SGA Minutes January 17, 2016

I. Attendance

Senator Rainey arrived 12 minutes late.

II. Acceptance of Minutes

Senator Gogineni: I hope everyone read last meeting’s minutes. Is there a motion to amend last week’s minutes? Motion to accept last week’s minutes?

Motion to accept last meeting’s minutes.

Senator Gogineni: Minutes have been passed.

III. Announcements

Proxy Fisher: President Gratch sent me an email with announcements. She first wants to welcome the new chief of staff, Abbie Spector- she will do a fantastic job. We would also like to welcome our new secretary, Hannah Street, and our new campus correspondent, Degrabbio.

Moving on, reform passed on a faculty AAL vote. There are six categories, President Gratch wanted me to go over them.

South and South East Asia/Pacific
North Asia
Middle East and North Africa
Sub-Saharan Africa
Europe
Comparative categories exist as a requirement.

The pass/D/fail also passed. President Gratch is very excited about that.

Senator Gogineni: I don’t currently have updates. I would like to ask our guest, Maryam Mahboob, to talk about the mac-truck.

Maryam Mahboob: Some of you have read the article about the macaroni truck. I just raised 200,000 on MiddStart. This is not enough to bring the truck over, but I’ll provide background and ways for the SGA to get involved. I think it would be important to have support. I started this idea at MiddCore in Lake Tahoe last summer. The object of the workshop was to design food that made it easier for a partner to enjoy eating their favorite food. I realize there’s a need on campus for late night food options. I was wondering what the SGA thought of this idea and ways I could garner support and fundraise the rest of the money. The mac truck is officially
registered as a business. It is registered as a student vendor on campus but essentially all the truck’s revenue and expenses come from different sources. It is a social enterprise. It’s first aim is to provide a social service. As of now, I’m not anticipating a for-profit business. I am hoping to hire students and hopefully raise student employment and serve wholesome local food.

Senator Schulman: Can you reemphasize how it’s not for profit?

Maryam Mahboob: Right now how it’s built is that the price points are at their lowest for the truck to sustain itself.

Senator Singh: I think this is a wonderful idea. If you could send us a link to the page for the donation, I’ll send it out to Ross Commons.

Maryam Mahboob: If you were interested in forwarding it to the Commons that would be great. I was thinking sports teams could get together and fundraise by making deliveries.

Senator Gogineni: Right now, with changes in retail food, they got rid of the option for sports teams. So how would people be able to work through the truck?

Maryam Mahboob: This isn’t running under dining services. It is its own entity – student run ventures. We have a lot of flexibility for the structure of the mac-truck.

Senator Chen: I think this is a great idea. We’ve seen what’s gone on with the Gamut room and its late night options. Could you give us a clarification for where in the process you are?

Maryam Mahboob: Thanks for bringing that up. Initially I only raised 2,000 but unfortunately the people renting the food truck, PCC, told me it needs some renovations. This requires money and PCC does not have the funds. We can raise enough to build/renovate the food truck or I can also look into other options.

Senator Chen: How extensive are the renovations?

Maryam Mahboob: It needs a paint job inside and outside, and new piping for wintertime usage.

Senator Boyle: Do you have a price estimate for how much?

Maryam Mahboob: I don’t have an estimate now but can do research and send that information to you.

Senator Schulman: I have a comment from Senator Toy.

Senator Toy: I suggest we use student emails to see how much interest there would be.

Maryam Mahboob: That would be an easier way for fundraising. If you would like this as something to back, I can send the MiddStart link. I can only ask for 2,000 but I can technically raise more. We could have an informal fundraising goal as well.
Senator Han: Do you see this as more of a short term project or a long term investment? This may determine whether renting or buying a truck would make more sense.

Maryam Mahboob: I think for me the hope is that once the truck has fixed costs and is established, it will be sustainable in itself. Of course this might take time and knowledge of which days of the week it’s needed more. There’s a lot of exploration that needs to happen but my hope is that it becomes a staple on campus.

Senator Chen: It seems that this is a big project and it’s been in the works. Is there already a group of people behind it?

Maryam Mahboob: I initially garnered support from MiddCore. Right now, I’m working with Sara Kierns at VT Small Business. I also have a student team, which are mostly friends, who are willing to help out. I have also had people who were interested approach me.

