of students have had their cars bumped into and had no idea who did it. It could be helpful for those situations. Also, has there been discussion about how it could be a slippery slope? Like if there are cameras in some places then they can keep adding cameras in other places?

Co-Chair Bogin: There absolutely has. I prefaced this because I thought the gut reaction, and perhaps the well-reasoned reaction would be against cameras. By no means has a decision been made about security cameras. I agree about the community standards, is it admitting defeat to have cameras? The Library cameras may not be that effective but I think that cameras in front of vending machines would undoubtedly be effective.

Senator Brook: I think this also important when looking at the relationship with the Honor Code. If we make the changes to add in the community standards to the Honor Code, we are taking a step towards changing our environment. If we bring in security cameras, it might butt heads with that.

b) Ian Burgin Cabin Update (Larson Lovdal and Phoebe Howe)

Phoebe Howe: It’s nice to be back here. I think the last time we were here was in November and as you all know, we got a very generous grant from you for $40,000. That’s a significant part of our estimated budget. This is our final design, which is a lot more defined and realistic of what you would see in the woods behind Rikert. The current status of the project: there is still a lot of
snow on the ground so it’s a little premature to be doing any site work that we need to get underway. The permitting process ended up being more time consuming than anyone predicted. It’s not a hurdle really, we’re working through it, but it’s taking some time. We aren’t compromising the quality of the project, but the timeline is shifted back a bit. It’s been a very educational process for Larson and I and everyone else who is involved.

Larson Lovdal: We’ve continued fundraising and updating our budget. We have a total of $62,000 including your $40,000 raised. We’re just looking to fill the last gap and we are working with Ian’s mom to do that through her friends and family. We are just getting some final thoughts from her before we go live with our campaign. She totally expects that we will be able to fill the gap.

Phoebe Howe: We really tightened up the budget and figured out exactly what materials we need. It will be $90,000, which includes all of the labor. We already have $62,000 and we are expecting to close the gap quickly with funding from alumni and friends of the Burgin family. As soon as we get permitting done and the snow melts, we’ll be out there and will have to cut down a few trees. Our contractor is Lance Waterman. He’s worked with both Solar Decathlon teams so he’s familiar with working with Middlebury students on design projects. Larson will be here over the summer potentially and either way, there are students who will be here in the summer to work with Lance. In the fall, we will be putting on the final touches and I will be here then to help with that. We should be done in September or October at the latest. Does anybody have any questions or want more background on the project if you weren’t here in the fall?

Senator Edwards: Could you give some background?

Phoebe Howe: This project came from two places. The first was the deconstruction of the Worth Mountain Lodge. The Mountain Club had a cabin up there for 50 years but it was taken down before most of us were here because the foundation wasn’t sound and it had been vandalized multiple times. We’re addressing that by building this on the Rikert trail network on some of the further ski trails. It will be locked when not in use and it will be an easy process to check out the key from Student Activities. We want it to be a place where students can go on a retreat away from school and it’s not an arduous hike to get there. It will be good for getting a diverse group to go there. It will be multifunctional for Mountain Club trips and anyone with a Middlebury ID card can use the space.

Larson Lovdal: We want it to be a place where the college and the community can intersect. It will be a warming hut during the weekends for Rikert customers. It’s on the outer edge, so it would allow people who haven’t been able to do the longer trails to rest and then expand and appreciate more of the trails.

Phoebe Howe: Rikert and the Mountain Club will co-manage it. It’s also a project in memory of Ian Burgin, class of 2008. He was he really involved in trying to renovate the Worth Mountain Lodge before it was taken down. That was something really important to him and he was really interested in connecting with friends in peaceful and authentic settings like out in the woods. He passed away in 2010 in a car accident so we are working with his mom and his best friend from Middlebury on this project.
Senator Fisher: Did one of you draw the picture?

Phoebe Howe: A girl in my senior architecture seminar drew it.

Senator Fisher: She did a wonderful job. I see that there are windows higher up. Is this a one-story project or is there a second story?

Phoebe Howe: It’s a story and a half.

Larson Lovdal: On the left side there, we have a sleeping loft. It’s open to the downstairs area but it will help to accommodate more people. It’s just a place to lay down your sleeping bag and pad.

