I. Attendance


Members Absent: Senator Han, Senator Rainey was 6 minutes late,

II. Acceptance of Minutes

Senator Gogineni: Welcome back! I hope everyone had a great February Break. Motion to amend or accept last week’s minutes?

Senator Sohn: Motion to accept?

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of accepting last meeting’s minutes? Minutes have been passed.

III. Announcements

President Gratch: I hope everyone had a good February break. We’re going to start with Larson since he’s here now. He can explain why he’s here.

Larson Lovdal: Hi everyone, my name is Larson Lovdal. We came around to you guys last year and requested money for a cabin in memory of a student who passed away in 2010. The cabin is planned to be on the Rikert Trail Network. It’s there for student use and for the larger college community as a whole. We also hope to have it serve as a warming hut for the Rikert trail network. You gave us $40,000 last year and recently gave us a challenge to get started on the project. Feb 8th was the deadline for fundraising and had a goal of $20,000. We have raised $43,000. The family and friend support has been remarkable. Any extra money following construction will be set aside to support maintenance of the cabin. I’ll be in touch with the treasurer regarding that. We’re dong some prep work this spring but we cant do any work when it’s muddy unfortunately. We want students to be involved as well. The real construction is set for next fall where students can be involved. Thank you very much and thank you for the challenge.

President Gratch: Congratulations Larson. Now Zak will make an announcement about elections.

Zak: Yes, there’s an election this week. It’s from noon on Thursday to noon on Friday. One is a Wonnacott election. We’re also electing two Feb senators. I encourage people to vote or to run. The items required to run are due Tuesday afternoon.

President Gratch: Thanks Zak. The only other announcement is an update on 10 o’clock Ross. We’re in the process of transitioning to full dining. Hopefully it will become an incorporated part
of dining and not an ongoing responsibility of the SGA. We’re working on getting a longer list of people to help out and engaging dining services more.

Senator Singh: Does this mean there will be hot foods?

President Gratch: Probably not. I’ve gotten word from dining that the change in weekend hours would allow for more flexibility for 10 o’clock Ross but I have not heard from them regarding this yet. I’m not going to give up on the hot food though. Do we have an update from the Finance Committee?

Aaron: I was told the meeting was too busy this week but I can make a brief announcement. We are doing applications for the spring. We need four senators, four finance committee members and President Gratch to review applications. I’m not going to take part in this round – I’m allowing new leadership to make the decisions. The leader of the that process is now Tavic Francis. Our goal is to get the application out this week and have new members selected by the first week in March. In terms of time commitment: we review normally around 40 applications in the spring for two positions. This year we’re doing more outreach to cluster managers and heads of student organizations to meet students that are not necessarily reading the all student emails. We interview 5-10 people before making our final decision. We probably will have 2-3 meetings. We should see how many people are interested and if there are more than 4 senators interested we could take a vote.

President Gratch: And this is for selecting people to be on finance committee correct?

Aaron: Correct.

Senator Sohn: Can you clarify the time commitment?

Aaron: I imagine we will have one meeting where we discuss all applicants and then two sessions of interviews. This does mean that you need to have the 40 applications read before that first meeting. Unfortunately, those sessions are early in the morning because that’s generally the time everyone is available. I think it’s an important job especially given the structure of the student government.

Senator Gogineni: Could we maybe see a show of hands as to who’s interested?

(Senator Rainey, Senator Sohn, Senator Parikh, Senator Edwards)

Aaron: Ok. Those interested should send an email to sgafc@middlebury.edu

Senator Gogineni: Once Aaron presents the mid-year update, I’m hoping to lead a discussion on how we want to allocate the budget. Let me know if you have thoughts/comments on things that should be included in that discussion.

