

I. Attendance

All senators are present.

II. Acceptance of the Minutes

Senator Pustejovsky motions to accept the minutes.

The motion is seconded.

17-0-0

All in favor and the minutes from the previous week are accepted, and recorded.

III. Announcements

President Toy makes an announcement about an upcoming conference at Bowdoin. She states that she “will not be able to get everyone” on the trip but would love for people to go. She would prefer if it were senators who were looking to continue their work with the Student Government and preferably not seniors. The dates are April 7th to the 9th and she urges the senators to let her know “in the next couple of days” if they would like to go or not.

She also mentions again the Student Life Survey is a great opportunity to inspire potential bills and initiatives. She states that survey allows for a good platform for initiatives to come from and to take up. She will also be sending out in the same email an update about McCullough renovations for MiddSpeaks and will send the email after the meeting. This update on MiddSpeaks will allow for conversation before it is presented to the College Board of Overseers.

President Toy makes an announcement that the probation period for 10 o’clock Ross ends tomorrow and will not start up until the following due to getting an updated monitor’s schedule. Just before this meeting, she spoke to Dan Detora and the possibility of 10 o’clock Proctor. There would be fruit and desserts rather than ice cream and cereal that is served at 10 o’clock Ross. She states that it “will be more central of a location and is less likely to have issues with alcohol. She asks the senators if there are any strong opinions against 10 o’clock Proctor.

Senator Ou states that he emailed his constituents and they were indifferent about it. He stated that an overall theme in the responses was that “something is better than nothing.” This was out of the 17 responses he got.

President Toy motions to vote on the idea of 10 o’clock Proctor.

The motion is seconded.

17-0-0

The motion is passed and President Toy will follow up with Dan Detora about 10 o’clock Proctor. Ratifying new committee members. There have been a couple updates to the committees and overall the next couple of weeks the senate will ratify new members into many committees including the finance committee.

A motion to ratify is raised.

The motion is seconded.

16-0-1

Senator Fleischer abstains.

IV. Senate Checkins

Senator Lantigua asks the senators if there are any updates. There are not at this time.

V. New Business

The topic of Charles Murray and “the last five days” is the next discussion between the senators.

President Toy reminds guests that in order for them to speak they need a senator to yield to them. She tells the guests that she is “happy to yield to anybody.” She also states to the guests to state their first and last name for the minutes. She reminds the whole room that the minutes are taken and they “go down in institutional history.” She finally urges to “keep the conversation polite” and try to stray away from “charged subject.”

Senator Aaron asks if the discussion of the bill drafted by Senator Pustejovsky will happen first or if the conversation will lean more towards the bullet points as outlined in the agenda.

Senator Pustejovsky states that she would be happy to start the discussion about the bill.

Co-Chair Sanderson agrees that he would “love to discuss the bill” but first he would like to discuss “the small little controversy... with Senator Wright’s defense.”

Senator Wright begins by putting “the controversy” into context. He says that a number of senators were approached by Charles Rainey and Co-Chair Sanderson to call for an emergency meeting. This meeting was going to discuss the possible solidarity with the number of student protesters and a bill that was recently passed in the Community Council. Senator Wright states that due to some “conversations that week I decided to send out an email... in defense of not hold an emergency session.” He goes on to say that “in defense of not holding an emergency session” he thought the emergency session would cause uneasy tension and might take away from the important conversations being pursued that week. He states that he “personally apoligizes” for not discussing the protest prior to this session and not bringing up the protest last session.

Co-Chair Sanderson yields his time to Charles Rainey.

Charles Rainey begins by introducing himself as the author of the piece of legislation that passed Community Council prior to the protests. The legislation denounced the Charles Murray talk, urged the Political Science Department to rescind their co-sponsorship, and to urge President Patton to not give the introductory remarks at the event. He wants to outline three main points on the argument about having an emergency meeting of the SGA. The legislation wasn’t drafted by a SGA, the conversation would not take focus off of the protests, and the privilege of excluding yourself from conversations when others don’t have that privilege. He points out his co-authorship in the bill with Senator Cohen regarding the Sanctuary Campus which this body voted for and passed. He states that it was a big issue that the senate did not have the conversation earlier and help uplift, and support those who were protesting. He hoped that this body would vote on standing in solidarity with marginalized communities and make an official statement. He is disappointed that there was no discussion regarding the campus visit by a white supremacist.

Senator Wright responds and states he appreciates Rainey’s critiques of the message this body has sent. He agrees and states that he too is “disappointed” but he takes responsibility for not having considered the conversation the session before. He states that he wants to try and respond to the conversation. He wishes this body had prioritized the conversation about the protests. He hopes that this body is a great example of creating a space for conversation. He yields the rest of his time to Rainey.

Rainey appreciates the comments made by Senator Wright and he states he agrees that there is still time to have the conversation in this body. He hopes that the efforts of the SGA will result and support those who took a stand against white supremacy. He hoped that had happened with the emergency meeting.