*What is SGA’s role in this? Email, publicity etc.?*

Maryam Mahboob: I was hoping funding down the road. I was thinking maybe forwarding to your respective groups, helping with fundraising. I was also hoping to hear, as the SGA, what you can do.

Senator Gogineni: Generally speaking, I think it’s easier if you bring us a proposal with a list of things you would want us to do and we can discuss/choose things from that list that we would like to do. Does anyone have any other suggestions?

Proxy Fisher: If you want funding it would be helpful to know exactly how much you need but if members wanted to send emails out that’s more than ok.

Maryam Mahboob: I had spoken to Ilana and she said I could just come and present the idea.

Senator Gogineni: If you want to send us a follow-up email, I think that would be helpful.

Senator Rainey: I’m interested in this. Where could they fund this if they’re interested?

Maryam Mahboob: Right now, go/middstart. It’s the first link on the page or the “Mac-Truck at Midd” Facebook page. Those are the two ways right now. I’m open to other ways as well.

Senator Chang: Thanks for coming in. I think coming back to us for funding is great. If you want something to happen right after this meeting, I think writing a blurb and sending it to Abbie, who can forward it to us would work.

Maryam Mahboob: Just to get an idea who would be willing?

(~6 people raised hands)
Senator Han: What kind of support are you looking at?

Maryam Mahboob: Fundraising is at the top of list, then people helping on the truck, overseeing different aspects of the business.

Senator Rainey: Could you possibly send a description to sga@midd, that we could send out?

Maryam Mahboob: I can do that. I’ll send fundraising breakdowns as well.

Proxy Johansen: If you’re assembling a team, would you want people volunteering?

Maryam Mahboob: I think initially having volunteers as opposed to paid students.

Proxy Johansen: You could have it in process and then transition it to a job.

Maryam Mahboob: Another thing to bring up. Workshop the idea/test out the idea using the Gamut room and making deliveries of mac and cheese would be good way of testing it. That way I could get an idea of price points and what students are looking for.

Proxy Johansen: I’m in Midd Entrepreneurs – their mentality is just do it. Maybe make mac and cheese and park outside Atwater on a Friday night and see what happens!

Senator Boyle: On the MiddStart page you mentioned where this would be. Is your idea that sales are foot traffic between Atwater, Ridgeline etc. or a delivery service?

Maryam Mahboob: The truck is not going to move around campus. Right now I’m hoping it stays in one place and people walk past or can call in from rooms. It’s a two-part system.

Senator Gogenini: Great! Thank you so much for coming in! If you want to send a blurb to us, we’ll send it out.

IV. Old Business

Senator Gogenini: In terms of old business: Are there any updates on what you’ve been working on?

Senator Rainey: I’m not sure if people are familiar but from my understanding at the end of a semester it’s asked we give custodians a tip. And I think this is great however, I was talking to dining staff, who are also aware that tips are given to custodians but not to them. I wanted to make a case and see if this would be something worth implementing because it seemed to be a little unequal from a faculty stand point.

Senator Gogenini: Can we come back to this? I’d love to get through old business first.

Senator Chang: For the SGA bills we passed (add drop deadline), there was uncertainty about who was supposed to bring that. I think it’s supposed to be the president and chief of staffs but
Gia from EAC brought it to Andy Lloyd. They only included one part of bill where the only difference is the in-book deadline was moved from two weeks to four weeks instead of the 8 weeks we said. Drop deadline from 5-8 weeks invoke deadline from .

**What are the deadlines now?**

Senator Chang: Pass/D/Fail in-vote deadline has been moved to four weeks and drop deadline is the same, which is 5.

Senator Gogenini: Which doesn’t really make that much sense.

Senator Chang: I think generally it doesn’t reduce stress that much to extend the deadline. So if the president wanted to pursue really pushing these through and saying that the Dean supported this, which really says a lot. On a different note, AAL passed which is terrific. All of the work of Gia, Olen etc. So if the SGA wanted to give a shout out to Midd Included, that would be great. Acknowledge the student work that has gone into this. It’s a form of violence to take ideas and not give credit to those who came up with them.