President Gratch: Welcome back Senator Toy and welcome back Senator Edwards.
Senator Gogineni: Ok so a clarification of voting procedure. This was a preface that should have been made a while ago. What you can and cannot do in the senate. Robert’s rules of order – even though they’re tedious at times are necessary because we want everyone’s voices to be heard. I want to clarify that if there is a discussion where you info you can table a discussion. Then once you have those facts you are in a better position to vote etc. Similar to what we did last meeting you can choose to limit a discussion. You can choose to motion to vote. Then you vote on voting. We haven’t had long extensive discussion so we haven’t really used this but if you need something you can defer to these options. The second point is voting procedure. We haven’t quite understood what it means to have a majority vote present. Correct me if I’m wrong Doug, but what it means to have a simple majority: we need to have at least half the people present. We have an 18-member Senate so in order for something to pass we need at least 10 people to vote for it. Abstentions don’t count as someone voting anymore. So say there are 3 abstentions, then 8 people are required to vote for it to pass.

Doug: The way the constitution was amended it's the majority of people that are present. Abstention means that you’re not voting. It creates a system where you’re reducing the number of people you need to vote for something.

Senator Gogineni: So it is 8 people.

Doug: So first you need quorum to vote. If you have a smaller number than full. Then the vote has to come from those that are present. As long as you still have quorum you can vote or pass legislation. When you have more people than you need, say there are 12 people here, the majority of people here are what you need. So if you abstain you still need 7 to pass.

Senator Gogineni: So if there are 18 people here, and 3 abstentions. You still need 10 people to constitute a majority. Abstaining means that you don’t have enough facts or you actually are really torn by the facts put in front of you. Moving forward we want to make sure that is clear. Any questions? Ok, moving onto old business.

Senator Rainey: As the author of the bill I would like to table that discussion to a future date and maybe swap out for other old business. Can I do that?

Senator Gogineni: How I have been doing the new business is actually incorrect. Usually if you want to introduce new business you put it in the announcements. You need something physically written down for it to be discussed as new business. If you want to bring a new topic up it has to happen to announcements.

Senator Rainey: So can we stay in announcements? Is that possible?

Senator Gogineni: That’s up to you, so yes.

Senator Rainey: I would like to have a discussion of the resolution and bill that were passed in last weeks meeting. And talk about the impact of what was passed and the delivery of both statements not only from President Patton but our statement as well. I wanted to give the floor to President Gratch to talk about the presentation of the bill because there are some issues that
leaders of cultural organizations have expressed to me in terms of the presentation of the bill. The bill that we were voted on was as an attachment and not the actual email. There was a preface to the bill which may have changed the language of the bill. A lot of the students of color didn’t even look at the statement. They thought it was ironic that we were talking about bringing together voices but the fact that it was an attachment essentially put aside those voices. The delay of the email after the bill was passed may have factored into the writing of the preface. Without quoting people incorrectly, I just wanted to voice some general dissatisfaction with the presentation of the bill not the bill itself but the presentation. I wanted to give you the opportunity to explain.

President Gratch: After our first meeting regarding the statement I spoke with members of the BSU board – what they conveyed was that this was inappropriate to send out to the student body. Because in my mind we were looking for a representative group, especially a black group on campus, that was where I would defer. So the decision to send it in the context of other discussions we are having stemmed from them telling me it was inappropriate to send it as it stood. Just so we can have a common vocab to talk about it: we didn’t really pass a bill. In line with what Senator Gogineni was saying about following the protocols for when things get confusing. We didn’t have any specifications in the language of the bill as to how/when it would be sent out. After we passed it I talked with a number of people about the options in how to send it and that’s what we came up with and that’s the context for my decision.

Senator Rainey: I think that with talking with this group after the bill was passed, it would have been appropriate to include the author of the bill, which was me. It would have also been appropriate to include cultural orgs. You are correct there’s no specification in the bill as to how it should be sent out but in the language of the preface, a lot of the discontent came from the fact that the preface did not address the issue/voices that we were trying to have heard in passing the bill. We felt the preface conflated a lot of the issues that are valid issues but derailed the conversation about what was meant to be had, a conversation about black students. I think it should have been appropriate to include me in that discussion. I think with this statement we may have done more damage than good.

President Gratch: It was sent under by name.

