Minutes: December 6, 2015

Start time:

I. Attendance
Absent: Senator Han

II. Acceptance of Minutes
Senator Sohn: Not all buildings are ADA approved.
Change To: Not all buildings are updated to meet current ADA standards.

Senator Sohn: I am not too clear with this language, but the thing is that there is in the works that we need to put in this resolution specifically.
Change To: There are plans in the works by the administration that we were asked to be removed from this resolution for privacy matters.

Motion to amend Minutes: All, but one abstention (Co-Chair Chang)
Amendments have been accepted

Motion to Accept Minutes: All, but one abstention (Co-Chair Chang)
Minutes have been accepted

III. Committee Report
Treasurer de Toledo: The current budget leeway is about $2000. We have seen 144 budget items this year. Many active clubs and many clubs are coming in. Approximately $54,000 in new money requests. We resolved the sound system problem. The new policy: fund nicer systems in the future, but we will have a set three-year of appreciation for them and it will be an in-house policy. About ten organizations are eligible for this, including Gamut Room and Hep Zoo. This is an incentive to treat the speakers nicer, because you won’t get new ones until after the three years are up. We also worked on the yearbook. We are working for a long-term solution for a scaled down item where it won’t cost around $40,000. We gave them our solid number; it is approximately $10-15,000. Next year, we will have more money for budgeting. As for club sports, we will have a meeting with the leaders of club sports for better ways to fund them very soon.

Speaker Gogineni: What about last year’s yearbook?
Treasurer de Toledo: Our goal is to have it out by this month, but I’m not too sure. Many people (around 155 people responded) have shown interest in working for the future yearbooks though.

Senator Raber: Are there just pictures in last year’s (2015) yearbook?

Treasurer de Toledo: Pictures take up about half of it, and just a collection of pictures for the rest including that of the organizations and sports. Last year we had one student doing all of the work.

Chief of Staff Brady: In 1988, they had the same debate of whether to cut yearbook.

Senator Edwards: For the speakers, is it only for students to use?

Aaron: It’s for those who live in social houses, special interest houses, and organizations that control space like Hepburn Zoo and Gamut Room. We can’t afford to give every organization speakers, so currently we have 10 clubs that are eligible for this.

IV. Old Business

I. Bill F2015-SB3: MiddRides App

Sherif Nada: Hi all, I am the founder and president of Middle Endian. The goal of the club is to create a community between those who are interested in computer science and bridge it with the computer science curriculum. The MiddRides app is our way of addressing the inefficiencies of Middrides. Most of the time, dispatcher doesn’t know where the van is, and a lot of time is wasted for those who are waiting to be picked up. Our app is a solution for this. You can just tap on a location and it gives a notification later on. It is very simplistic because we want to have the easiest way to solve pressing problems. If pubsaf has an announcement to make, they can write it in.

Senator Raber: When will it be implemented?
Sherif: Jterm. We are pretty close to something that works. We just have issues to create an app with Apple’s guidelines.

Senator Sohn: What if someone does not have an Apple product?
Sherif: We have Apple and Android team. Currently, Apple is taking more time. If someone doesn’t have either, we can come up with an app for other types of phones like Windows or they can call pub safe.

Senator Rizal: So there’s no communication between driver and user?
Sherif: Yes, because PubSafe doesn't want that to happen. They don't want the driver to be distracted.

Senator Sohn: On weekends with just the driver, would the driver have to look at the phone?

Sherif: They won't be interacting at all. It would be the dispatcher. The dispatcher would communicate with the driver.

Deputy Chief of Staff Murphy: Is the app free?

Sherif: Yes

Chief of Staff Brady: Does it go in a route?

Sherif: No. They do the route when they can. They will serve people better by deviating from it.

Deputy Chief of Staff Murphy: When someone presses the button, would it be “Carolyn needs to be picked up” or “Student needs to be picked up”?

Sherif: Right now, the way we have it is that “X number of students are waiting at ADK.” I don't think that changes anything about Middrides. It's very tweakable if it becomes a privacy concern.

Senator Rizal: Maybe all the request history can be erased every month, because why would we need the information after a month anyway?

Sherif: Sure. I would rather improve it when I see the problems. This is called premature optimization where we try to foresee problems before implementation—worrying about things at the wrong time.

II. Bill F2015-SB5: Pass/D/Fail and Bill F2015-SB4: Drop Deadline

President Gratch: For background, Jiya and the Academic Committee have been working all fall for this. They created a survey with 700 responses. She will share it with the Faculty Education Affairs Committee.