Senator Fisher: I was happy about this before but now I’m simply tickled!

Phoebe Howe: Yeah, this will be much nicer than the dank cabins on the Long Trail.

Senator Fisher: No dankness, alright.

Treasurer Gratch: Do you have a sense of what the timing will be to get the permit approved?

Phoebe Howe: We ended up needing a larger state permit that’s normally only necessarily for things like the new type of housing that’s going up on Ridgeline. It was very surprising that they said we needed one of those. We are exempt from other permitting because of the backcountry primitive nature of the structure. There are no utilities or roads going to it. We ended up needing a wastewater permit even though we don’t have any running water. We have hydro-geologists who are working on getting us a permit application for that. It should be a simple process. By the end of the month we should have all of our permitting done which will coincide nicely with being able to get up there and start working.

Larson Lovdal: Even if all our ducks were in a row at this point, we would still be sitting around watching the snow melt, literally.

c) Publicity Committee Update (Director of Publicity Nan Philip)

Director of Publicity Nan Philip: I’m the Director of the Publicity and chair of the Publicity Committee. Robin was the Chair in the fall so I stepped in for her when she went abroad. I’ve been working with Taylor and Danny on publicizing whatever you guys are working on. Like Taylor said at the beginning, we’re working on MiddCourses. It’s a little tricky to advertise. In the fall we had a tables set up to talk to people but that didn’t really work that well. We’re just trying to get the word around and using chalk in Bi-Hall and posters such. We’ve been posting things to the Facebook page and that’s the best way to get to people. If you guys could share the things that are posted on the page that would make a huge difference. Am I allowed to ask you to do that? We can only put up so many posters. You sharing the link to MiddCourses and the SGA posts is how we’ll get a majority of the clicks. People are slowly starting to go to it by habit, which is great. We’re also in charge of the bulletin board and Danny tells me when things change. We’re also working with Taylor and have stuff ready to go for if the restaurant thing
happens. Also, one thing we haven’t done before is publicizing before elections and trying to get people to run. Once people do decide to run, we thought it might be nice to have posters up with who is running for which positions. If four people run for SGA President, we can have each of their photos and names on a big poster with maybe also a link to their website.

Senator Berlowitz: Is there a reason that you waited this long to start advertising? Registration starts in two or three days for some people so people have been planning their schedules for a while now.

President Custer: There was the difficulty of spring break and planning around that. We thought that an energetic campaign right before registration would be a good way to go about things. The campaign in the fall was incredibly successful and we go an enormous spike in reviews. So part of it was logistics and part of it was thinking that a burst right at the end would be effective.

Director Philip: The majority of upperclassmen also already know about it so we want the publicity to be more prevalent for the freshman and sophomores. We’re putting up posters everywhere, but really focusing on freshman dorms.

Senator Berlowitz: Thanks those were great answers. You’re publicizing who’s running, but are you also going to publicize to get a better turn out the day of in terms of voting?

Director Philip: We haven’t gotten that far. That is something we can think about and I think that having these posters up would get the word out about elections, but we can do more.

Chief of Staff Zhang: Let Director Philip know if you have any ideas.

Senator Fisher: Thanks for a great presentation, Director Philip. My question is about the tools in your proverbial tool kit. In my life, I’ve seen that there can be a lot of success when you look outside the box or destroy the box. You’ve got a grasp on traditional types of publicity. I’m wondering if you have thought about performances or theatrical or interactive ways of publicizing things? What’s your vision? Are you open to pushing the boundaries and if so, what do you have in mind?

Director Philip: I’m game for whatever. We did try having tables set up in Bi-Hall where we sat there with computers and tried to get people to sign up for MiddCourses. That was a test and we were trying to move away from posters but it wasn’t that successful so it’s probably not the best way to go about it. It can be tricky because it’s online and it takes some time. People would rather do it sitting down where they are working. For getting people to vote, we have thought about doing that again. It doesn’t take that long to just click the buttons because most people have already thought about who they are going to vote for. It would be great to have a more interactive event. You should all email me if you have any more suggestions.

Senator Toy: I’m wondering what the restaurant thing is.