Senator Rainey: Yes, but people think of it as the SGA. I wish that more people were included, the people that authored it, the cultural orgs. You are correct there’s no specification in the bill as to how it should be sent out but in the language of the preface, a lot of the discontent came from the fact that the preface did not address the issue/voices that we were trying to have heard in passing the bill. We felt the preface conflated a lot of the issues that are valid issues but derailed the conversation about what was meant to be had, a conversation about black students. I think it should have been appropriate to include me in that discussion. I think with this statement we may have done more damage than good.

President Gratch: I think moving forward the key is following what Senator Gogineni said and making sure we have all the specifications laid out.

Baishakhi Taylor: Hi everyone! I just wanted to introduce myself: my names Baishakhi Taylor and I am the new Dean of Students here at Middlebury, and see how the senate works. But again I want to be mindful of your time and make this quick. It would be really helpful as a new
member of the community, that if there was some conflict regarding BSU supporting or BSU not supporting the bill, to have a personal meeting with them. I think it would be helpful in a separate meeting to hear from the cultural orgs regarding their opinions and the emails they sent etc.

Senator Rainey: The boards of the cultural orgs were relevant to the bill I was passing so I reached out to them while designing the bill.

Baishakhi Taylor: So it would be really helpful to have that. Again I don’t want to take up time but I think it would be very helpful. As a new person I think it would be helpful to have a separate conversation with those cultural organizations.

Senator Rainey: Just as clarification the BSU did not think it was appropriate for the SGA to send the statement out to all students: President Gratch was completely right on that front. They did think it was appropriate for the administration to send out an email however. But BSU is not representative of the entire black community. There were other organizations that supported the statement so I think that because BSU has black in their name doesn’t necessarily mean they are representative of the entire African American body here. There is diversity in that community that exists in the other cultural orgs. In terms of what I’m voicing: it is that there is discontent among all cultural orgs, excluding UMOJA, which I haven’t talked to. Everyone voiced discontent in some way in how the statement was presented so I was just curious in terms of how we are going to start communicating more with cultural orgs, having monthly meetings, having a position in SGA for that. So that we can explain through email/presentation of emails. I think it would benefit all of the SGA.

Senator Gogineni: Let’s open it up to discussion.

Senator Boyle: I was curious, and Co-chair Chang you don’t have to answer if you don’t want. There was, via Facebook, a feeling that the language of the bill had coded anti-black language and I was curious if you were talking about the forward or the preface.

Co-Chair Chang: The preface.

Senator Sohn: I’m thinking about the brainstorming meeting we had and how it would be relevant to reengage with those ideas if we can.

President Gratch: Yes, I’m meeting Michael Garel thing coming week. And for all of you who were at the breakfast meeting with President Patton, we’re thinking about a retreat where we can dedicate ourselves to those ideas.

Senator Gogineni: If anyone has any new suggestions feel free to bring them up.

Senator Rainey: In response to the aftermath of the statement. After hearing what some members of the community which the statement was meant to support, had to say about it. Maybe an explanation/transparency of the statement with an apology to the cultural orgs would go a long
way. I think it would be very restorative to the sentiment of what is going on right now. DMC sent a statement and I’m sure more will be coming soon. That would be my suggestion.

Senator Gogineni: Does anyone have any thoughts?

Senator Raber: I think that it’s disappointing that a statement that was so well intentioned has been taken in this way. What could have been positive is now negative. I don’t know if an email is the best route. If wouldn’t have to be a public email – just to the presidents of those orgs. Validating those concerns and understanding that a mistake had been made.

Senator Gogineni: I agree with that opinion. It would ease discontent where it was affected most. The campus article about the email that was sent out. In terms of optics it would look bad to apologize about how we haven’t apologized well the first time. The whole campus doesn’t need to receive it.

Senator Boyle: A personal meeting is really powerful. Just being able to answer their questions. I think what’s problematic about email is it’s not an easy way to communicate. I think it would be a good idea to have more presence and communication with the board of cultural orgs.