**Is Midd Included an organization?**

Senator Chang: Yes, the past few years. Also on AAL reform – she’s upset that Oceania does not get their own. Critical perspectives was changed. It compares lenses of race, gender, class sexuality. There’s an SGA working group thinking about something similar so I’m not as worried. There was a change from the Midd Included proposal of North America and Latin America and Caribbean together. And then North America and Latin America together. Troubling language on professor’s part of putting the Americas together. To me the answer is moving from a continental to a cultural perspective. Another argument that was used is that they shared the same indigenous peoples. Another argument, that ignores the differences in power dynamics, is that 50% of the US population will be of Latino origin, so I didn’t find that convincing either. My goal is that in ten years we won’t have these requirements anymore. It’s really not a good way of comparing cultures etc. So it’s a stopgap but ultimately the purpose is to acknowledge student identities but to me it feels like my identity was not being recognized because anyone that takes a class on the US doesn’t have to take anything on Latin America. I do think it was really scary to me that most people were against the Americas requirement and this small group of professors with weird arguments convinced the faculty to vote for this. It was concerning that not everyone understood this. It was “Murrydryish” thinking, I’m only referring to this one point.

Proxy Fisher: Nothing I’m saying represents President Gratch’s views. You did invoke my advisor’s name and that you’ve heard him speak. When I hear you say things like people weren’t acknowledged and it’s a type of violence. I hear your comments. A lot of things I believe in people disagree with and that’s fine but I get the feeling that it’s fundamentally wrong that people disagree with you. I think that that’s harmful to what we’re engaged in here in a liberal arts school and I’m not trying to say your ideas are bad but I hear a tone that indicates that you’re so sure you’ve gotten this all figured out and anyone disagrees with are, they’re “Murrydryish” and old and that just really concerns me for what the future of education looks like and it’s
important that I say this, especially because we’re not really talking to a specific point. I’m not trying to attack you, I’m just saying how I do feel and think.

Senator Gogenini: I don’t know if you want to respond but we do have to limit discussion, but did you want to respond? It’s ok if you don’t.

Senator Chang: Is there anyone else who would like to say something on my behalf?

Senator Gogenini: So I’m going to say we should move onto other old business. Anyone else?

Senator Gogenini: Ok let’s move onto new business.

V. New Business

Chief-of-Staff Spector: As some of you might know, we have a working group about how McCullough can be a new space for students. I’m a part of the working group but I’ll be there and President Gratch asked me to reach out to you about ideas on how to get this conversation started. The first thing we’re doing is gathering info about other student centers at different colleges - what works and what doesn’t. We also want to send out a questionnaire about why students use McCullough and why they might use it more. If anyone has ideas about how we can change McCullough - the architecture/what’s in it. Make it more inclusive and used. Suggestions about what to put on the survey would be great as well.

Senator Gogenini: To start us off, is there anything about changing the physical space?

Chief-of-Staff Spector. There has been talk about knocking down some of the walls/offices and making it more of a community space. We’re looking for architectural input in the future. These are not really short terms changes. They’ve also been thinking about bringing the bookstore to McCullough. Ideas like that could be recommended.

Senator Toy: I would like to know what results are expected to come out of this. If Doug is in the room, he was on this board two years ago.

Chief-of-Staff Spector: I’m not totally sure, if Doug you know more. In terms of short term – the goal is to get more students coming through McCullough. We want to make it a space where people want to come through. The long-term goal would be to change the building. I can look into things discussed two years ago.

Senator Boyle: Are you looking for our thoughts that the group that is forming or what we want to see them pursue?

Chief-of-Staff Spector: Things we want to pursue. So far we have general goals and we’re looking at other schools as models. In addition, we’re thinking about sending out a survey.

Senator Boyle: One observation I’ve had is that it’s not 24 hours. Getting kicked out of the grille at 2 am. It’s interesting that we don’t have a non-study 24-hour space on campus.
Senator Gogenini: Why it’s closed down is that it is a space that has to be monitored because alcohol/kegs are stored there. So its more of a security issue and that’s why you can’t stay in the Grille/Crossroads for 24 hours.

Senator Rainey: Is there a way to keep people out of those areas?

Senator Gogenini: McCullough should still be open.

Senator Rainey: No, It’s locked. I’ve wanted to come use vending machines but doors are all locked around 2 am. Its not 24 hours for that which is odd.

Senator Singh: Just a suggestion, if McCullough does become 24 hours, we could have more comfortable places to sit. Maybe, the area in front of Wilson hall? We could make it more comfortable.

