SGA Minutes: 3/13/2016

I. Attendance


Members Absent: President Gratch

II. Acceptance of Minutes

Senator Gogineni: Motion to accept or amend last week’s minutes?

Senator Sohn: Motion to amend – on page 14: it says President Patton but should be President Gratch.

Senator Gogineni: Motion seconded?

Senator Singh: Seconded.

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of amending? (Everyone). Amendment has been accepted.

Senator Gogineni: Motion to accept last week’s minutes?

Senator Sohn: Motion to accept.


All those against? Zero

All those abstaining? One (Proxy Chang)

III. Announcements

Senator Gogineni: Ok! Hi everyone, this should be a quick meeting. Let’s start with announcements.

Baishakhi Taylor: Hi everyone! In January we had a breakfast at the president’s house. Some members of the administration were there with Ilana and some of you. We agreed to keep coming here once a month for an update on what we are working on. We’ll come and give an update on what the administration does. First we have AIM (Alliance for an Inclusive Middlebury). Because Miguel Fernández can unfortunately not be here today
(He’s working with the disability group), I will give you an update on that as well. AIM was announced in December. We started meeting in January and are very close to launching the AIM website. I will send all of you the email once that is fully live. What we are doing is trying to make the AIM work as public as possible. We want a clear sense of how inclusive our community is in terms of demography. Not in terms of who we admit – it’s usually different than who comes in each fall. We want a baseline of what our student body looks like. That is why the delay on launching the site has occurred. One of the big projects we’re working on is looking at Kirk Alumni Center specifically at the photos exhibit – how do we make what we present more inclusive? Development and alumni affairs are what we’re working on. AIM is also hosting a symposium on diversity and inclusion. We’re bringing student activists from other school’s as well as speakers. It will be on May 7th. Spring is a busy semester and very packed but it’s the only Saturday that worked. A series of short dinners with faculty is coming up as well. What does inclusivity mean? How is it different than our understanding of diversity? This comes in conjunction with IDC’s dinner. We’re hoping to bring all of this together on brunch on May 8th which you are all invited to. We want to have a final conversation at the end of the spring term reflecting on the work of the semester. Restorative justice is under work as well. What would work best on our campus – we’re exploring that framework as well. BRT (the Biased Response Team) is presenting their final draft tomorrow morning. If that goes through tomorrow they will come present it to you, most likely next Sunday. The AGDI last week met with the communications team to better present accessibility and inclusivity on campus. They’re hoping to work with them in the fall and spring – help us strategize what our accessibility should look like. They are also working with the budget. AGDI is in the process of hiring and working on that. Any questions?

Baishakhi Taylor: Ok! Thank you so much and if anything comes up please let me know. The BRT and the website should be up and running soon.

Senator Gogineni: Thank you so much. Just a couple more brief announcements.

Senator Raber: A quick update on our 51 Main student run bar night event we had on Thursday. We had about 275 students come throughout the night. 130 -140 is max capacity so we had a line out the door for 2 hours plus. We had student bar tenders and so far it was a great success. If anyone has spoken to constituents about feedback, please get back to me. Our next event will be in 2 weeks.

Senator Gogineni: Quick update on my conversation with Dan Detora about dining hall overcrowding. Thank you Senator Grandas and Senator Sing and Murphy too. I talked about getting a panini machine in Ross and dividers to separate the lines. Don’t spread this info please, that applies to all visitors as well. He is also working on digital menus in front of stations so people can see where things are. Redfield proctor is open for dinner – it is always open so people are welcome to use that space. Spread that info around. We talked about opening Proctor basement for lunch time – some traffic can go down there. He mentioned a one card system that may go into effect next year – again don’t quote me on this. This is an open way which would indirectly work on overcrowding.
Senator Chen: Announcements on Ross. – there is going to be a printer in Ross. It is going to be in the LaForce library. We are working out issues and touching base with everyone on that.

Senator Edwards: That reminds me, the Proctor stapler is gone again.

Senator Gogineni: Any other announcements? Ok moving onto old business.

**IV. Old Business**

Senator Gogineni: Senator Rainey is not here – so we’re going to skip the community council bill. Let’s move onto the Finance Committee guidelines. Last week Aaron presented his proposal. Here we have an alternative proposal by Senator Boyle.

Senator Boyle: So this is my first bill. I thought that there definitely needs to be action. I met with Aaron. What has happened is some overreaction – finance committee was going to make decisions without help of anywhere else. Club sports reacted badly and it got pushed to next year and it keeps happening that way. This would hopefully establish more concrete decisions. There was going to be a committee last year but no formal written down procedure was in place for that committee. At the top are a series of whereas statements. At the bottom is a plan for how this would go out. For the upcoming fiscal year, the FC will continue to budget club sports in the same way they have in the past. They are not freezing funding but budgeting in the same way as last year. A committee would be established with one treasurer from each club, two members of Senate and Finance Committee members. The would meet once a month until next March. It can extend itself but it has to be through a majority vote. One thing we found out is that a lot of our club sports have a high base cost and not much variable cost. Regattas etc.: that’s not a large portion of the cost. This well help find that deficit and take some pressure off the Finance Committee. Going to the administration which has failed time and time again – creating an endowment etc. hopefully within a year we will have a better idea of the school’s budgeting.