President Custer: As some of you know, one of my platform ideas was a restaurant partnership so that students could get discounts if they showed their Middlebury ID. We would highlight one restaurant a week. It was more difficult than expected because these restaurants already see quite
a bit of students coming through. There are two restaurants at the moment signed on and I’m
talking to two others. It hasn’t happened yet because I’m trying to convince the remaining two
restaurants, not because the Publicity Committee isn’t ready yet. If we could get three or four
restaurants, I think it makes it more legit but I don’t think I’d want to have it just be a two-week
thing. I’m still doing work talking to business owners. The stuff Publicity Committee has come
up with is great so hopefully you’ll get to see it.

V. Old Business

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

Nick Warren: Over break, Karina and I got together and revised this substantially. We
incorporated almost all of the suggestions. The “Press Secretary” will now be the “Recording
Secretary” which is a term already used in the constitution. The person would be paid and the job
would be posted on the SEO website. The SGA President hires that person and the SGA Advisor
approves their time sheet. The President or the Senate with ⅔ majority can remove the Recording
Secretary. They can also still attend Cabinet meetings at the discretion of the President.

Senator Toy: I have a question about how the SGA pays people who do the newspaper
deliveries. Do they do timesheets?

Chief of Staff Zhang: They do fill out timesheets and I interviewed people at the beginning of the
year for the Wall Street Journal delivery position.

Co-Chair Bogin: About the last part about the Community Council minute-taker, do the
administration, staff, and faculty all have discrete budgets? I’m happy for the spirit of that but in
effect could it actually be jointly paid for?

President Custer: Is that a question for me? I have no idea. I just know that it should come from
somewhere outside of the SGA because it’s not only for students.

Press Secretary Tiberend: Would you be opposed to calling the position “Secretary” instead of
“Recording Secretary”?

Nick Warren: Yes, because “Recording Secretary” is in our constitution and it’s the name given
to that position in other congressional bodies. It has been used for decades.

Senator de Toledo: In the absence of any reasoning other than historical, I would like to
make a Formal Amendment to change “Recording Secretary” to “Secretary.”
President Custer: Seconded.

Senator Allis: Why would you prefer “Secretary” to “Recording Secretary”?

Press Secretary Tiberend: This is kind of about resume building as much fun as we’re having
here. I would just rather have “Secretary” on my resume than “Recording Secretary.”

Treasurer (and former Press Secretary) Gratch: I agree.
Vote on Senator de Toledo’s Formal Amendment.
Ayes: President Custer, Senator Gerstenschlager, Senator Gogineni, Senator Medina, Senator Allis, Senator Sohn, Senator Brook, Senator Vaughan, Senator Edwards, Senator de Toledo, Co-Chair Bogin
Nays: Senator Jahan, Senator Toy, Senator Fisher
Abstentions: Senator Berlowitz, Senator Hussein, Speaker Brady
11-3-3
Senator de Toledo’s Formal Amendment passes.

President Custer: Could you go over why you removed the position from the Cabinet?

Senator Toy: I really don’t like the idea that someone in the Cabinet is paid. This is a position that has distinct skills that are different from what other Cabinet members do and especially since they’re putting in five, six, or seven hours a week already by doing this, they shouldn’t also be in the Cabinet.

Senator Jahan: I wasn’t here for the last meeting but I read the minutes. I think there is a disjoint between saying the position is not in the cabinet and also retroactively paying Press Secretary Tiberend. I’m not understanding that piece of this.

Senator Toy: Nick and I didn’t like the paying retroactively but it was a Friendly Amendment last time so we didn’t take it out.

Senator Berlowitz: I don’t think we should punish Press Secretary Tiberend because under the old system she was a part of the Cabinet. If we pass this, we are saying that she deserves to be paid for the work she’s doing.

Senator Jahan: I don’t think that not being paid is a punishment.

President Custer: I don’t think there is a real justification for removing her from the Cabinet. I can invite anyone to my Cabinet meetings. In all but name, this person would be in the Cabinet. I’m not sure that removing them is a necessary addition to this bill.

Nick Warren: Every other Cabinet member is subject to impeachment. This position is hired by the President through a different application process. They can’t be impeached but can be removed through a different process. I looked at where we could have fit this position into the bylaws and it didn’t make sense.

