SGA Minutes: 4/17/2016

I. Attendance

Members Present: Proxy Murphy, Senator Raber, Senator Toy, Senator Sohn, Senator Boyle, Senator Parikh, Senator Grandas, Senator Edwards, Senator Singh (Proxy Bachelet), Senator Chen, Senator Aaron, Co-Chair Chang

Members Absent: Senator Rainey

Co-Chair Chang arrived 5 minutes late. Senator Grandas arrived 9 minutes late. Senator Chen arrived 15 minutes late.

II. Acceptance of Minutes

Proxy Murphy: Motion to accept last week’s minutes?

Senator Sohn: Motion to accept.

Senator Toy: Seconded.

Proxy Murphy: All those in favor of accepting last week’s minutes: Everyone

All those against: 0 votes

All those abstaining: 0 votes

Proxy Murphy: The minutes have been passed. Moving on to announcements.

III. Announcements

Co-Chief of Staff Spector: Hello everyone. I wanted to talk to you about the campus master plan. I’ve been the student appointed to work on the Campus Master Plan this year. In 2007 Middlebury hired a consulting firm to make maps/run studies about what our campus looks like and what we want it to look like in the future. We’re very much in process of working on it. For a little background on the project – the plan is meant to be a 50 year working document. It’s supposed to project future campus development for the long term. It’s not about changing one building specifically but rather more about what the campus will look like many years from now. “A compass not road map”. There are many chapters – some of which being background of the college, plan, specific projects and goals, sustainability, built systems, natural systems. For this master plan we will be updating each of these sections. Instead of changing every detail/data point we’re more looking at big policies and assumptions and how we might need to change those. For example, we can’t change the maps because we don’t have access to that data. We’re adding two new sections - accessibility in the master plan and real estate and lands (the property that the college owns in Middlebury and alluding to other campuses). I’ve been working on the social and academic life section. Some of the things we need to make
clear is that there has been new housing built since the master plan – Ridgeline housing. Another important part is that the faculty has grown considerably and thus need more office space. We can’t run big studies but can make recommendations. Our plan is to continue writing updates and will be doing that for the rest of school year. Over the summer people will continue writing it and hopefully it will be approved by board in the fall. I’m wondering if anyone has any questions or thoughts? Another person was supposed to be here tonight but I can try and answer questions as best as it can.

Senator Sohn: Thanks for bringing this to the Senate. Does it address student demographic changes?

Co-Chief of Staff Spector: Not really. It addresses the whole of the student body and has made note of the significant growth in the student body but it does not have a more specific breakdown.

Senator Aaron: What is the SGA’s role in this process?

Co-Chief of Staff Spector: Originally I was really excited because I thought there would be student input. I have realized that this document is a lot bigger than any point on time on this campus because it’s a 50-year document. Of course it affects the institution but it doesn’t affect our day to day life. My role is to be more the student liaison – students are interested in learning about it. I see the SGA as being informed about what is going on but in terms of other roles I don’t know.

Proxy Murphy: How often are your meetings?

Co-Chief of Staff Spector: Biweekly.

Proxy Murphy: If there are no other questions we can move onto the bills.

Senator Edwards: Can I add to announcements? I have mentioned speed dating before and I’ve been looking at dates. I know we’re winding down but I was thinking we could do it on May 6th. It’s a Friday. Does anyone have comments?

President Gratch: Is it going to be outside?

Senator Edwards: We definitely could.

President Gratch: Wasn’t the original idea to hold it on Battell Beach?

Senator Edwards: We can do that. Does anyone want to help me plan this? It’s been a lot to plan by myself in the past.

Senator Sohn: I can help.

Proxy Murphy: I could help as well.
Proxy Murphy: Any other announcements?

President Gratch: There’s an election tomorrow from noon until noon on Tuesday. Obviously other than making sure you vote try to make sure your constituents vote. It’s important to have a strong voter turn out because if reps are not elected then the whole legitimacy of the SGA is hurt for next year. Spread the word. Make sure you follow the rules of the constitution. Zak can speak to that if you need clarification. Doug is also still looking for ushers for commencement activities.

Doug Adams: Yes, so you would assist with commencement activities. I need two for seating and then a couple others for other activities. You stay for senior week and are paid. If you’re interested, you can contact me. I will be holding interviews this week.

Senator Grandas: What are dates?

Doug Adams: Commencement is May 29th so it would be the week before that through commencement.

Co-Chair Chang: The job people told me that they had all jobs listed on website.

Doug Adams: Commencement is not considered a job. You need to be nominated or suggested. This is first time I’m doing it.