Senator Rainey: I wanted to echo what you both said. I don’t think it should be sent out to the whole student body. I think it should be concentrated to those affected. There’s no email marker for POC (and that would be extremely problematic) but I think, given the concerns of those heard, emailing the cultural orgs would be good. We could also say we’re willing to send a senator to a meeting and apologize in person and see what we can do in the future. And have some transparency and pull back as to why this was done. This preface didn’t help the SGA. It’s a shame that the work that the cultural orgs put together in supporting the bill went wayside in a very public manner. I wanted to give everyone the magnitude in the way it was done. And from what we discussed at breakfast with President Patton, apologizing to the orgs permeates throughout the student body.

Co-Chair Chang: I think it’s helpful to ask what would be most helpful to the people that are affected. Giving them a list of things we have brainstormed and having them choose what they find most appropriate. We need to contextualize this incident in a longer history of marginalization of students on campus. It might be useful to think of a longer term project to restore the project. Restoring justice is being explored by Ashley Laux and AJ. Asking: how can the SGA over months and years work on this relationship?

President Gratch: Michael Garel and I are emailing the cultural org boards this week. It was not with this exact topic in mind but I would imagine that having a sit-down conversation with them and giving them an opportunity to express discontent would be useful to everyone.

Co-Chair Chang: Not related to advice on how to respond now but I want to support everything that Senator Rainey has said: why the forward was problematic. I’m available after this meeting if people want clarification as to why it was problematic. Use me as a resource for that.
Senator Rainey: I think for the meeting that you planned with cultural orgs, it would be useful to invite as many of us as possible. Even though we are not the ones that sent out the statement I think it’s important for all members of the SGA to be there. It looks like we were all involved in this. I think it’s important to come together when all cultural orgs are there. Restoring the damage that has been done.

Co-Chair Chang: Another relationship we should talk about is senate and what senate passed and then how it was represented. There’s something that was broken between what senate passed and how it was represented. There’s another reason for us all to continue this discussion.

Senator Gogineni: I think that goes along with construction of bills, generally speaking. This has not been done as much this past year but generally a bill is meticulously crafted so that the original intention cannot be misrepresented. Bills are things that carry forth to years after us. we can have a discussion on it but I would say personally that if you are writing a bill, it should be very clear how you envision it to be carried out.

Baishakhi Taylor: Because President Patton is new and I had an opportunity to go to the breakfast she had with you I want to echo what was said: to strongly request to have the conversation first before a bill is passed. I would strongly request that we start with a conversation as you think about drafting new bills.

Senator Toy: I want to reiterate what you said. It helps if the conversation happens first. If the conversation hadn’t gone too late. I know you wanted to get it out quickly and having people discuss things for two and a half hours before passing may not be enough. I think it’s important to put a lot of work into it on your own idea and then discuss it.

Senator Rainey: This is my last comment. I echo what you guys have said. Making sure the bill is tight, I understand that, but I also want to remind people of the context of the bill. I emailed the bill to the senate – everyone had time to look at the bill and respond to the bill. It’s not like I dropped a mixtape. Everyone had time to look at the bill and digest it. But I think that like President Gratch said there was a team of people that you referred to as the best way to present it and it’s a shame that I was not included in that, as the author. I would think the confusion would not have been there if I was included in the discussion. Perhaps I think that is where the intention went awry. That’s all I want to say. There were errors on both sides – sure I could have been meticulous but that conversation should have happened with me as well.

Senator Singh: Ok I have an announcement: something I would like to work on and has been discussed in Ross Commons is feeling unsafe near College Street where there’s a lighting issue. Commons council has also talked about the blue lights: they would like to see more of those.

Senator Boyle: The crime stats can show light on the lack of blue lights. There’s not a lot of preventative action on this campus. I think if you go to a campus with a bigger town/city you see more security. Here it reflects where we are physically.
Senator Gogineni: Can we go straight to Senator Singh for more comments regarding this? I think for the sake of time; it might be better to go straight to the Election reform bill. Zak do you want to talk about it?