Senator Pustejovsky states her appreciation of their conversation but states that it seems more of a “personal conversation” between those involved in the situation. She states that she would like to change the subject to the bill but first states that it’s hard for her to sit there and state the SGA was complicit with white supremacist. The SGA Institutional Diversity Committee sent out an email and it was a surprise that there was a SGA response at all. She states that she represents the entire campus and understands the difficulty of what position to have with future conversation. She states that she wants to move to the conversation about the bill.

She motions to table the conversation and the conversation about “What we do now?”

The motion is seconded.

16-1-0

Senator Goldfield is in opposition..

The motion passes and the conversation is tabled.

Co-Chair Sanderson begins the conversation and states his desire on the interest of “what is good for the community” and the interest of mending the community. The student body is extremely divided.

President Toy invites a representative from the executive board of AEI to speak.

Phil Hoxie, a representative from AEI, says that AEI is open to the whole student body and they host weekly meetings that are open to anybody. He states that he has personally worked on many things with Charles Rainey and hopes that they can continue having conversation. He states their intention is to bring speakers that challenge students and there’s something valuable to hear in diverse viewpoints. He states again that anyone is allowed to participate in these conversations.

Alexander Kahn, another representative from AEI, states that the club is non-partisan and hosts many different individuals from diverse ideological backgrounds. Even the executive board of AEI is half democrats and half republicans and there is no pushing. The club is an open discussion for fair and honest conversation.

Senator Fleischer states a quick point that he understands that there might be a bipartisan community at AEI “the founding club is not.”

Hoxie disagrees and states that there is no true partisan in AEI.

Kahn states that AEI also promotes individual research and publish work that support diverse viewpoints.

Senator Aaron thanks all who came to the conversation. She states that she wants the community to resolve the issues and focus on how we can learn from these things. She states that there should also move to the conversation of community standards too.

Senator Pustejovsky asks if bill can be pulled up so the conversation can continue. She urges the other senators for their input and want to add anything too. She states that having that speaker on campus “feels like the community standards were violated.”

Senator McCormick responds that he feels as if this “infringes on free speech.” We should be able to bring who we want to campus even if their ideas are unpopular. He states that Charles Murray’s ideas have something substantial to them if they sold about 400,000 copies of the bell curve.

Co-Chair Sanderson responds and states that some speech doesn’t “have equal platforms” and he brings up a recent conversation he had with a Syrian refugee on the topic of Charles Murray. He states that this person who has viewed an authoritarian government first hand started that the protest was not

infringing on his free speech. He wants to bring up the bill by Senator Pustejovsky and he wants to consider the conversations on community standards.

Senator McCormick brings up his mother who grew up in an authoritarian government and her warning on how easy it was to infringe on free speech and then lose it completely.

Senator Cohen states that she wants the conversation to move towards the more particular situation at Middlebury.

Senator Pustejovsky states that she agrees with many of the senator's comments and how this is important that we talk about free speech. She also states there is a difference between "free speech and hate speech." What do we think our community values are, she poses to the body. She states that Murray was not the best representative for that.

Senator Wilson moves more towards the conversation about the bill. She states the committee appeal process would need to have people who have diverse perspective. She also agrees that the speakers should also align with our community standards. She also hopes that having an appeals process for speakers would mediate some of the drama too.

President Toy yields to Hayden DeBlois, a representative from AEI, asks a quick question about the sponsorship of and the particular intent of the bill.

Senator Pustejovsky states that the sponsorship is typical and just usually in the first part of the bill. Then she goes on and states that she wants departments to think about their co-sponsorships and what ramifications they can have. Student Organizations should also be held to the same community standards.

Senator Aaron thanks for Senator Pustejovsky for bringing the bill forward. Senator Aaron also points out that "the protests were important" and people obviously felt passionate about it. However, the censorship of speakers could be dangerous.

Senator Wright reaffirms the importance of free speech and the conversations around it. He states that it is important to acknowledge the ramifications of free speech when they are erasing someone's personhood. We should have the notion to protect people from oppressive forces and narratives. He again reaffirms that the campus is deeply divided in terms of our ideologies.

Senator McCormick continues the conversation by stating that he doesn't understand why the event could have challenged and engaged in a discourse with Charles Murray. He affirms that we should be inviting people from the whole ideological "spectrum." He brings up the Shaun King speech as it was only received "with applause" while the Murray speech was "the complete opposite." He again states that we should have challenged his ideas in a discourse that didn't fully not allow him to speak.

Senator Wilson yields her time Violet Low, a representative from AEI responds to a couple comments addressed by previous speakers. She speaks first about the importance of maintaining the productive conversations that have come up in the past week. She also ties it back into Senator Pustejovsky's discussion about representing the whole community. She then discusses why she too joined AEI as a place to hear other point of views because she had always been surrounded by liberal ideologies. She talks about how she has been exposed to different arguments that have allowed her to understand her own views better. She states to the senators that "you represent the whole student body and those who wanted to him and that's important. She then talks about the liberal illustration of the campus and how many liberal ideologies never get attacked at Middlebury.