Senator Gogineni: Ok, so we’re accepting technical questions first.

Senator Chen: Aaron how does this look?

Aaron: Well I haven’t seen the bill. Numbers wise for you - in the short term future we can do it. I mean it’s not ideal but it’s possible. I haven’t seen the bill but I’m curious if there’s a statement about the level the SGA is funding club sports. Any unfairness in our budgeting process is being brought to us. I think it’s a valid idea that club sorts are more expensive. We are a delegation of the senate – you set our policies. It’s hard for us if we are not going to reform the process at least affirm that you are comfortable about the level of club sports funding right now.
Senator Boyle: If you go to the top – there are whereas statements which accomplish that. Whereas the SGA recognizes the validity of club sports. Whereas we need to find a solution. It takes blame off of the Finance Committee.

Senator Raber: My question is in terms of senators – obviously if it’s one meeting a month it would be senators of this SGA for 3 months and then new senators. Who would be the point person for the rest of the time?

Senator Boyle: The one thing I like about FC is there is continuity across years. We know who it will be next year.

Aaron: We don’t know. It might become elected. Ilana has reformed that.

Senator Boyle: Regardless, there are a lot of them that will be there next year. Hopefully they will continue their presence into next year. We can change the bill but the senators from this year would no longer be on their committee. Hopefully members of finance committee would be those that would carry velocity into next year with new senators.

Senator Toy: The section about members of each individual club sports being present. There are some sports where this funding situation doesn’t apply - would they be interested? You need a representative from each club sport. I also think this committee needs a head to help with continuity. I don’t know if you want to say it’s one of these.

Senator Boyle: The club would be elected from the base committee.

Senator Gogineni: Would you like to add that now?

Senator Boyle: Yes.

Senator Gogineni: What would the clause be?

Senator Boyle: “The head of which shall be elected from the committee itself”

Senator Gogineni: Ok now let’s open up the floor to discussion.

Senator Raber: I think that this is a good bill. I think that after reflecting on last week’s meeting, that ultimately the responsibility falls on the SGA and the FC. Will these club sports continue to exist as they are – I don’t think that should fall on our shoulders. That decision should go to the administration. I think everyone can understand this side of the problem. Unless more money is added to the pool we have to cut somewhere. Hopefully if this group is finalized we can have more administrative contact.

Aaron: This is not a good thing but this is the reality. The administration strongly advised the SGA not to admit crew as a club sport. So I don’t think they will have a hard time saying they won’t fund it.
Senator Raber: Maybe with this committee – with representatives of this group of club sports something could happen.

Senator Sohn: Going off of Senator Raber’s point. I don’t know how possible this is? But would it be possible to get an administrative liaison on this committee. I think this bill would be stronger if there was a set goal on how to contact the administration.

Senator Boyle: So yes the one problem is if there is a liaison it would be great but I don’t know who the point person in the administration would be. I also don’t know if they would have voting power in the committee. If that one members shouldn’t they would feel powerless.

Senator Chen: I would recommend not sticking that on immediately. The worst thing you can do is have the committee not be formed because we don’t have a liaison. Maybe the liaison is not something we want to be included in hard core. I also want to yield time.

Senator Toy: I sent out an email on Monday morning about whether the student activities fee should be allocated equally across students – I realize yes people could have had multiple responses but I had only 7.5 % yes. 82% said no because some students’ interests take more money and 10.4% said other. It could be faulty but I think it’s pretty indicative of club sports existing.

Erika: I don’t know if this technically counts as administration but Eric Dusett is our cluster manager. I don’t know if he would count as administration but maybe he could be the point person on the committee?

Senator Singh: Do you want to make membership of all clubs optional? It could make formation easier if some clubs don’t want to be part of it.

Senator Boyle: I would like to accept the friendly amendment about election – and one treasurer of club sports if they so choose.

Senator Gogineni: Any comments on which proposal people would prefer. We could do a straw poll?
So all those in favor of the proposal Aaron presented: 0 votes
All those in favor of Senator Boyle’s proposal: 12 votes
All those in favor of neither proposal: 1 vote

Senator Gogineni: So that shows there is wide support for Boyle’s bill.

Senator Toy: I have something nitpicky. In line 4 “vested interested” should be vested interest. Each “whereas” statement should have a comma at the end. At the last “whereas” statement you can take out the “and”. Finally, in clause 6 it says the committee might extend itself indefinitely – maybe just for another year? Because that sounds like we will always have a committee.
Senator Boyle: It’s a learning process. When Aaron mentioned the 3-year process – till the school might have more money. That was the reason why but I accept that amendment.