President Custer: I just have a clarifying question about how this person is picked. Is it just the President that gets to pick? So I can hire them and fire them at will? It says the President or the Senate with ⅗ majority can remove them. Just to clarify to everyone, this gives the President more authority in some sense. This person doesn’t need to be approved by the Senate. If you leave them in the Cabinet, then I can hire them and the Senate has to approve them. If you want another check on the President, it would behoove us to keep them in the Cabinet.
Nick Warren: In this situation, the President would have just as much authority as they do over the people who are paid to manage the Craft Corner or deliver newspapers.

President Custer: I’m not against that; I just want to discuss the point of removing them from the Cabinet. They will basically be a Cabinet member.

Senator Allis: I’m with the group of Senators who think that if we change the nature of the job that it probably shouldn’t be in the Cabinet. Press Secretary Tiberend said last week that her contributions are mostly clerical. If that’s the case, then it shouldn’t be a Cabinet position.

Senator Berlowitz: The Press Secretary, or Secretary, or whatever we’re calling it now is less policy oriented as a position. The Secretary isn’t offering their opinion or implementing policy.

Co-Chair Bogin: I agree with what has been said.

Senator de Toledo: Straw Poll: Who believes that the position should stay in the cabinet?
2-12-3

Senator de Toledo: Motion to end discussion and vote on S2015-SB7.
Senator Hussein: Seconded.
Ayes: President Custer, Senator Gerstenschlager, Senator Gogineni, Senator Berlowitz, Senator Toy, Senator Medina, Senator Allis, Senator Sohn, Senator Brook, Proxy Poole (for Senator Vaughan), Senator Hussein, Senator Edwards, Senator de Toledo, Co-Chair Bogin, Speaker Brady
Nays: Senator Jahan
Abstentions: Senator Fisher
15-1-1
Motion passes.

Vote on S2015-SB7.
Ayes: President Custer, Senator Gerstenschlager, Senator Berlowitz, Senator Toy, Senator Medina, Senator Allis, Senator Sohn, Senator Brook, Proxy Poole (for Senator Vaughan), Senator Hussein, Senator Edwards, Senator Fisher, Senator de Toledo, Co-Chair Bogin, Speaker Brady
Nays: Senator Jahan, Senator Gogineni
Abstentions: None
15-2-0
S2015-SB7 passes.

VI. New Business

a) Bylaws Amendment: Accessible Elections Act (S2015-SB12) (Director of Membership Nick Warren, President Custer)

Director of Membership Warren: Hello again. So this does three things; that’s why it’s in three parts. The first part makes the mandatory informational meeting merely informational so that candidates can get the information another way if they cannot attend this meeting. The second
part halves the number of signatures necessary except for the Commons Senators who already only needed to get 25 signatures. The third part says that I have to send an email at least three days prior whereas currently I have to send it exactly three days prior. It would be nice to have some flexibility.

Senator Berlowitz: This is a great bill. That is all.

Senator Toy: I don’t like halving the candidate petitions. I see that you want to make it more accessible and that it can be hard to ask for signatures. But if you can get 100 signatures, you can get 200 signatures.

Senator de Toledo: I like this except for the President. It is such a well-known office as shown from the survey. I think that 200 signatures seems reasonable. Only needing 1/24 of the student body to sign your petition doesn’t seem that substantial.

Senator Jahan: Why is the requirement for SCOCC only 50 when the requirement for President is 100? They’re both representing the same amount of people.

Nick Warren: That’s because before this, the President had to get 200 and the SCOCC had to get 100 signatures.

Co-Chair Bogin: I also think that they should be even.

Nick Warren: I will defer to my President.

President Custer: Sure, if you want it to be 100, then by all means.

Senator Fisher: I’m going to speak candidly, which is something I rarely do. I really love this bill because it is great work by someone I admire and respect. Director of Membership Warren does a tremendous amount of good work for this body, this school, and this world. I took Philosophy of Math this J-Term and there is something to be said about the numbers all being 100 or less. There is something nice and round and beautiful and tranquil about those numbers. To the folks who say it isn’t enough, it isn’t about the number of signatures that you get, but the fact that you go out there and get those sacred scribbles of honor from your peers. 100 folks is a lot of folks. I don’t think that any of us can say that we have 100 friends at this school even using the most liberal definition of friends and these are 100 people who support you to have power in this institution. These numbers are pretty arbitrary and I think it’s petty to argue about whether it should be 100 or 200 signatures.