Co-Chair Chang: Isn’t the summer housing agreement already due?

Doug Adams: Yes, except for this position. I need 4 to 5 people.

IV. New Business

Proxy Murphy: Ok. Moving on to new business. We have no old business. These constitutional referendums were submitted by Co-Chair Chang.

President Gratch: Before Co-Chair sent in her bill I did what she had asked and made my own proposed changes. So we should Strike Section B and just make this about the constitution committee.

Co-Chair Chang: It doesn’t matter to me at all.

President Gratch: Ok then let’s just keep it. Basically this is coming at the request of Co-Chair Chang and the CC. The first one is that current constitution committee wants to be renamed to “The Student Organization Oversight Committee”. It is a more accurate reflection of what they do. If Co-Chair Chang wants to speak to Section B.
Co-Chair Chang: The acronym SCOC is pretty phallic and people have resisted using that in conversation. CC is shorter: Co-Chair. Let’s just stay with this one. I have another question. It seems silly to have a constitutional referendum to change the name of something. Maybe we can just have a referendum to not need a 2/3 vote to change the names of something. We’re not even changing my name we’re changing its abbreviation.

President Gratch: There are things I could imagine that we would want to ensure do or don’t happen with name changes. What if I decide we want to change everything to class president but people didn’t like that? I think we should still have something in place to ensure name changes are agreed upon.

Senator Toy: There’s a slight difference between the two. This says each mention. Maybe just when its abbreviated and not every mention of her title. So when you’re talking with your friends you can say Co-chair.

Co-Chair Chang: SCOC is the problem so let’s change the abbreviation. Otherwise it might get confusing. Each mention of SCOC.

President Gratch: Ok I will change that – “Each mention of SCOC shall be repealed”

Proxy Murphy: Motion to vote?

Senator Boyle

Senator Toy: Seconded.

Proxy Murphy: All in favor: 11 votes (Proxy Murphy, Senator Raber, Senator Toy, Senator Sohn, Senator Boyle, Senator Parikh, Senator Grandas, Senator Edwards, Senator Aaron, Co-Chair Chang, President Gratch)

All those abstaining: 2 votes (Proxy Bachelet, Senator Chen)

Proxy Murphy: Ok this has passed.

Proxy Murphy: Moving on to a couple other things that were forwarded in the email. We have the Multiple Modes of Access to Elections Bill.

Co-Chair Chang: Modes of access. I sent these to Senator Gogineni on Friday. She didn’t include it in the email out to you all because she didn’t realize it didn’t go to all of you originally. It took a while to get back to you but the reason why we can include these and have them voted on tomorrow is that I mentioned them. Doug and I talked and these are things we can introduce and vote on today. Is that ok? Ok. Multiple modes of access is addressing if you’re studying abroad, taking time of from Midd you should be able to access the election. That includes “reasonable” access. I’m open to friendly amendments on this. Essentially it means that the SGA director of membership needs to provide you with electronic signature and skype you into meetings or debates. It says “including but not limited to” so you can ask for other things if needed. You need to be able to be
included in an election if something is preventing it for you. I tried running from home when I was taking time off for medical leave. It’s already really hard to be off campus and having a medical problem etc. Having to write long letters to SGA in response to them denying you access makes it very hard to run. Stipulating this as a section that confirms you can have that access is good. What happens if someone says no and then you can’t do it? Maybe one person shouldn’t have control over that. Also having a way to appeal the decision and give it to a broader group would be important. I don’t know who the appropriate body is. Maybe the Senate maybe the Appeals committee.

President Gratch: I have a question: this is probably for Doug. I know it says in the constitution you need to be currently enrolled at Middlebury to run.

Doug Adams: It depends on how you’re taking leave. If you’re withdrawn, then you’re not an active student. The reason we have this it allows the student not to return the next term if needed.

Senator Grandas: You could put in enrolled students into the wording.

Co-Chair Chang: When they’re running they shouldn’t have to be enrolled they should be planning on coming back the semester that they will be actively serving. Maybe we need to strike that. Can someone look that up?

Senator Raber: So you could replace that by saying: “will be enrolled throughout the time of their office” so that you don’t have alumni running for positions.

Co-Chair Chang: That sounds good to me.

Senator Parikh: If we wrote something like that couldn’t high school students run for election?

Senator Boyle: I feel like that wouldn’t happen.

Co-Chair Chang: We can say excluding incoming freshman.

Senator Chen: Yes, you’re right that can happen but we have first year elections anyway so as far as structure goes maybe barring first years is not necessary because they’re not in this election anyway. Deposits are due in May but elections are in April

Senator Boyle: If that were to happen this high school senior would need to have someone on campus to convince 35 people to sign for them.

