Minutes: Sunday, November 8, 2015

Start Time: 7:01 PM

I. Attendance


Absent: Senator Allis

II. Acceptance of Minutes

President Gratch: Motion to change the line that quotes a conversation with JJ Boggs.
Chief of Staff Brady: Seconded.
Co-chair Chang: Abstention.
Minutes accepted.

III. Announcements

President Gratch: I hope everyone had a great weekend. First, I would like to touch base on Thanksgiving, so we can work out the Thanksgiving meetings.

President Gratch: We will have a meeting before Thanksgiving, but no meetings after.

President Gratch: A few of us attended the faculty meeting that was held in the Kirk Center on Sunday. The two main topics were: AAL Proposal and Pass/Fail legislation. The AAL proposal was not contentious, but people were talking about changing it to have multiple perspectives and to make the “invisible visible.” The other thing they discussed is the pass/fail legislation. This legislation was brought to them three years ago, and it expires on December 31, 2015. The Education Affairs Committee made the proposal and they would like to extend it for three more years. They feel like they were looking at inconclusive data. The conversation was then led to student stress and there were comments made by professors that we shouldn’t have the students and newspaper staff(s) in the room. It went into executive session, and it was quite interesting. I got a few professors emailing me about that. So this is just all FYI and we can talk about this after if any of you want to.

Speaker Gogineni: Does anyone have any other announcements?
Senator Rainey: We had our first year meeting. It went really well and we chose eight young women to represent our committee. However, we have no Brainerd representative(s).

Senator Parikh: It was a very productive meeting and we hope to continue having positive news.

Chief of Staff Brady: We have been working on club sports and I will be sending an email out about funding to a few of the club sports captains.

Speaker Gogineni: I think this is a great opportunity to continue to talk about what you all have been working on.

IV. Old Business and New Business

Senator Chen: I spoke with Patrick Norton, the "CFO" of Midd, concerning the cost of making buildings fully accessible. He said that on a new project, in order to make them fully accessible vs. ADA accessible, it would be 40% more expensive. For the Ridgeline Townhouses, this means a $5million increase in price from the onset. However, at this point in construction, making the townhouses fully accessible means to postpone the project, redesign the building, and re-do the foundations, which would cost a lot more than just $5million.

Senator Bhakta: It wouldn’t be viable for people to be in Ridgeline because of the hill.

Senator Chen: I was just going to add to it. Since May 4, 1977, all buildings in Vermont must be ADA accessible. All of our buildings are ADA accessible, but not fully accessible.

Speaker Gogineni: Any more businesses?

Senator Edwards: At the Cook Commons meeting, we talked about rebranding 51 Main. Many people mentioned not knowing it’s a college-affiliated restaurant. I think advertising it more would help. Along the lines about advertising, the Tuesday $6 Burgers and other deals would draw in more crowds. Also, 51 Main is a stop for Middrides, and I think more people would want to go if they knew that.

Senator Edwards: Many students come up to me about club budgets and they wonder how much each clubs receive. I don't know if this information can be public.

President Gratch: I think it can be more transparent, but it is something we can talk to Treasurer de Toledo about.
Senator Edwards: So there is no go link to know?

President Gratch: No.

Chief of Staff Brady: In terms of 51 Main, a lot of people were confused whether rebranding would make it more of a student space because currently it is towards an older crowd. Maybe we could make it more student-friendly with cheaper food options. Maybe even a sports bar, because we don’t have one in Middlebury.

Senator Rizal: I found myself dreaming about this the other day, but is there a committee that will work towards the rebranding of 51 Main?

Chief of Staff Brady: We can start an ad hoc committee.

Senator Rizal: I would like to propose an ad hoc committee for 51 Main.

    Senator Edwards: Seconded.
    Ad Hoc Committee created.

    The members of the ad hoc committee: Senator Rizal, Senator Bhakta, Senator Han, Senator Parikh, and Senator Boyle

President Gratch: From what I understand, someone approached me and Tiff about 51 Main. It should get more attention, because it is a student space.

Senator Han: What does the greater committee think of this?

Advisor Adams: I was part of the original committee. There was never a draw specifically for students—it was supposed to be for everyone. But I think there needs to be a larger conversation that includes the large stakeholders.

Senator Raber: The most popular idea is to make it a tequila bar.

Senator Rainey: What is 51 Main like?

Senator Raber: It is like a hamburger bar with really affordable food. They also have live music weekly.