Senator Toy: I understand that. But I don’t think that 25 signatures is enough. 25 signatures is your freshman hall, you don’t have to go outside of your comfort zone. I would like to make a Friendly Amendment that both Commons and Class Senators should need 50 signatures.

President Custer: If you’re going to run for SGA President or SCOCC then you are prepared for it to be a major time commitment and you’ve thought a lot about it. However, I don’t think is true or needs to be true of Senators. I think that there are people who could make good Senators who only find out the day before the petitions are due. I would prefer the bar to entry to be as
lower as possible for the vast majority of people. In terms of getting out and meeting people, that will happen in the campaigning.

President Custer does not accept Senator Toy’s Friendly Amendment.

Senator Hussein: I want to echo President Custer’s sentiment. I do think that the other numbers should be higher than 100. There is personal investment to go out and vote if someone asks you to sign their petition and you sign it so the more people signing the petitions, the more people will be likely to attend elections. That’s my reasoning for why the numbers should be higher.

Senator Hussein: Motion to end discussion and table S2015-SB12.
Senator Berlowitz: Seconded.
Ayes: President Custer, Senator Jahan, Senator Gerstenschlager, Senator Gogineni, Senator Berlowitz, Senator Toy, 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: Senator de Toledo
16-0-1
Motion passes.

b) Bylaws Amendment: Finance Committee Reform Act (S2015-SB11) (President Custer)

President Custer: This idea for reforms to the Finance Committee comes from the discussions we’ve been having in the Reform Group this year. The Senate is not engaged enough in the budgeting process as a whole. At the end of the year we will listen to a long detailed report about the budget and then next years Senate won’t really deal with it. Our only interaction with the budget after that are the Bi-Weekly reports, which are great, but the Senate doesn’t really have a formal say in the allocations. There is also some tension with the Finance Committee allocating the money and the Senate also seeing itself as responsible for the money. This will hopefully make it a more cordial relationship. So there are two reforms to increase the transparency of what these guys are doing and how they are chosen. Hopefully you read them. One of which is that any allocation over $10,000 has to be approved by the Senate before it is allocated. That’s a difference of magnitude and not something that is normally allocated. People who are elected to represent the student body should have a say in those allocations and they should have to vote and be held accountable for those decisions. The second reform involves appointing new members to the Finance Committee. Every time that the Finance Committee has applications, an ad hoc committee will be formed to choose the new members. It will be four Senators and four Finance Committee members and the President would organize it. Those are the two major changes.

Co-Chair Bogin: I like the bill, but I have something that was brought to my attention by Director of Membership Warren who reads these things like nobody else. How are four members chosen from the Finance Committee if there is no Finance Committee yet?

Senator de Toledo: The Finance Committee is a four-year body. Every year you lose two or three people.
President Custer: It hasn’t been true for a decade that they only sit on the committee for one year. So if you didn’t have four sitting members on the Finance Committee, you would have bigger issues.

Co-Chair Bogin: Is that in the Bylaws?

Nick Warren: So there are two sections that are relevant. One says that at the discretion of the Finance Committee Chair, past members can be appointed without completing an application. There is a separate section of the constitution though which says that all committees are yearly. Would you suggest that it be more explicit that incumbent members carry on from year to year?

President Custer: Yes. Substantially, that shouldn’t change how we vote on this bill though. The idea is that in practice, once you’re on the Finance Committee, you serve for the rest of your time at Middlebury.

Senator Berlowitz: About the first one about any allocation exceeding $10,000. Is that just budgets or also New Money Requests? Are there a lot of them?

Senator de Toledo: 17 over the course of a year would be over $10,000.

Senator Berlowitz: Is there a way to specify that if a Senator is also a Finance Committee member, they cannot serve as one of the Senators on the committee? That’s not really increasing the accountability of the Finance Committee.

President Custer: Sure, I’ll adopt that as a Friendly Amendment and work on the language.

Speaker Brady: This is a PDF so I’m not going to write on it.

Senator Gerstenschlager: I’m wondering how you came up with $10,000. I looked over the last few Bi-weekly Reports and there were no allocations over $10,000. Would you be receptive to lowering that number to $5,000?

