SGA Meeting Minutes – April 24, 2016


Members Absent: Co-Chair Chang

I. Acceptance of Minutes

Senator Gogineni: So because the director of membership staff is not here I’ll give a brief update on elections. Elections went well - over 1,500 students participated which is definitely building up from last year. Thank you all for the efforts you put in and congratulations to those winners.

Senator Edwards: And the results were out in 16 minutes which is crazy.

Senator Gogineni: Yes! Because of the new system. That being said is there a motion to accept or amend last week’s minutes?

Senator Sohn: Motion to accept.

Senator Chen: Seconded.

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of accepting last week’s minutes: Everyone
All those against: 0 votes
All those abstaining: 0 votes.

Senator Gogineni: The minutes have been passed. In terms of announcements. We won’t be having the Bus Funding discussion because President Gratch isn’t here. So moving on to new business. Senator Aaron’s amendment to the Club Sports Bill.

Senator Aaron: As you all remember when we were having the issue of funding club sports about a month ago we decided to pass Senators Boyle’s Bill that would create a committee made up of 2 FC members and reps from club sports who are interested. I met with Derek Doucet, the person in charge of club sports, Senator Boyle and Aaron. We have come to the conclusion that the best way to move forward is to amend the bill so that the work that needs to get done is still a collaboration between us and club sports but will not involve the red tape of meetings once a month that will allow them to move forward or not. Are there any questions?

Senator Toy: I’m wondering is there something in place for club sports to meet once a month?

Senator Aaron: That’s the idea of this. Having a meeting once a month is not the way we want to accomplish this goal. We reached out with times that are available to meet. A
couple of sports got back to us but the reality is that they can’t all meet at the same time. The goal is that we are meeting tonight. Club sports aren’t practicing right now. That being said we’re having trouble getting them together. We want to sit down with each of them to make sure we’re on the same page with funding – SGA transparency we encourage them to reach out to us and have them bring back what they are working on. It requires responsibility on their part if they’re passionate about their sport.

Senator Raber: So does the responsibility end up in your hands or in the hands of the club sports?

Senator Aaron: We have the responsibility of informing club sports on what they need to do. Meeting their goals is their responsibility however. Just as all of the other activity fee receivers, this is part of the functioning and maintenance of their club. We are here to assist them in any way. Senator Boyle and I have met and have spent a lot of time with administrators regarding this issue. We spoke with them about if there is any way we can find money from the college – we looked at endowments etc. We encourage them to reach out to us. The only problem is that these enforced meetings takes away from time club sports have to plan. We’re both committed to this just how the bill is set up right now is not the best way to help them.

Senator Boyle: When we say that the responsibility of fundraising is on the club we do not mean that they will handle it all. SGA senators can compile lists of available fundraising opportunities. This gives us leeway to meet individually with club sports. For example, crew just got back from Bates – we want to be meeting with them but this gives more flexibility in terms of what we are doing. I want to point out that for #2 when we’re talking about bridging that gap it’s important to have that individual attention on each sport. Figuring out what is your gap between your funding plan and how much you get from the SGA. The goal of this committee might change but this current wording will reflect what the college can do now. I think it is a nice way of adding more flexibility, saving people time and being able to affectively accomplish small goals.

Senator Sohn: Thank you. Point of clarification: Right now there isn’t a structure for funding club sports. It’s just what it is now right?

Aaron: Yea given the way the bill was passed. It will basically be funded in a similar manner to the way we have been funding which is to do our best balancing club sports and the fact that they are tremendously expensive. I can’t go to a club sport that costs $600 per person and say because I feel that’s too much we’re giving you $400 per person. That’s preventing them from operating but I don’t think it’s the role of the committee to make that decisions until such time that the Senate is prepared to make that decision. This year you’re not going to see any increase or dramatic decreases in club sports funding.

Senator Boyle: As the bill stands now it automatically puts Aaron’s plan into effect next year. That’s really the most important part is giving club sports a year to adjust to a new system.
Senator Toy: Motion to vote.

Senator Boyle: Seconded

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of voting: Everyone
All those opposed: 0 votes
All those abstaining: 0 votes

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of the bill as it stands: 12 votes (Senator Gogineni, Senator Raber, Senator Toy, Senator Sohn, Senator Boyle, Senator Parikh, Senator Rainey, Senator Grandas, Senator Aaron, Senator Edwards, Senator Singh, Senator Chen)
All those opposed: 0 votes
All those abstaining: 0 votes

Senator Gogineni: The bill has passed. This might be the quickest SGA meeting ever. Before we go does anyone have new ideas they want to talk about?

Senator Aaron: One thing is that the library opens at 9 am on Saturdays. That kind of bothers me so I might be working on that. Just come talk to me if you want to get involved. 9am is too late for me.

Senator Gogineni: Similarly, Senator Raber and I were upset that it closes early on Friday.

Senator Grandas: I was talking today with Jeremy and we came up with the idea of doing a commons Olympics.

Senator Boyle: Yeah it’s happening.

Senator Grandas: We would love to help if people would be interested.

Senator Boyle: I have a concern and I know that the McCullough reconstruction committee has a lot of ideas wrapped up but do people know what’s stopping McCullough from being a 24-hour space?

Senator Rainey: I was talking to Katherine Kycharczyk, the president of MCAB, and the main problem comes with staffing. I haven’t talked to Advisor Adams about it but that’s what I’ve heard. And there has been no pressure to do that in the past because with out peer institutions don’t have 24-hour student centers either. But it would be nice if we had one.