Chief-of-Staff Spector: Great idea! We were also thinking about turning the crest room into more of a comfortable space. The board of trustees uses it once a year which is why it’s not but we’re ultimately trying to change that. Or knocking down the area downstairs with offices.

Senator Schulman: I have a comment. I think it might be hard to institute areas of big community here – especially since dining halls already serve that purpose to an extent. I’m not saying we shouldn’t change McCullough, but just to keep in mind our dining halls seem to be the strong hold of our community.

Senator Gogenini: Have you tried to compare the role that the student center should play verses Anderson freeman center? AFC is a smaller space. Maybe we could make McCullough more personalized. I’ve heard that at AFC they have snacks and people are always welcome. It’s a different environment which is not an environment that exists here.

Senator Rainey: It helps that Carr Hall and AFC actually have events there after hours. It would help to have school sponsored weekly/biweekly events here that are more social engagements. This would attract students and would definitely help with making it more homey.

Senator Sohn: There is another lounge space on the third floor. Reconstructing that?

Chief-of-Staff Spector: Have any of you spent time there?

Proxy Fisher: I just feel like I’m not allowed up there.

Senator Boyle: McCullough is claustrophobic without being cozy. Who built this? I feel like you get lost and I don’t understand how the space works. I think the problem is fundamentally architectural.

Senator Rainey: I don’t like what’s behind the student bar in Crossroads. Where’s the light? It’s dusty, furniture is old, and it doesn’t vibe well. I don’t see people in there. Opening that area a
lot more - taking out those big doors and expanding it a bit more. I want everything to be a little bit more free flowing.

Senator Parikh: Every entrance feels like a back door or side door. There’s no central front door. If we choose one of the doors and those could be the front doors, we could make the pathway from there to the grille etc. feel like more of a main entryway.

Senator Sohn: Do you want it to be more of a student social center or more of a study area or both?

Chief-of-Staff Specter: We want it to be an area where students want to come. Whether it’s socially or for study.

Senator Gogenini: I think based on comments Wilson hall is the biggest room in this building. It has a very obvious purpose but is only utilized over the weekends etc. It’s not used at all during the week. Maybe focus on that?

Senator Rainey: When is the survey going out?

Chief-of-Staff Specter: Not sure. We just had our first meeting on Wednesday but we’re still constructing the survey. If you come up with ideas, feel free to email me or the SGA account.

Senator Rainey: Would you like us to talk to our constituency now or wait for the survey?

Chief-of-Staff Specter: I’ll check in again on Wednesday.

Senator Gogenini: Any last comments?

Senator Gogenini: In that case, let’s move on to other new business. Senator Rainey, your comment on bonuses?

Senator Rainey: Two things, there’s a disconnect between the staff. The custodial team gets a tip at the end of the semester from students for all of their hard work. It’s an everyday job that demands work, time and energy. This is known by the dining staff and they came to me and started a dialogue. They were perplexed why they don’t have the same system when their work requires the same about of time, energy etc. Is it our role to promote quality between staff? It seems to be an issue in dining services especially since we’re asking them to do so much more for students. I think if we could ask students to show appreciation for them in one way or another it could be good.

Senator Bhakta: I think the issue is dining services hires people that work in the cafeteria whereas the commons hires custodial.

Senator Chang: I think this is a great issue. The larger issue is that other staff do get holiday bonuses from the school and custodial needs to rely on student generosity. Dining services does not receive anything. Why is custodial and dining services not getting holiday bonuses?
Senator Rainey: If they were given the same holiday bonuses as other faculty, this would not be an issue. Maybe we can address this in the form of a resolution? I’m happy to be a part of it.

Senator Sohn: Thanks for bringing this up! I had a thought last semester, my other friend in college had a huge poster area outside of the dining halls. Students could write a quick note on a poster thanking dining services. This is something students should be involved in. As students, we might not have the funds to give thanks in a monetary way, but maybe saying thank you with words would work.

Senator Rainey: I’m glad you mentioned that. I think the reason they’re upset is they don’t feel appreciated by students. The custodial team has a monetary appreciation from students. We continue to demand more from dining services, especially with the new 10 o’clock Ross, but we are not showing appreciation back. This is an immediate problem.