IV. New Business

Zak Fisher: I’m assuming you’ve all read the bill. The biggest thing is we’re changing, and obviously this is timely, would change a single transferrable vote to instant. It would be a winner take all system. The highest vote getter is the one that wins. There’s no second round, droop quota business. I found that no one really knows how the voting system they’re using works. I think people find it confusing at best and penetrable at worst. I have found multiple instances that there is a strategic advantage to ranking people in a certain way. There’s no way to gain the system but that myth keeps. The fact that our current system allows for that worries me a lot. The second reason: this would make elections much quicker. As Senator Raber knows it can be very time consuming and tricky. It makes the SGA look bad and is unnecessary. That’s the most important thing and what I hope we can agree on. The third point I’ve added here makes ties impossible. I’m not totally set on this part. I think it’s a very fair way to ensure that elections don’t end up in a tie. I thought this made sense: to have the Senate vote on it anonymously and then have the President vote on it if there is a tie in the Senate.

Senator Gogineni: In terms of how you’re defining a tie, is a tie only if it’s say 250 voting on one and 250 on another.

Zak Fischer: I took it to mean that it’s an exact tie. Every time we have an election now we have that many people voting times 2 or 3 or whatever. This increases instances of there being a tie.

Senator Toy: So is it one vote per one person? And if it’s a class race is it two votes per person, one for each position? Wasn’t there supposed to be a computer program to make the voting counting easier?

Zak Fisher: There was supposed to be a computer program. A professor told me he was working on it. He then found a great website that costs a couple thousand a year and essentially said that would be a better option. I don’t know of an affordable, accessible way to do it.

Senator Toy: Can we make a friendly amendment about how people running cannot participate in the vote?

Zak Fisher: How do you feel if they’re running in the race they cannot vote. “If a member of the senate is a candidate for the election being voted on they will not participate.”

Senator Toy: What happened in the fall?

Zak Fisher: There was a tie between 2nd place in the Feb election. There’s nothing in the bylaws in how I’m supposed to proceed in that situation. I ran it through taking a vote and Senator von Platen would win regardless. But the fact that we saw a tie speaks to it.
Senator Gogineni: How about: “If a voting member of the Senate is a candidate for the election being voted on he/she/they will not participate to vote.”

Zak Fisher: “Position in question” maybe?

Senator Gogineni: Friendly amendment accepted? Is there a response to what we just changed?

Senator Raber: I don’t think its super appropriate for the senate to be voting. I understand what you mean Zak. If there’s an exact tie it would be hard to mobilize people to vote again. I don’t have a super constructive comment but I think it might be problematic for the senate to be making decisions.

Zak Fisher: I share your concern and I do agree it’s a little awkward. I kept it in just cause it’s very rare still. And at least there’s a mechanism in place for when there is a tie. I don’t think it’s feasible to do the election over again. The reason I felt comfortable giving it to the Senate is because theoretically it’s a representative group of the student body. I would like to pass section 1 and 2 and would be willing to scrap part 3.

Senator Raber: Maybe the Senators are representative of what would be the previous student body. The newly elected senators would make the vote. That would be tricky though

Zak Fisher: It’s not a perfect solution but I hear your criticism.

Senator Gogineni: Specifically wanting to pass discussion to 1 and 2.

Zak Fisher: Can I split the bill? And then just talk about 1 and 2.

Senator Gogineni: Of course. Does anyone have any comments on parts 1 and 2?

Senator Boyle: There is some bias in the system. The Sophomore election was a mess. We had six people running. I think this change is a necessary thing to have.

Co-Chair Chang: I would use just “they” as opposed to “he/she/they”. Would it be possible to have the working document shown here?

Senator Edwards: This seems pretty straight forward but what do you see the advantage to the old system is?

Zak Fisher: Theoretically in places where this is the way you’ve been voting your whole life I hesitate to say it’s more fair but it does leave the most people feeling the least dissatisfied. I think there is a certain issue with this too.

Senator Edwards: So it’s only an advantage when there are multiple positions?