President Custer: I looked at the master allocation sheet. It is somewhat difficult to find a number below $10,000 where you have enough budgets coming to the Senate so that they get a stake in the process but not too many so that they’re doing the job of the Finance Committee. $10,000 was the best number we could find.

Senator de Toledo: It would be a tremendous number of budgets. There are few that are over $10,000 and most of those are much more than that like MCAB is around $300,000. If you cut down to $5,000 then Senate meetings wouldn’t talk about anything but the Finance Committee. To do spring budgeting we’re spending 4 days, 8 or 9 hours a day, and these are people who are used to it. That’s why $10,000 makes sense.

Senator Jahan: I’m curious as to why for most committees, the Director of Membership is involved in choosing the new members, but Director of Membership isn’t helping to choose the members of this committee.
President Custer: That’s just an oversight on my part. Largely, his role is just to make sure that it’s a fair process rather than contributing substantively. I’m happy to write something in there about making sure that it’s a fair process. I wouldn’t want to have them on the committee because that gives the President a second vote since the President appoints the Director of Membership.

Co-Chair Bogin: Can someone give me an idea of how long it takes to go through 17 budgets?

Senator de Toledo: It takes us a long time. We meet with the club and go through their budget and we present our rationale to you. You wouldn’t be quibbling over the $15 or $20 charges, that’s something that we work through. You would be arguing over whether or not we should philosophically be giving this much money rather than going through each line item that it takes us a while to deal with.

Treasurer Gratch: For example, the week before spring break, the Crew team had an emergency. At the last minute, a major donor pulled out who had promised a donation to help them purchase new crew shells. They needed $14,000 to purchase new crew shells or they would lose the money they had already put towards it. Usually it’s a job that the Finance Committee does but it would be nice to have Senate input when it’s more of a philosophical argument like that was.

Co-Chair Bogin: So is the Finance Committee in favor of this bill?

Treasurer Gratch: The $10,000 or the bill in general?

President Custer: Finance Committee Chair Aborn supports this bill.

Senator de Toledo: We’ve already selected new members this year. How will it work for budgeting this spring?

President Custer: It would work in terms of individual budgets, so like MCAB should be debated on Senate floor.

Co-Chair Bogin: Dolci will be there.

President Custer: Anything over $10,000 is a significant chunk of student money and elected members of the Senate currently don’t really have a say over it. When you get up to amounts over $10,000 it requires more than technical experience.

Senator Hussein: I wanted to hear Treasurer Gratch’s thoughts on the bill and she already expressed those.

Senator Toy: In that emergency Crew situation, we wouldn’t have had a meeting so what would happen there?

President Custer: I can call emergency Senate meetings if necessary. In the case of Crew, they came in on a Wednesday so we would have been able to vote on it on Sunday.
Treasurer Gratch: Not in this case. They needed the money the next day.

President Custer: Okay well in that case, we could have an emergency Senate meeting to vote on it, but that would happen very rarely.

Senator Fisher: I can be brief, but on that point, this bill came out of the Reform Group where we were trying to get students hyped up about student government. An emergency Senate meeting to vote on something over $10,000, by god that is exciting! That will make people want to get involved. How much fun is this!

Senator Jahan: For the four Finance Committee members on this committee, are you assuming that the Chair of the Finance Committee will be on the committee?

President Custer: I think you can leave that up to the Finance Committee. I don’t think it is necessary to put it in there, but I think it is a good idea for the Chair of the Finance Committee to be on this committee.

Senator Jahan: Is it necessary to be explicit and say that the Chair of the Finance Committee is one of the four members?

Senator Gratch: I think it makes sense.

Senator de Toledo: I would disagree slightly. Having it up to the Finance Committee would allow the Chair to be on the committee if they would like to but they don’t have to be. If the Chair is a senior and decide that the younger people, like the juniors, should be in charge of electing new members, they should be able to do that. You shouldn’t tie the hands of the Chair and say that it has to be the Chair and three other members. It should be at the discretion of the Chair of the Finance Committee.

Senator Berlowitz: Motion to end discussion and table S2015-SB11.
Senator Brook: Seconded.
All aye.
Motion passes.

VII. Adjournment

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