Co-Chair Chang: Does anyone have a major disagreement with the goal of this bill?

Senator Toy: In the constitution it says that positions are open to students matriculated by the college. They must be on campus through their term.
Senator Edwards: I was wondering it currently says what exactly? That you need to be on campus?

Senator Toy: All matriculated students.

President Gratch: What if we just took out “students with regard to access students cannot participant in part of all of an election without stating the reason”? With regard to access – you could take out “are abroad, on leave from Midd, with disabilities or for other reasons”.

Co-Chair Chang: I thought it was good that the SGA support students with disabilities.

President Gratch: I think it results in the same thing.

Co-Chair Chang: I think if someone who’s abroad who’s does “Apple command F”, they won’t be able to find it. Maybe we can name the section? Would you be ok if we kept it?

President Gratch: The only part I have issue with is the “on leave from Midd” Cause that info is in the constitution.

Senator Chen: In the constitution, the eligibility of president, SCOC, senators is enrolled students. The same for voter eligibility. I think President Gratch makes a good point. If you say “cannot participate” it doesn’t narrow the scope. Maybe just broadening it a little bit would be useful.

Senator Toy: In terms of trying to get this passed by the student body, it’s a lot of text. I’m not sure if the student body wants to read all of it. I would try to streamline it. I think taking it out is good – leaves up to interpretation.

Co-Chair Chang: I see the problem. The point is I do want people to run who plan on being on campus. It doesn’t matter if they are enrolled when they are running. I should write a clause that strikes these issues.

President Gratch: Are you looking at the bylaws or the Constitution?

Senator Chen: The Constitution from June 10th 2015.

Senator Toy: Weird, mine is April 30th.

Senator Grandas: we could make the on-leave be specific to the type Doug mentioned.

Senator Murphy: Is that a friendly amendment?

Senator Grandas: Yes. Maybe say temporarily on leave?
Doug Adams: There are multiple ways of being on leave from the college. That language is in reference to a president of SGA that was suspended from college in his last semester who wanted to continue in his roll of SGA president with suspended status. In that situation the clarity had to be in constitution. That was the language written at the time. Its awkward language. You want access for students who will be here but who are legitimately not here. The reality is students who are abroad could be withdrawn from the college. If you’re studying abroad in Australia you are withdrawn, Germany you are not. The enrolled is actually active status. How you define enrolled is a bylaws change not a constitutional change.

Proxy Murphy: Maybe say everyone who will be on campus in the term they are running. All the same steps will be taken and a fair opportunity will be given them. Then its all-encompassing.

Co-Chair Chang: Doesn’t that contradict the current constitution?

Doug Adams: You just need a clarification statement in the bylaws clarifying what enrolled means.

President Gratch: On that note – how do you feel about it being in bylaws and not in the constitution?

Senator Raber: What is the difference? Is it easier to change in the bylaws?

President Gratch: It’s easier to change if it’s in the bylaws which makes sense. Bylaws tend to be processes which is why it fits in the bylaws.

Zak Fisher: I think it would be naturally in the bylaws. Signatures, petitions, debates are only mentioned in the bylaws so it would be weird to have these things mentioned in the constitution.

Proxy Murphy: Does that change how we word this?

Co-Chair Chang: We should pass this for the bylaws but if we want all students to be on campus we need to strike something from the constitution.

Senator Chen: It says enrolled without defining enrolled. We can just define enrolled as student with full intention of being on campus for the term that the student will serve. “The definition of enrolled student would be someone who has a full intention of being on campus for the terms that they are running for”. We can play around with the wording.

Senator Chen: Since it’s bylaws we can put it off for a week?

Proxy Murphy: Do you want to do that after?

Senator Aaron: I don’t know if we want to be more specific for students being abroad.
Co-Chair Chang: Is there an email address for students abroad?

Zak Fisher: An all-student email goes to all students who are abroad. Then it doesn’t matter. It’s going out to everyone.

Senator Aaron: Maybe the first time we can say students who are aboard in the email. Do we need to have it here?

Co-Chair Chang: I don’t understand the options.

Senator Aaron: It says making the policies explicit in public? What do you mean by that?

Co-Chair Chang: Do you want to say SGA membership needs to include it in the SGA email?

Senator Boyle: I think it’s a good statement as it is. I think it’s pretty clear when you send out an interest email. “If you are currently off campus you can easily enter signatures: here’s the process of virtually collecting signatures”. I think the problem is with drawn.

Doug Adams: You still get emails.

Senator Boyle: Say you went to an outside program. Are you still on the all-student email?