Proxy Fisher: I think this is a logistical issue. We separate custodial by commons/res-life. Dining halls don’t exactly match up that way. Individual dining staff have mentioned that things are tough and that makes me sad about how we choose to spend our money. Hopefully a discussion about the living wage comes here too and we can talk about the lives that our staff people lead. What do we want them to be able to do?

Proxy Johansen: For an immediate fix – it’s different but you do recognize dining staff. Maybe if we had little boxes that had their pictures on them. This could also encourage staff to be nicer. I would give the guy at Ross I know a little money.

It’s a pool for custodial.

Senator Boyle: This is a good discussion to have. I’m excited to hear the living wage discussion at Community Council. I think it’s ridiculous we need to help workers to have just wages and we are not using money the college has. I think energy should be focused on people actually meeting the dining hall staff. I don’t know the names of the staff. Maybe we could have pictures, names, a blurb on where I’m from, how long I’ve been at Midd etc. I think humanization goes a long way on how people treat each other.

Senator Gogenini: This is the last comment for the sake of time. And then we can return to Senator Rainey.

Senator Sohn: I wanted to emphasize what Senator Boyle and Proxy Johansen said. I like the picture idea. I know custodial has their pictures up in living spaces. Having photos of dining staff would be good.

Senator Rainey: I would love to somehow spearhead a resolution so that our staff are actually feeling appreciation from students. My second order of new business is that we don’t have a 24-hour space. It really bothers me that the library is not a 24-hour space. I understand there needs to be someone there. But there are institutions that have 24-hour spaces. I hear excuses all the time I trying to dissuade students from stressing out. But does it really? I think it would ease the process of getting the night done if it was a 24-hour space. I know the café is open but you don’t
have access to library resources. I wanted to bring that to the table. I would be interested in having the SGA conduct a survey to get the popular opinion on this.

Senator Schulman: I would also be interested in the survey. I personally think that as a tour guide it’s a point of pride in that our institution does not necessarily support the 24 hours. When I hear the library is closing I try to bust out my work and helps me from staying up very late.

Proxy Fisher: This is an important thing for me. I grew up in a town where nothing closes. I said the same thing as a tour guide. The 24-hour thing and seeing the other people with a 24-hour lifestyle. I think Senator Schulman is getting at something. It’s something about the ethos of the institution. Is this a place where we want to see people working at 4 in the morning? I think it has a lot to do with the message we’re sending.

Proxy Johansen: I think every night seeing people staying up with you is great. I think there’s way too much work but of course that’s a completely different and larger issue. Having people there with you helps, you’re not alone. I pull all-nighters a lot and I think it’s an important point.

Senator Gogineni: Is there a place to print 24 hours?

Senator Boyle: Chateau.

Senator Gogineni: I think a lot of places close up. Maybe not a place that encourages late night work but maybe places where you can find resources like a printer.

Senator Sohn: I was wondering- every living space has a lounge study area. If we do decide to go ahead and use a survey, what percentage uses those as a study area/social area? I think it depends but maybe using that in the survey helps.

Senator Rainey: I heard pride, I heard not encouraging people to stay up. I don’t personally think that having the library close is dissuading people to stay up. I think that really the library being closed only serves as an obstacle. At least in Battell, not all the rooms are being used as study spaces. Especially because social spaces outside do not have resources like printers to help you get work done. I hope everyone will think about this and I will bring it to the table as a bill/resolution.

Senator Chen: One thing I’m curious about is how that might go hand in hand with the McCullough group? Its probably not the point of a social center to be 24 hours but maybe the Mitchell green space could have printers etc. What resources do you need at 3 am?

Senator Rainey: I think both. Books and different things. There have been times where I wish I had access to things in the library whether they are materials etc. Things the library has that normal students wouldn’t.

Senator Von Platen: I think it boils down to better time management. I think maybe planning the day a little better. Maybe we don’t need a 24-hour space.
Senator Gogineni: Did you just want to end the discussion here?

Senator Rainey: These are all great points. But you can’t control habits that people have. You can only change the institution to become conducive. I want everyone to think about this. Official SGA poll to hear student opinion. What Laurie Patton said: we need to change and evolve.

Senator Gogineni: Is there any other new business or should we save it for next weeks meeting, considering time?

VI. Adjournment

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of adjourning. Thank you for coming- meeting adjourned.

Meeting ended 8:17 pm.