SGA Minutes 1/29/17

I. Attendance
Senator Pustejovsky absent and sent no proxy.
All other senators are present.

II. Acceptance of the minutes
Senator Wright motions to accept the minutes from last week.
The motion is seconded.
15-0-0
The minutes from the previous week are accepted and recorded.

III. Announcements
President Toy defers to William. He states to continue encouraging constituents to take the student life survey. As of Sunday, there was a 14.65 percent response rate which he states is “good because it has only been open for five days.” President Toy reminds the Senate that they need a 33 percent response rate for the survey to be statistically valid. She also states that she will send a “draft email tonight” so senators can send to their constituents. William also points out the fact that the survey participants have been 65 percent female. President Toy also reminds the body that tomorrow afternoon will be the first raffle prizes. She also reminds the senators to not send any links but rather advertise to their constituents the go/sgasurvey so they don’t keep redoing one survey.
President Toy also announces that 10 o’clock Ross has been suspended until March 6th. She states that on Thursday morning the Ross Dining manager found beer cans in the trash can and suspended the program until March 6th. She reiterates that there is “no way it’s coming back until March 6th” but that she will “try to work something out with changes and talk to him.” She states that the monitors told her they did not see any beer in the trash. Senator Lantigua states that “it is harsh to penalize these monitors” because their job does not include going around and smelling everyone’s drink. Senator Waddell also reminds President Toy to send an email to the student body and Senator Lantigua urges President Toy to include that it was suspended because people were drinking.
President Toy discusses club sports funding and she reminds the senate that this has been a conversation that has been ongoing in the senate for years. She has a meeting time scheduled with leadership of club sports on Tuesday at 7 and does not want to further discuss the bill that she has drafted about club sports. However, she does summarize the main sentiment of the bill as proposing to cap budgets of club sports between “ninety to hundred percent” of their average budgets from the last couple of years. She states that this will become more transparent when she has a conversation with the leaders of these club sports.
Senator Aaron states that one of her constituents is starting a “ski collective” and that if anyone wants more information they can contact her.

President Toy motions to move MiddView conversation to the bottom of the agenda. She states that hearing the mid-year report will “show us where we stand as a student body.”

The motion is seconded.

15-0-0

All in favor and the motion is passed so the MiddView conversation will be moved to the end of the agenda.

The senate now moves to the conversation with Dan Detora over the phone. President Toy asks for Dan to talk about “the changes that are happening and the miscommunication.”

Dan responds that the email was sent very quickly following a decision made after the article in the campus. He states that starting in the spring there will be check stands at every dining hall and students will be asked to swipe their cards. There will be meal plan in the spring but they just want to get “production records.” They are also looking for feedback because the plans for the fall and the implementation of a meal plan are fluid. He says that the students will be apart of conversations for the meal plan and that there has not been any decision made about the meal plans that will be offered to students. He states that “it’ll be up to the student body” and he wants to stress that to the SGA and the student body. They are also looking into hiring more people in the Dining Halls for the swiping system.

Senator Wright asks a clarifying question about “who was involved in making this decision?”

Dan responds by stating that this has been an ongoing conversation since 2008. The decision was made for a variety of reason too. He cites safety issues, concerns about how many people they were eating, and people coming from the outside community.

Senator Wright states his appreciation for Dan’s comments and he asks if there is any record of student involvement in those conversation.

Dan states that these conversation have been going on for quite some while and that there were minor conversations with the SGA last year sometime.

A first year constituent of Senator Ou named Matthew states his question to Dan. He questions Dan that if the concern is to combat food waste would a swipe system be sufficient enough.

Dan answers the question that the student body during conversations about the meal plan can have “exactly what we have now” with one meal plan that it unlimited. He states that there is an misunderstanding with the general consensus on how people view meal plans. He also states that
this will not affect “the price” as it will “stay the same.” He states that meal plan will not influence any tuition increase because that is “not my decision” by a decision of the board.

President Toy asks Dan to talk about the Eat Real bill that was introduced to the SGA about two months ago. She also asks him to discuss the confusion surround the bill.
Dan replies by stating that he has talked to the Eat Real prior to sending out the email that started there would not be any changes in meat in the Dining Hall and “they were comfortable with that.” He also states that as of now there are no formal plans to reduce meat in the dining hall and that the Eat Real group has a lot more to prepare and we are “pretty far away” from having this implement. He states that there will be a forum possibly in late February. He reiterates that this process is working with the entire student body and SGA.