Speaker Gogineni: Senator Raber and Co-chair Chang, would you want to add in any comments about this bill? Do you want to pass the bill before knowing the results?

Senator Raber: I don’t think the statistics and results are needed to pass the bill.
Co-Chair Chang: I agree. The results are great, but unnecessary to pass the bill. We should pass it this week if they're having a meeting soon.

Speaker Gogineni: Motion to pass the bill?

Senator Raber: Motion to pass the bill
Rizal: Seconded
Pass: All but one abstention (Senator Chen)

Senator Motion to pass the Drop Deadline bill
Pass: All

V. New Business
Julia Desmarais: Hi, I am here to listen to your conversation about accessibility: I just wanted to show support for this subject. I think they are not very visible issues on campus. I want to thank you guys for taking this step. One issue has a lot to do with the admissions brochures Middlebury sends out. A lot of the brochures that go out show no visibility of disabilities. Also, a lot of the materials online are not captioned. Some of the language used sounds very abled and the image we are portraying does not show those who are disabled.

Co-Chair Chang: Thank you for your support and presence here today.

Julia Desmarais: Is there a timeline when this bill will be passed?

Senator Sohn: We brought up the bill originally last week, but we tabled it because we wanted Co-Chair Chang to be part of the conversation. We can update you very soon.

Senator Chen: A few updates about Ross printer—I recently met with Peggy and she's very much for the idea. Currently, Proctor printer is most used outside of library printers. I just need to do more reaching out to get this approved. One of the biggest issues is seen with the Chateau printer where it breaks and does not get maintained. Maybe we can have a paid position to have someone make sure it’s not broken. Two good places for the Ross printer: The classroom across Ross Commons office or the LaForce lounge.

Senator Rizal: I think walking to LaForce would be better.

Senator Chen: It’s just that if it’s more used, we need maintenance.

VI. Announcements
President Gratch: We had the town hall forums twice. I have a conversation request from President Laurie and she said, “Could SGA talk about the question of alliances between white students and students of color?” She created this alliance with inclusivity. 1. What it should look like/do? 2. Ideally, what would it produce? I think she’s just looking for feedback in many places.

President Gratch: She sent out an email saying she’s forming an alliance on inclusivity of student, faculty, and staff for best practice, policy relating to racism and similar issues on campus. President Patton is now trying to figure out what it does and what it produces.

Senator Edwards: I think these conversations are only happening in select groups. Not everyone talks about them, because they’re just very specific groups. I guess an alliance would be a bridge of all these groups, but I’m not sure what it would look like?

Senator Rainey: Is everyone familiar with Emma Watson? She’s an UN Women Goodwill Ambassador and launched the campaign, HeForShe. The organization focuses on gender equality, and it tries to understand the power dynamics and look at how women are treated in society. I think it is a great template for the alliance here at Middlebury. My only contention is that there is a lot of speaking for and speaking over on campus. There is this idea that you can step into someone’s shoes, but I don’t think that’s possible. You can step into my shoes, and understand how I got into my shoes without wanting to know how I got to my struggle.

Senator Schulman: I really admire the directors of Health and Wellness and how they orchestrated their dinners to have conversations on campus. These conversations are very organic, and maybe we can make something where people want to be there and talk about these issues.

Senator Raber: Maybe some type of invitation where both faculty and students can attend.

Senator Allis: Do we know what type of alliances President Patton is looking for?

President Gratch: How would we want to see alliances everyday?

Senator Rainey: There’s a difference between tentative ally and active ally. It would be a great way for tentative allies to stand up.

Co-chair Chang: The first step is with us. WE can start with maybe a senator and cabinet Justtalks session. It would be nice to send a
representative to DMC or WOC meetings and see if there are any bills they want to write. I think we need to start thinking about our own racism within our own space. That way we can grow and work on better ally relationship.

Senator Raber: Rather than calling them to come to our meeting, we should be going to them. I have been speaking to Jennifer Herrera. Maybe we can have SGA attend one of the cluster board meetings during Jterm.

Co-Chair Chang: I really like the idea of going to their meetings, because being a student of color is exhausting in itself. We can work this year to build trust with the larger community—maybe we can have training in here as the first step.

President Gratch: Anything else about everyday alliances?

Senator Rainey: Continuing the trend of having more discussions, regularly having conversations that will make us uncomfortable. By giving a place for minorities to talk about their situation(s) would be helpful.

Co-Chair Chang: Having President Patton give training to faculty/staff/students that’s more than once a year.