Zak Fisher: If you have two candidates who would theoretically split a group, they’re not being totally shafted by the other person running. I think those problems are rare.
Co-Chair Chang: In which ways could we make it easier for you? Having more people helping you count votes?

Zak Fisher: This will make tabulation process easier but that is not a good reason to vote for/against this bill.

Co-Chair Chang: We could say that results would be released in 24 hours. I think that’s ok.

Zak Fisher: It does say it has to be in by midnight that day.

Co-Chair Chang: It is a hard system to understand. There is a video on YouTube: I think it’ll be hard for us to understand the current voting system without looking at the other voting system.

Zak Fisher: I think if you have a voting system with a 5-10-minute informational video it’s not the best voting system for 25,000 people.

Co-Chair Chang: The only thing they have to know is that they need to rank them in the way they want.

Zak Fisher: I think there’s more to it than that but I think that’s a part of it. I think in general it’s better to have a simple clear fair system that everyone can understand.

Senator Edwards: I think that’s a valid point.

Co-Chair Chang: I think we should take some time to watch the video together.

Advisor Adams: I think there are a couple senators who were her when this was discussed at length. The previous system that the current system replaced involved needing to meet a 50% threshold. The current system would not necessitate a 50% threshold. The reason this was put into effect was in order to meet 50% you needed a second election. Just saying that historical point.

Senator Rainey: So for clarification you don’t think a single transfer is a fair system. I don’t think it’s less fair. Personally I like the winner takes all system better but I think it depends on how you look at fairness. You can have the highest number of votes but then you loose. That doesn’t seem fair to me.

Senator Boyle: In what case in a single transferrable vote system will the single round not reach a threshold to win?

Zak Fisher: That’s in the video.

Senator Gogineni: Do we want to take a vote on if we want to watch the video or not? All those in favor of watching the video: (4) Senator Raber, Senator Rainey, Senator Parikh, Senator Toy
Senator Toy: It is a really confusing video – I don’t know if watching it once will clear up that confusion.

Senator Sohn: We can look at last years voting history and have Zak explain it?

Zak Fisher: So this is the first round of votes. The top vote second vote wed be done (new version). What happened here - April Poole had the least number of votes so she’s out. All of her second choices get redistributed so for the 42 people that voted for her 17 were given to Senator Sohn and 12 given to Senator Boyle as second choice. So he jumped above George Wells.

Senator Boyle: Why does it say 123.4 next to Collin’s name?

Zak Fisher: I don’t know why.

Senator Rainey: So with this voting system if you want someone to have a higher chance of winning you would just check they’re name and you’d be done with it.

Zak Fisher: No but that makes sense. You’re second and thirds only matter when you’re first is out.

Senator Gogineni: There’s clearly two separate issues. 1. People don’t understand the system and 2. That people put random numbers down for their other options.

Zak Fisher: It’s not like there’s one wrong way to understand it. The only thing that makes sense is the video.

Senator Gogineni: Personally I don’t see any fault in seeing how the votes are calculated. We could have a disclaimer that if you don’t know the other candidates just put down one choice.

Zak Fisher: People don’t believe it. We have language like that.

Senator Toy: Another problem with this system- those people did not actually get a say in who won. And I think people would be more careful with their vote.

Senator Gogineni: Is there a motion to vote on one and two?

President Gratch: Never mind, I was going to introduce another thing which is controversial.

Senator Gogineni: Does anyone have questions?

Co-Chair Chang: Who is this advantaging? And who is it disadvantaging? And how does the old system do this?

Senator Gogineni: Any comments?
Senator Raber: I think what Zak brought up if you have two candidates that are similar it would attract the same type of voting base. The system we have now works to avoid that a little. It would disadvantage those candidates that appeal to the same group.

Senator Schulman: I’m going to be honest I didn’t know how the voting system worked until now. And I think a lot of people don’t know and will not take the time to learn. I think the simplicity of it is important.

Senator Sohn: Point of clarification. The current system only has one vote available. With the commons system that becomes tricky. You could have 2 votes there. I think the proposed system would change the class senators if this was not added.