Senator Ou asks if the option will be open to using the money at the grille, midd-xpress, and stuff like that.
The plan will be constructed by student input and there is a possibility of having those options as well.

Senator Schoel asks a similar question about being able to use the meal plan off campus like buying groceries.
Dan reiterates the point that the decision will be made when we get a “group together” and they discuss the construction of a meal plan.
Senator Schoel then asks the question about if the meal prices would have different prices.
Dan says they “will all be the same price.”

Senator Goldfield follows up on Dan’s comments about the Eat Real proposal. He asks Dan if it “is completely off the table” because that is what seems to be communicated.
Dan answers that “it is off the table right now.” He reiterates that the Eat Real team has a long ways to go and that it would be difficult to replace the protein they have now with plant based protein. They need to look at different communities here at Middlebury too like the athletic community and just the overall student population to really go forward with their proposal.

Dan is thanked by the senate and the conversation is ended.

 Senator McCarthy makes a comment that Dan did not address. She states that the posting of calorific and nutritional information about the food is not necessarily a bad idea but it would be great if the information was not “advertised” as much as we are hoping too. She defends her argument by stating that Middlebury has a “an epidemic of eating disorders” and people are just not eating food enough in general. That we should have a discussion about that because it’s a “delicate situation.”
Senator Schoel states that the last conversation with Dan he stated that the information will not be as public as thought but would still be available. Senator Aaron states that we should “continue to talk about it.”

Senator Wright poses a question to President Toy about if she had any knowledge of the swipe system from the past. President Toy states that she did not know it would be implemented in the spring until last semester’s finals week. However, the campus article did “surprise” her. Senator Wright questions the lack of transparency and the seemingly “unilateral” decisions made by the SLG.

President Toy then comments on some events that happened after the campus article on a facebook group dedicated the Middlebury parents. There were a lot of different sentiments and many negative. She states that there will also be a town hall in the spring semester and they are still trying to figure out who can be there but there will be representation from people on the SLG. Senator Lantigua asks President Toy to get the dates confirmed so they can send the date to their constituents.

Co-Chair Sanderson states that there are possible benefits to the much larger popular especially lower income students who might not access to funds to spend at places like middxpress. He urges the body to lobby for increased accessibility to facilities like this. A meal plan option could allow lower income students to utilize these facilities. Senator Cohen states her appreciation for Co-Chair Sanderson’s point. However, she states that a fact of the push back is that there could still be an issue with a meal plan that could leave lower income students hungry and how this would affect financial aid.

Senator Ou bring up the possibility of having the meal plan include laundry. President Toy urges him to email Dan to further conversation on this.

Peter states the same sentiment as Senator Cohen that we should really be discussing the accessibility factor and consider how it could effect a lower income student’s livelihood at Middlebury.

Senator Wright finishes the conversation by stating that everything seems to be “up in the air right now.” That we should continue conversation with all bodies so that we’re all on the same page.

Senator Aaron motions to table conversation.
The motion is seconded.
15-0-0
The motion passes and the conversation is tabled.

Peter, the acting chair of the finance committee, thanks the senate. He begins his presentation by showing the senators the three number members of the finance committee including two sophomores and one freshman. He then states the goals of the committee: innovation, approachability, transparency, cluster organizations, and small concerts. He states that they have been presenting every club with “full details of their discussions and decisions” to promote transparency. He states that for the 107 organizations and cluster organizations and 1.049 million dollars have been allocated. Also, he states that there were 23 new budgets this fall and 14 new money requests. He shows the senate the future snapshot of the SGA’s financial future. He gives the senate a snapshot of the future finances based on 2,460 students.

Senator Aaron asks a question about how clubs are audited and how expenses are signed off. Peter answers that all expenses are checked three times and the student activities office chooses what clubs are audited.

Senator Pustejovsky arrives at 7:52.

President Toy speaks about a bill that would change the Finance Committee's guidelines to “policies” so it has more of edge to it. She states that sometimes it is hard for the Committee to “look people in the eyes and say no.”

There is a motion to table the conversation
The motion is seconded.
15-0-0
The motion passes.