Senator Toy: In clause 3 – starting next month can we make that April 2016? That’s all I have, thanks.

Senator Parikh: I think that the entire reason we are talking about this is there is a problem with unsustainable funding. Maybe we could make it more of a compromise. If we set a cap instead of at a similar monetary level. No more than a 5% decrease in each club. I think that was the entire reason why the treasurer brought this up in the first place. The committee being able to be indefinitely discuss this. Maybe we should have an ultimatum – so that if it’s not resolved in a year than Aaron’s bill goes through?

Senator Boyle: It says that in clause 5.

Aaron: I think this gives us reasonable leeway to look at this as we have in the past. To strike a balance between funding way more than any org and meeting the needs of club sports is tricky. We will probably fund similarly than we have in the past. We discussed a spending freeze but that is unfair because some clubs see an increase in participation and some see a decrease. I would expect a similar total number as last year. My only comment – some of the language in the whereas clauses make the assumption that we haven’t funded club sports since we’re talking about decreases not increasing funding.

Senator Boyle: I concur.

Senator Gogineni: Motion to vote?

Chief of Staff Spector: Do we want to change to “if they so choose” (representatives of club sports)?

Senator Boyle: Sure.

Proxy Sloan: Senator Rainey has expressed wishes to table voting on the bill. He does not feel any member of the Senate has enough context to make a formal decision. This is for the club sports bill.

Senator Gogineni: Seconded? (Not seconded)

Senator Gogineni: Second to motion to vote?

Aaron: Can I say something?

Senator Toy: I yield time.
Aaron: I think that this is a great solution to not making a decision. That’s not necessarily a bad thing – it’s now on this body for club sports to come together in association with the FC. I can also see this coming together next year with nothing being done. Other than the FC who really has to do these things to put a budget together? Club sports have an incredible interest in increasing funding not decreasing it. The status quo is not necessarily a bad thing. While I see the Senate taking indirect responsibility of the FC, the whereas statement aren’t saying it enough. Responsibility is still being put on the FC to interpret things regarding this. People are constantly complaining to the FC – telling us we’re discriminating between clubs. Some orgs get way less funding than others. I think this is insufficient. My proposal for a change – some whereas statement along the lines of “until a new solution is found the SGA is comfortable with the current level of funding”.

Senator Gogineni: Senator Boyle do you accept that?

Senator Boyle: How about “Whereas the SGA takes complete and total responsibility for the current level of funding which club sports receive until we can find an equitable solution.”

Senator Grandas: Is everyone comfortable with the level we are funding club sports right now?

Senator Gogineni: Inherently voting for something is us agreeing or disagreeing on it. Through the vote itself would be where that establishes itself.

Senator Sohn: Is there a way for clause 4: one of the main reasons this came up is because of our lack of communication with the administration. I would feel more comfortable with this bill if there was something about the committee being in communication with the administration. The people changing the amount of funding we get is the administration.

Senator Chen: I’m just going to go back to what Aaron said in that the administration has given the recommendation to not take this on. We have not listened and have taken this on anyway. Taking this on might not be as productive than finding different ways of getting money outside of the administration. I think this was the problem in the past as well.

Senator Sohn: Yes, I agree but I think there needs to be some line established where we can talk to the administration. It doesn’t need to be us asking them for more money – it’s more to know what they are thinking, why they aren’t giving us money.

Senator Raber: Senator Chen – as Aaron said that has been the administration’s response. If this discussion is opened up to those that play the sports maybe the administration would feel less comfortable making such a strong decision instead of in a room where no one hears their decisions. I think this committee is in contact with the administration – that has to fall on their shoulders – that they wont fund club sports and the administration
saying we don’t want to touch this. If this is something they want to do that conversation should happen in the open.

Senator Gogineni: I don’t think it has to be in the language of the bill for this to happen in the committee.

Senator Boyle: You would think that an athletic venture would fall under the gaze of the athletic department. But of course that’s not what has happened. I think this gives leeway in which the committee can investigate a number of things. It doesn’t lock the committee in doing one thing and changing its base to investigate other solutions.

Senator Gogineni: Given the discussion, is there a motion to vote?

Senator Toy: Motion to vote.

Senator Edwards: Seconded.

Senator Gogineni: This is a vote on voting:
All those in favor of voting? Everyone expect Senator Raber and Proxy Sloan.
All those abstaining: 1 vote (Senator Raber)
All those against: 1 vote (Proxy Sloan)

Senator Gogineni: Ok, we will vote on it.
All those in favor of passing it as it stands? 14 Votes (Senator Gogineni, Senator Raber, Proxy Spector, Senator Toy, Senator Sohn, Senator Boyle, Senator Parikh, Senator Edwards, Senator Chen, Senator Bhakta, Senator Singh, Senator Aaron, Senator Grandas, Proxy Chang)

All those abstaining: 1 vote (Proxy Sloan)
All those against: 0 votes

Aaron: What about the second set of guidelines that have to be passed?