Senator Chen: I’m wondering what mixing a student run bar and 51 Main would be like? Maybe turn it into a student run bar so it can be more student-friendly.
Senator Rizal: It's an interesting point. Isn't there a basement in 51 Main that is unused?

Advisor Adams: There is a rented space. I'm not sure about ownership, but it is empty.

Senator Rizal: We can maybe design that area for a student bar.

Senator Singh: People at the Ross Commons meeting told me that the food should be reinvented.

Chief of Staff Brady: From what I understand, Graham may have wanted something on campus. But I don't know what it would mean for it to be in town. The vibe may be different.

Senator Boyle: Something I imagined is that maybe the top floor would be comfort food like loaded mac and cheese while downstairs could be for drinks. This way, it could include both under 21 and over 21 individuals.

Senator Han: We have Marquis and American Flatbread, but I think we can do some research. Maybe we could send out a survey to see how to fill out these social gaps.

Senator von Platen: Maybe we could change it to be like a café or just a cozy place to get off campus to do work.

Chief of Staff Brady: I agree with what Senator Han said. I think something you can all think about is that SGA used to be very good at making research reports. I think setting a timeline would be really great. It is a lot of work, but if you really want to see things getting accomplished, I think this would be a great way.

President Gratch: I have survey reports pertaining to student life that may be helpful, but we could also have a new survey.

Senator Raber: Reshma and I had a meeting two weeks ago about the video we watched. I brought together all the presidents of the cultural orgs. It was not very well attended, but I think a part of it is that they believe SGA has never been that helpful and supportive in the past. I think it is important to start a longer-term relationship with groups on campus. In the last four years, the SGA has never contacted them before, but this is a great time to show them we support them. Also, I have been in contact with the bookstore and pub safe for the adhesive cardholders for phones.

President Gratch: I thought about this over the summer. Maybe it could be a way to promote SGA.
Senator Rainey: Last week I was invited by a fellow student to speak about minority stress. Some of the experiences I was hearing are from concerned freshmen minorities. A lot of them are talking about transferring, class stress from amount of work, and just having a hard time adjusting. We brought this up to the CC and it was a conversation starter.

Co-chair Chang: Stress and racism is definitely going to be a topic the CC will be talking about.

Senator Rainey: Maybe we could have a required course where it is centered on racism and class dynamics. Anything to make it a conversation on campus would be very helpful. I would love to have differing opinions from the SGA rather than just my own to bring to my dean.

Co-chair Chang: With regards to the meeting, we were thinking of proposing to maybe extending the drop deadline. Also, we want to make pass/fail to five weeks rather than the same as add deadline. Would anyone like to write the bill?

Speaker Gogineni: I’ll write it.

Speaker Gogineni: I am going to a meeting with the Student EAC, which is currently working on MiddCourses to pitch the idea of having more detail course descriptions in the course schedule before registration. Currently there is very little input about what the class will be like from the professor and how the professor hopes to teach the class. Having that on that information on the course schedule will allow students to know what they are getting themselves into with registration.

Senator Raber: When I was abroad, I had that. It’d be to have a breakdown of the numbers of midterms or how the class is structured.

Speaker Gogineni: Any more news?

Senator Han: This is completely random, but if anyone was on the SGA two years ago, we passed a bill to have rental skates. I haven’t heard of anything and was wondering if any of you would know about this.

President Gratch: I haven’t heard anything, but you should pursue this.

Senator Edwards: In terms of speed dating, I had a meeting with Q&A recently to get their feedback. The ad hoc committee also met last week. One thing that has been the biggest struggle is to make it inclusive that
it’s not only catering to the heterosexual community. They suggested having maybe two events. To me, that feels bit segregating, but it was suggested by the queer community. Also, someone suggested using bracelets to differentiate preferences. I talked to some super senior febs and they said they’ve wanted an event like this since they got on campus.

Co-chair Chang: Sounds like you have good momentum. Maybe you should also start a conversation on how to include the trans community.

Senator Rizal: Would this be on Battell Beach?

Senator Edwards: Maybe Redfield Lounge, where the language tables are. Great hall might work, but that’s where people go to study. If anyone has suggestions, please let me know.

Senator von Platen: Maybe the Bunker.

V. Adjournment

    Senator Boyle: Motion to adjourn.
    All ayes.

Meeting is adjourned at 7:50 PM.