President Toy talks about the next thing on the agenda and states that the senate does “not have to vote on this today.” She states the bill is to allow the finance committee to take the policies mores strictly.
The bill would also look to the SGA to approve funding that was requested for “one unit” over 1,000 dollars. It would allow the SGA to approve it because as President Toy states it is “easier for us to say no.”

Senator Pustejovsky motions to table the conversation.
The motion is seconded.
15-0-0
The motion is passed.
President Toy discusses some changes to her cabinet. She states that William will move to the Director of Elections and some other additions to her cabinet. She states that there will be a special election for Junior Senators combined with the Feb elections.
Senator Aaron asks when the Feb Senators last meeting should be. President Toy clarifies that it is tradition that senators come until they are replaced.

President Toy motions to ratify new cabinet members.
The motion is seconded.
15-0-0
The motion is passed.

President Toy begins the conversation on MiddView trips by discussing her conversation with Laurie Patton and was understood that the “situation was not a dire as we thought.” It was stressed to her that this would be a “partnership.” President Toy presents the senate with various situations that they could possibly allocate towards the MiddView trips.
Senator McCormick questions one of the possibilities which is giving MiddView 10,000 and questions where the other funds would be found.
President Toy responded by stating she did not know. She was given the impression that this would allow the SGA some ownership over MiddView.
Senator Wright states “is this a joke?” He continues by stating that he is wary on voting on any proposition when it seems like transparency is still an issue. He defends his argument by stating that the MiddView trips funding was presented as something dire but now seems to be something else.
Senator Schoel agrees with Senator Wright and states that MiddView is important to many of our constituents but if we decided not to fund it we don’t know the ultimate fate because of the lack of transparency.
President Toy states that “I guess it is a question about what we fund.” She brings up the funding of FOO as an example.
Senator Pustejovsky says that many of her constituents were wary about the MiddView funding because it seems like we are in a deficit but the administration keeps getting larger.
Co-Chair Sanderson echos Senator Pustejovsky statements and states his curiosity in the ever-growing administration.
Senator Wright appreciates President Toys urge to vote on the bill but states that he cannot vote on “principle.” He states his unformt in passing legislation without knowing all the facts.
Senator Ou also states his confusion of where the money would come from if the SGA voted not to fund it.
Senator Aaron reiterates the need for transparency and calls it “ridiculous.”
Senator Cohen states her confusion too but also states that she doesn’t understand why we should even fund it if the administration is not going to clarify any points. She states it seems like the administration will find the money and “make it happen” because they want this to happen. Senator Schoel states that many of her Feb constituents are confused and upset because if they decide to fund it “nothing's going to happen” to Febs. Senator Ou poses a question about how they would get the 50,000 for the rest of MiddView. Senator Cohen reminds him that Katy Smith Abbott discussed meeting with the Ways and Means committee. Co-Chair Sanderson also agrees that the senate should not vote on the bill and ask for more transparency. Senator Pustejovsky agrees. President Toy states that she respects the opinion about not voting on the bill but would like some urgency on the matter. There is also the possibility of voting on a bill and then proposing another bill. Senator Andrews agrees with the transparency issues and states that she felt as if this was an emergency situation. Senator McCormick states that the possibility of just funding 10,000 dollars might show the student body and administration that we care about MiddView but still raise questions about transparency in the whole process. Senator Aaron reiterates her opinion of the lack of transparency and urges more of the administration to show up to meetings. Senator Lantigua states that this conversation shows that we care and that we care so much that we are supportive of finding the money for this program. However, we are just one body and have our own troubles with our money and states that she doesn’t understand the lack of transparency and the way the campus progresses. She uses the new AFC as something that is just new and questions why it had not been supported before. Senator Lantigua continues the sentiments by stating that she is upset and confused by the current trend of the administration. Senator Pustejovsky states that she believed the SGA would already be in collaboration with the administration but it seems as if it is only a one sided conversation now. She also echoes the points raised by Senator Lantigua.

Senator Wright motions to table the bill. The motion is seconded. 12-2-1 Senator Cohen and McCormick vote in negation. President Toy abstains.
President Toy finishes the conversation by stating that there will be many more conversations and visitors in the meetings to clear up any transparencies. She thanks the senate and wishes them a happy break.

President Toy motions to adjourn.
The motion is seconded.
15-0-0
The motion passes.