Whereas many students study abroad, take time off from Middlebury, have mobility impairments, fall ill, or do not have the ability to participate in the necessary steps of the election for a variety of reasons,

Whereas running for an election should be accessible to all members of the student body that will be enrolled and attending Middlebury College during the term they are running for,

Whereas not all students have friends or classmates that can collect signatures for them,

Whereas being present at a debate can be central to winning an election,

Whereas having to reach out to the SGA and negotiate their access to running can be an extra step for potential candidates that may dissuade them,

Whereas in the spring of 2015 I was initially denied access to running for Co-Chair by the SGA Director of Membership because the SGA wouldn’t allow for electronic signature collection, and had to write a lengthy appeal to have the decision overturned,

Whereas because I was taking time off for medical reasons, finding the time and energy to fight for my right to run was very difficult and may not be an option for many students,

Whereas the student body should elect its candidates through the election process, not by exclusion via its policies,

Whereas the student body loses candidates, especially candidates that may have valuable alternative perspectives, when it excludes these students from running,

Whereas explicitly and publicly making a commitment to accessibility, inclusivity and working with disability is central to a vibrant student body,

Be it resolved that…

A statement be added to the bylaws as following:

“With regard to access, students who are abroad, on leave from Middlebury, with disabilities or for other reasons cannot participate in part or all of an election, must be granted access to all SGA election processes; including but not limited to the election interest meeting, signature gathering and debates. These practices may change over time and may include but are not limited to electronic signature gathering and virtual
presences at meetings and debates. The SGA Director of Membership is responsible for making these policies explicit and public, as well as providing access in a timely and professional manner. All reasonable accommodations must be made, and students may appeal to the Appeals Committee.”

Respectfully Submitted,
Tiff Chang, Co-Chair of Community Council