Zak Fisher: There are two separate systems for single and multiple constituencies. In multiple you use a droop quota.

Senator Rainey: What’s a droop quota?

Zak Fisher: It’s a number you need at the beginning to remain liable for other rounds. As far as I know that’s not up for discussion with someone in my position. But the idea is if you’re getting a very small number you’d be out right away.

Senator Toy: In the Spring, 6 of my votes got redistributed because I had shot over the quota.

Senator Sohn: How does the proposed system work for that. If there was someone they want two senators but they only get one vote.

Zak Fisher: Then they could give two votes.

Senator Boyle: In terms of communities this might effect. Looking at election results of my class, it’s easy to see, when they got knocked out, where their votes went and why. There may be communities that are not behind a certain person but their voices would not be heard if their first person was knocked out.

Zak Fisher: That is true. From my perspective I don’t know anyone who knows how the voting system works. I don’t think that if you’re going to run and you feel someone is similar to you that you wouldn’t. I think that the biggest disincentive to run is if the person is in the race period. If changing to the new system disadvantages someone it would be the group that has the greatest raw representation on campus - students overwhelmingly well represented on campus.

Senator Toy: Can we have two checked boxes?

Senator Gogineni: If we want to vote now we should.

Senator Toy: I think we should also test this out on a smaller election and see how this works out.
Zak Fisher: I accept Senator Toy’s amendment to change it to two votes.

Senator Gogineni: motion to vote?

Senator Boyle: Motion to vote

Senator Sohn: Seconded

Senator Rainey: Clarification.

Zak Fisher: Every voter will have up to two votes which cannot be applied to the same candidate.

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of voting on this issue? (All senators for voting except for Co-Chair Chang)


Senator Gogineni: The bill has passed, congratulations Zak.

Senator Boyle: Can we introduce an idea: including at the bottom of the election, a survey of whether they liked the system or not?

Senator Chang: Parties have a powerful system in order to maximize their chances of winning the election. The advancement of women and ethnic minorities is lost in these systems.

Senator Toy: I don’t think any of us put that much thought into it. I don’t think constituencies are thinking like that. It’s not a Hilary vs. Donald Trump Position. I think they do a good job and I don’t think that’s how Middlebury works.

Senator Parikh: I think that’s talking about a system where there are parties. The Democratic party nominates one person. If the Democratic party can nominate a bunch of candidates that would be relevant and allow marginalized groups to enter the race more easily/willingly.

Co-Chair Chang: I think it’s implicit: we can’t control how we think about that.

Zak Fisher: As far as I know there is no thing about ties and we could talk about it on Sunday.

Senator Chen: I’m not too comfortable with being presented with a tie. And then coming up with a solution after the fact. We would be more uncomfortable to be faced with a tie and then make regulation about the tie.
Senator Rainey: I wanted to go back to what I was stating about the bill. Let’s say there was a tie and two candidates were brought before me. I think a revote in that situation would be best. I know it’s a lot of work but I think its only fair.

Senator Chen: I see where you’re going with this Senator Rainey but you have to consider what incentivizes the people and what happens with a tie. I think you do want to make sure that everyone who wants their voice to be heard is heard. You do want to do it within a certain time span and make sure everyone is represented. Also going forward, if we’re going to have a conversation about this we should keep in mind what the alternative could be.

Senator Singh: It seems like there are two options: could we have a straw poll?

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of voting on a tie in the senate: (5) All those in favor of revoting (6).

Senator Parikh: I think both systems are fine but if we decide to do another election we need to figure out a way to distinguish between the two elections. In the French presidential elections only the top two are presented in the second election.

Senator Sohn: I think that’s what the current proposal is.

Senator Parikh: No I’m saying on the revote.

Senator Sohn: So if you’re doing a revote you’re just choosing the candidates that have the highest votes.

Senator Parikh: Instead of having another full election it would just be those who are the top positions.

Senator Raber: Although I agree with the sentiment that the voices are being heard. That feeling would be lost if we are voting on it. There would be a lower turnout of the vote and the power is on their hands not to vote. At least it would not be in our power.