Senator Gogineni: So we have already seen this proposal and guidelines. We have tabled this in knowing what this would mean. Does anyone have any new comments?

Senator Gogineni: Motion to vote?

Senator Toy: Wait, can we scroll down?

Senator Raber: Would this take into effect in September?

Aaron: This would take into effect in September but really in April. Your budget from this year is set. So this would technically take in effect next year. I We want it to apply to clubs coming in then it would have to be passed essentially now.
Senator Singh: Is this formalizing what happens?

Aaron: We have to go along it. It’s an abstract justification along the lines of what we’re not funding (hotels, flights etc.). We’re taking a lot of requests and it wouldn’t be fair. I could envision future finance committees down the line funding them again. This helps equalize funding between organizations both on and off campus and if we’re funding hotels and flights for conferences – if everyone wanted to go our budget wouldn’t spread that wide. And meeting snacks – orgs come in and they request numbers. We wanted to set a precedent that we wouldn’t fund a full meal unless that is somehow very important to your meeting. It’s one thing if that is important for your org (e.g. centered around cooking).

Senator Gogineni: Unless there are new comments, is there a motion to vote?

Senator Grandas: Motion to vote.

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of voting (everyone except Proxy Sloan).
All those against? Zero
All those abstaining: 1 vote (Proxy Sloan)

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of passing these official guidelines? 13 votes
All those opposed? 1 vote (Proxy Chang)
All those abstaining? 1 vote (Proxy Sloan)

V. New Business

Senator Gogineni: Great it has passed. Going back to the agenda- it’s just me left. I don’t really want to go into discussion about the bill. Currently we have 128 submissions on the survey I sent out but am hoping to receive more this week. Having the administration actually do these things would be a lot given our number of responses so far. This is our schedule bill – when Senator Toy and I met with people about changing the course schedule and what the course description would look like. We want to make it easier for students to know what the courses are. People thought the course listings we have now are insufficient. How course listings are finalized has been antiquated. Some haven’t changed in 10 years. All the course listings for a specific class are the same regardless of different professors. Given that, I wanted to see what input from students would look like – if they think the system is good or not. The most compelling stat is: have you ever taken a class that has been taught completely differently by two different professors: 89.84% said yes. Course listings should be more individualized: the professor teaching the course makes it very different. That comes to the conclusion that the procedures to which course listing are finalized should be changed. Teachers should edit their own course listings. That is generally what the bill looks like and I’m waiting to add the
statistics in. I wanted to let you guys look at it now and am open to questions. I will send the final bill for next week.

Senator Raber: Is there any way to incorporate the syllabus?

Senator Gogineni: We have talked about this. I think that would be amazing but that is even harder than doing this because it’s hard to convince faculty to do anything mandatory. Syllabi are 10 times harder to do than this. Maybe in the future we will get syllabi. This is the first step in.

Senator Toy: Because class registration is so much before classes actually start a lot of professors have not looked at their syllabi. For the fall they use summer and for spring they use winter break to create/update their syllabi.

Senator Parikh: Maybe related to this can we create an archive for syllabi. You can’t look at course 2016 but maybe course 2015?

Senator Gogineni: The response was that professors don’t want to feel limited. If a student looks at an old syllabus the professor doesn’t want to feel limited in keeping the class the same. It becomes more of a restriction on part of the professor. I’m going to table this bill.

Senator Toy: Did you send out President Gratch’s bill from last week?

Senator Gogineni: I never got it

Senator Boyle: She wanted to wait.

Senator Sohn: I think she wanted to revise it first.

Senator Edwards: Along the lines of midcourses: I was reading reviews and noticing that there are fewer reviews now. I know when you join you have to write two reviews – can we keep that up so each semester you have to?

Senator Gogineni: That is technically how it is. You have to do one to keep it.

Senator Chen: Something I’ve seen other colleges do is they work with the administration. If a student works to do all reviews they get their grades one week earlier.

Senator Singh: Midcourses doesn’t require that. You only have to fill out 2 reviews in the beginning. Maybe we could make something like that happen.

Senator Boyle: It’s also why reviews are stacked towards intro classes.

Senator Aaron: if you’re a freshman you can’t view reviews because you haven’t been able to review before.
Senator Gogineni: We can invite Dana in and talk to him about that.

VI. Adjournment

Senator Gogineni: Motion to adjourn?

Senator Boyle: Motion to adjourn

Senator Singh: Seconded.

Senator Gogineni: Meeting has been adjourned. Meeting end 7:55 pm.