Doug Adams: Yes, you should be.

Co-Chair Chang: I want to keep it the way it is.

President Gratch: Doug just pointed out that there’s no mention of enrolled students in the constitution it’s just in the bylaws so we don’t need to change the constitution.

Senator Chen: Would you be comfortable making this a bylaws change?

Co-Chair Chang: Yes.

Senator Chen: So let’s change “constitution” to “bylaws”.

Co-Chair Chang: Where should people appeal? And students may appeal to the appeals committee?

President Gratch: Yes. The Finance committee is a student org creation.

Co-Chair Chang: Should it be the SGA Senate or the appeals committee?
President Gratch: The appeals committee is made up of SGA Senators so I think it should be the appeals committee.

Co-Chair Chang: Any other changes?

Proxy Murphy: Definition of enrolled student?

Co-Chair Chang: if it doesn’t go in the Constitution.

Senator Boyle: Motion to vote.

Senator Toy: Seconded

Proxy Murphy: All in favor of voting: Everyone.
All those opposed: None.
All those abstaining: None

Proxy Murphy: All in favor of passing this statement? Everyone.
All those opposed: none
All those abstaining: none

Proxy Murphy: This has passed. We have one more bill from Co-Chair Chang.

Co-Chair Chang: This as also introduced last year. When it says members of CC are chosen annually: they’re actually not chosen annually. Everyone runs a process in the spring and fall. Could you pull it up? It’s not super important to me because it won’t change how CC runs so if you all want to get out of SGA early that’s fine but if it’s important to the Director of membership to have this reflect what actually happens, this is for you.

Senator Toy: Is there a way to put this into a bylaw? Getting this passed might be hard. If it’s already what is happening. 2/3 have to vote and 2/3 have to say yes and if it doesn’t then we can’t add it.

Co-Chair Chang: I thought this is what other people enjoy but I’m totally happy not putting this through.

Senator Sohn: So for example a first year applies to be on CC. He or she makes it and is part of CC. Are they on it for their full time at Midd or is it a reapply situation?

Co-Chair Chang: No, we actually had a student that thought she was automatically on it. The only thing that I know of where people stay on for four years in FC. How did you come to the assumption that students come on to CC for four years?

Senator Sohn: I assumed because of the FC. I wasn’t sure. Is it written anywhere?
Co-Chair Chang: It’s not written anywhere you could choose the same people every year but there is a process each year.

Senator Edwards: I think it’s the first point: If you resign over your four years. It’s not direct though.

Senator Chen: I think it’s because how it’s worded you need to resign it’s not an active switch of power. For many of our other committees if it’s senators we have to run each year. There’s no resignation option after each year.

Co-Chair Chang: My point is that we don’t have people who think they are on it for four years. Is the solution not passing this? I’m going to drop this referendum. SGA director of membership: are you ok with the SGA going by the a Constitution that doesn’t reflect what is happening?

Zak Fisher: That’s a loaded question. I think things are ok how they are.

Co-Chair Chang: How do we make it clear to students? Should I send an email?

Senator Boyle: I know there’s an interest email sent out. Maybe say clearly CC is a one-year positon.

Senator Raber: Or email members at the end of the year telling them they have to reapply.

Doug Adams: The Constitution doesn’t have this process. It’s the bylaws. You’re right on the clarity. There is none.

Senator Raber: Maybe we assumed because I think about other orgs like MCAB, the cabinet committee. IDC has people sit on that for several years. Maybe the Senate feels unusual in that each position is replaced each year.

Senator Aaron: If it’s an issue of people resigning or leaving is it possible for CC to select an alternate if someone leaves? Someone who doesn’t have responsibilities but can be called on if someone resigns.

Co-Chair Chang: They would have to be at each meeting without voting privileges.

Senator Aaron: If you select someone new they also wouldn’t have attended meetings. It would be someone aware of what’s going on but not with any responsibility.

Co-Chair Chang: It’s an interesting idea. We choose a 9th person and when someone leaves we have a replacement.

Senator Aaron: That way there would never be an empty seat.
Doug Adams: If it helps the process used to be that there were 3 alternates. They eliminated that because non-voting members are hard. And they changed it to a large quorum so that not all student reps had to be there.

Co-Chair Chang: I’ll keep thinking about it. I can bring it to CC and get back to you. I’m done.

Proxy Murphy: That’s the end of new business.

V. Adjournment

Senator Toy: Motion to adjourn.
Senator Boyle: Seconded.

Proxy Murphy: All in favor of adjourning: Everyone.

Proxy Murphy: Meeting adjourned: 7:53 end.