Senator Sohn: If we change the third portion to re-voting I think the timing of re-voting is important. We want to tackle people’s energy and desire to vote. This is a possibly friendly amendment.

Senator Gogineni: I just want to clarify that this is not even in this bill. It’s either that we have point 3 or we don’t have point 3. We could write something completely differently. Unless you want to try it.

Zak Fisher: I like what number three is right now more than the other ones.

Senator Rainey: Motion to vote on point 3.

Senator Gogineni: Motion to vote on voting. 7 opposed, 1 abstaining, 2 against
Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of point 3: 3 (Senator Singh, Senator Toy, President Gratch, Senator Chen),
Against: 8 (Senator Gogineni, Senator Raber, Senator Schulman, Senator Sohn, Senator Parikh, Senator Rainey, Senator Von Platen, Co-Chair Chang)
Abstaining: Senator Edwards

Senator Gogineni: Part three has been denied. Does anyone have any last things to say?

President Gratch: If someone has an idea to amend they should put that forward right now.

Senator Gogineni: So we voted against point 3 and we can amend it just a matter of if that’s appropriate to do now.

Senator Edwards: I think it’s better to have something in place.

Senator Sohn: If we don’t say anything and there is a tie what would happen?

Zak Fisher: I would come to talk to President Gratch and see what she thinks I should do.

Senator Gogineni: Questions?

Senator Parikh: Amending the bill temporarily so that a tie is determined as a coin flip and then next time we can have more time to talk about it

Senator Chen: A coin flip gives the least agency to people voting. Zak has looked through past statistics. A tie is very rare before and I think this system will make it more rare. We could pass Part 3 temporarily for the Feb election and then revisit it at a later point. It’s already written and the chances it would come into play would be very rare.

Senator Gogineni: We can amend and if people don’t accept it we can leave it.

Senator Raber: I drafted something. Can we pull it up?

Senator Gogineni: “In the event of a tie for highest number of votes (and or second highest number of votes in the case of multimember constituencies) a revote would be held for constituents within 48 hours of the election. This process would be repeated in the event of a second tie.

President Gratch: And this doesn’t include Senator Parikh’s idea. As it stands now I wouldn’t be able to pass this.

Senator Rainey: If the top two people in question go again like a primary essentially.

Senator Gogineni: Could you write that in.
President Gratch: It’s tricky because there might be a position where there are only two people running then the only 2 people are voting and in the event of a tie two people re-voting.

Senator Rainey: Change to “The two people in question for the tie”.

Senator Singh: change to “constituents in question”

Senator Sohn: Why do you not accept the amendment President Gratch?

President Gratch: Something doesn’t feel right about it. If we have two people running and then two people revote, it’s about who has the most friends or who has the biggest network.

Senator Edwards: The 48 hours. Then the next election would have to happen between Saturday and Sunday. I don’t think it’s a good idea to vote over a weekend.

Senator Gogineni: Do you want to change that amendment to not 48 hours.

Senator Rainey: Yes and I wanted to ask President Gratch a question. If there are two people who run, then it’s the same election all over again. For the time can we extend the time to another week?

Zak Fisher: I promise you if there’s a tie we won’t wait a week to resolve it.

Senator Chen: I would say that anything within 48, 36 hours is appropriate. It’s going to be a mad rush to get all of their friends or it could be that a bunch of people who have voted won’t vote a second time around. The other thing is that when you put out a second election and you have a massive poll you’re going to get a lot of questions on campus as to what’s going on. I think we need to think about that.

Senator Gogineni: I’m going to put a couple options in front of you. We can end discussion, we can vote on this amendment and then pass number 3. Then we can pass number 3 and hope we don’t have to default to it. Straw poll?

Voting on amendment written here: 1
Tabling discussion: 6
Voting on amendment 3 as it stands: 5

V. Adjournment

Senator Chen: Motion to adjourn.

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of adjournment: 9
Against: 0
Abstaining: 4

Meeting ended 9:00 pm