Chief of Staff Brady: I think we can fight policy-wide to create diversity.

Co-chair Chang: We could have a college supported group and also have white students talking about racism. Another thing is if SGA takes a progressive stance, because our President herself is so progressive. We should also have FC trained.

Senator Boyle: I really like how Co-Chair Chang is providing concrete suggestions. The ideas can sometimes be too theoretical.

Senator Schulman: Essentially we need to fight apathy. We can have an event where each org can send 1-2 representatives to a conversation.

Speaker Gogineni: I was talking to Colin and we were discussing the town hall meetings. If you see an action taking place in front of you, that’s how you get away from apathy. I think a lot of these meetings devolve into these types of meetings until you see someone do something you feel strongly towards.

Co-Chair Chang: I was at a meeting and a senior leadership person was talking about financial aid. He was then corrected that financial aid is a
happy deficit. This gave me an idea that senior leaderships may need training, also.

Senator Schulman: I had a conversation with a white girl. She’s scared with being thought of as ignorant. How we can fight that?

Senator Edwards: I agree. I had so many questions I wanted to ask at the town hall meeting but I didn’t want to be seen as an ignorant white girl.

Senator Raber: The fact that people were turned away means that it is important for people. A lot of people who attended that meeting heard opinions they’ve never heard before.

Senator Singh: People don’t voice their opinions that much. I have had so many conversations with people in small groups. What I’ve seen is people go to these conversations but they don’t speak up because they think they’re not saying the right thing.

Senator Rizal: We were talking about being afraid to ask questions. Not only are they sensitive topics, but also if someone says one word wrong, people would stand up and tell them to say it correctly.

Senator Sohn: Going off of smaller groups setting—maybe we can have something similar to architecture tables but for diversity conversations.

President Gratch: Carolyn and I were talking about this the other day. Maybe we can mark a table where it can be similar to a scaled down version of Dinner with Strangers. There can be cards with questions or topics on them that can be conversation starters.

Deputy Chief of Staff Gratch: A place you can go without pressure. Everyone is there for the same reason.

Senator Rainey: We need to encourage minorities to speak up. Just joining cultural organizations and talking to friends who are minorities is not enough. There is a real fear in our students.

Senator Edwards: Maybe we can have future events where they write things on a card and the speaker will read them out loud.

Senator Allis: I agree we do need training, but I think more people needs to speak about this topic—more qualified people and not just the SGA.

Senator Edwards: To give an update about speed dating: Speed dating succeeded my expectations. Over 100 people showed up and we had to turn away 20 people. There was so much going on. I saw quite a few
people exchanging numbers. It was heavy in terms of freshmen and sophomore but there were super senior febs there also. I have heard nothing but positive results. I was also worried it’d be a female dominated dynamic, but there may have even been more guys there. Good food and music—about $140 spent total, which includes poster printing. I went out afterwards and people were still talking about it. One thing that stuck out to me was when a group of rugby players came up to me and told me they have huge respect for the event. They felt it was a great way to meet other people besides Atwater. This is a good direction for SGA to potentially have events that targets the problems within our community directly.

List of things to consider:
- Become regular event. I won’t be here for Jterm, but someone else can be in charge of it. I can host in the Spring term.
- Larger venue. It was extremely loud.
- Microphone would have been nice or a gong.
- Maybe list of random questions that are below the surface level.
- People recommended a Valentine’s Day event.
- Google survey to create more feedback
- Thank you everyone for helping out

Senator Chen: I think the idea of targeting the upperclassmen would be really interesting.

Senator Rizal: Some people came to see. It tells us that people are curious. They want to hear the first round of feedback. Next time, we’ll have more people come because of this.

Chief of Staff Brady: Did you hear anything from the LGBTQ community?

Senator Rizal: We didn’t even think about the preferences. No sexual preference is a good way to go.

Senator Boyle: I tried to start the rental rec equipments. Apparently they just never had it before.

Chief of Staff Brady: You should talk to Lily about this and she can forward this onto Facebook.

Senator Boyle: It’s possible to have people borrow equipment. For example, squash rackets to practice with for those who don’t know how to play squash.
Senator Chen: What about skates?
Senator Boyle: I spoke with the person in charge of sports facilities and saw some, but didn't see enough for rental.

Senator Rizal: The Ping Pong club recently lost a table. You should email the president of the Ping Pong club if you find it or know where it is.

VII. Adjournment
   Motion to adjourn: All

Ended: 8:50 PM