Senator Toy: Didn’t we have a student monitor to hired by SGA once?

Advisor Doug Adams: Yes, for early Saturday and Sunday hours.
Senator Chen: Going back to Senator Aarons point about 24/7 spaces. I’ve heard a lot of talk about making Bihall and the gym open for longer. There’s a big push behind it and a person to talk to would be Cathy Ekstrom. She’s the coordinator of Bihall.

Senator Raber: I had a question. I understand that the library closes because someone has to be there. Aren’t all other buildings open?

Senator Chen: Bihall and some other buildings are off the campus grid so you can access it if there’s a place you can put in a pin. You can get also get your student card activated but aside from that no, buildings gets locked at 12.

Senator Edwards: But you can spend the night.

Senator Chen: Which is different from other buildings on campus. Some places will kick you out when Pub safe does their sweep.

Senator Parikh: This isn’t a huge issue and it’s two pronged. Right now to use the online enrollment verification you need a SSC and lots of international students don’t have a SSC. They need to contact their Dean and it takes 5 days. I heard from some of my friends that when they went to the Snowbowl what they use to verify you’re a student is the enrollment verification. They had to pay the regular person rate because they are international students, which I think is a problem.

Toy: Wait what is this enrollment verification?

Senator Parikh: I don’t know because I’m an international student. But it becomes problematic when a Middlebury resource only works for people with a social security system.

Advisor Doug Adams: There are other ways to confirm that they are an active student at Middlebury.

Rainey: Does anyone want to comment on this issue?

Senator Raber: I can get the online verification. We could take this later but I think when I came in as an international student I was given a proxy social security number.

Senator Parikh: It depends if you get a job on campus. I don’t have a student visa so I’m not eligible for a SSC.

Senator Sohn: I feel like we should figure out who to contact. I don’t want to leave you hanging.

Senator Rainey: I want to bring it back full circle to club sports. I was wondering if we’re going about the conversation with the administration the wrong way. Aaron - past
experiences – why has it been shot down for administration funding / institutional funding?

Aaron: It’s entirely our fault – as a body SGA because in the past the school did fund crew. The school decided it could no longer fund crew so crew wanted to ask SGA if they could become an SGA org. The administration warned the SGA this is a tremendously expensive sport, you cannot afford it, don’t approve it. The SGA approved it anyway. The administration told us they are not helping us which is why this conversation never goes anywhere. This conversation right now is especially non-starter because of the school’s financial situation. Even beyond that any convo started about the administration picking up costs for club sports gets pushed to that point. They decided – whose decision is it? That we have 31 varsity sports so I don’t know how you would go about saying you can’t have squash but you can have crew. They don’t have any more money to assist us with club sports.

Senator Rainey: They won’t partially fund?

Aaron: No. They are building a storage facility for crew not near water. It has the same racks etc. They will not cover operational costs.

Senator Rainey: I just want more info. If there’s no money, fine there’s no money but I was talking to Laurie Patton and Katie Smith Abbott. We need to prove that SGA paying for crew is having a larger effect for other cultural orgs like BSU etc. who haven’t gotten raises in what they need each year. If we can prove that there is a correlation, then perhaps they would be more willing to fund club sports.

Aaron: There’s no evidence that it has to do with cultural orgs. But it is on campus orgs – cultural, academic, food etc. that are affected. In 150 active orgs you see a pattern. Your typical on campus org. meets once a week, you hold on campus events once a month beyond your own community and go to a conference once a year. Those orgs fall in the $1500-4500 range in terms of funding and those are where the orgs feel the biggest strain when club sports are being funded. An extra $500 for them is significant but $500 for club sports isn’t. Equestrian, crew, sailing both rugbies and both frisbees. On campus orgs. don’t compete off campus, their main interest is on campus, they have a specific interest and they meet a couple times a week.

Senator Gogineni: Should be open this up to the floor? I don’t want this to just be a back and forth info session.

Senator Rainey: So I think that what I’m getting at is the reason why cultural orgs get more impacted and running with that might make the administration think more about this issue. I understand that most on-campus orgs haven’t gotten more money. But when you think about increasing cultural orgs getting more membership and how turbulent Middlebury has become for members of these clubs, I think it gives more cause to these orgs being impacted more than your standard on-campus org. If we can correlate mental health etc. Five African American students dropped out or left this year alone. It’s
something to look into. It becomes a little bit more immediate. A way for SGA to give more resources to these orgs. If these expensive club sports are standing in the way, it might give the argument a little bit more power.

Senator Gogineni: Quick responses. Maybe someone can write a bill if we’re interested in it.

Senator Boyle: We would love to talk to you about it. My one concern is that Colby rugby went to the administration two years ago and made the argument about safety. The response was we don’t have any more money so why don’t we just end it. That being said, going at it from a cultural org is a lot stronger.

Senator Toy: Something totally different: I’m going to be sending out an all student email for Cabinet. If you’re not a Senator next year please consider applying or nominating someone you think would be good. I’m looking for a large time commitment as well. Look for that thanks.

Motion to adjourn.

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of adjournment: Everyone. All those opposed: 0 votes.

All those abstaining: 0 votes

Senator Gogineni: Meeting has been adjourned. Meeting end: 7:30 pm.