Senator Lantigua responds to the comments made by Low. She understands that it's important to have productive conversation but as the President of Alianza and a latina at Middlebury she is tired of being invalidated on this campus. Murray's narrative questioned her own existence which has caused her mental health to suffer this past week. She exclaims that she is "exhausted" she physically feels the

pressure consistently, of being person of color at Middlebury, that she has to defend her position and it's truly exhausting.

Ivan Valladares, another representative from the AEI, responds and states he is "exhausted too." He brings up his own past in Alianza where he too did not feel comfortable. He goes on to state that AEI was not trying to defend the points made by Charles Murray but wanted to make clear and open dialogue with these ideas.

Senator Lantigua states that Alianza has no point in the discussion right now. Their goal is to try these doors and their ideas are to try and illustrate an inclusive community.

Senator Aaron states she does not feel comfortable voting on Senator Pustejovsky's bill tonight because the conversation needs to continue and to keep discussing solutions.

Senator Duran discusses that Middlebury does not have to engage in these conversations. Then he goes on to discuss the regular debate that people of color at Middlebury constantly have about defending their stance on the campus. He states it has "normalized to me now."

Senator Pustejovsky agrees with Senator Duran's point and continues by stating that she hopes this legislation would give people of color on campus an equal footing.

Co-Chair Sanderson goes on to state that he too would not want to vote on the bill tonight because he thinks the legislation should be "expanded on" and should look at all the mechanisms on campus. He also would like to discuss the role of Pub Safe too and the treatment of student protesters. Co-Chair Sanderson yields to guest, Charles Rainey.

Rainey states that he wants to echo some of the sentiments that state that people of color consistently are forced to engage in these conversations. He says that a lot of academic discourse is taught in classes but the physical presentation of it isn't necessary. Especially in the case of Murray whose book is widely disputed. He then states the protesters right to their own free speech as well and that there is something worth thinking about as well. He then states that the point made by Senator McCormick about Shaun King don't belong in this conversation because the speaker's narratives are completely different.

Senator Wilson suggests that we start the discussion on Senator Pustejovsky's bill more precisely starting with the committee and the appeal process.

Senator McCormick states that he has an issue with the idea of the committee in question and questions the SGA's own "jurisdiction" in this move.

President Toy states that the SGA did not fund him coming here. However, all student orgs go through a review process anyway and there's a lot of review when it comes to student orgs. She would not know what the bill would look like with academic departments.

Senator Pustejovsky states that the committee wouldn't look over decisions of speakers with oversight. Rather they would help students make a statement and express their problems. She also states that the bill is nowhere near finished and wants to flesh it out more.

President Toy yields to Hayden Dublois. He urges the senate to maintain respectful discourse as President Toy announced in the beginning of the meeting. He then changes his discussion to the legislation on the table and states that the appeals process is worrisome to him. He states that some may be tempted by just emotional appeals. He understands that emotions "are very high on both sides." He states that he hopes the conversation around the legislation will be highly debated. He just feels as if the legislation seems like censorship to him and what that it truly is creating. He states that viewpoints might not adhere to what the majority of the community truly want. He states that the legislation is going down a "dangerous road."

Alex Kahn, another AEI representative, states that he concurs with everything Hayden started. “This is a very liberal campus” and we should be wary of how we ostracize certain viewpoints as it might set a very dangerous precedent. He hopes the conversation goes further in how we uphold a community and the right of free speech.

Senator Fleischer states his agreement with the bill and how the legislation will lead into the larger conversation. He feels as if he could vote on the bill by the end of tonight. No one seconds the motion.

Co-Chair continues by stating that “speakers can be shut down.” The protest illustrated the power in the students and their methods, and showed that this is something that truly affects them.

Senator McCarthy urges towards “putting words on paper.” She uses the legislation regarding Black Lives Matter as an example of an appealing process the 200 signatures. We should have a way for students who don’t want a speaker on campus to somehow fight back.

Senator Lantigua says that if it were to get into specific numbers than it would limit the conversation. This needs to be a piece that uses coalition processes and community building.

Senator Pustejovsky states that does not want to vote on the bill today and would like to table the conversation.

The motion to table conversation on the bill is seconded.

13-3-1

Opposing tabling the conversation are Senators Fleischer, Aaron and Goldfield.

Senator Wright abstains.

The motion passes and the bill is tabled.

Senator Wright makes a closing statement on how we should look at workshopping the community standards right now. We should do something, he urges. He states that the Murray talk were in violation to the community standards and we need to think about that. He uses another example of a protest sometime ago against Murray at Middlebury. He states in interest in starting an ad-hoc committee that would workshop the ideas of the community standards and the legislation

The motion is seconded to form an ad-hoc committee with Senator Pustejovsky steering the conversation.

17-0-0

All senators in favor and the ad-hoc committee is formed with Senators Fleischer, Aaron, Wilson, Duran, McCarthy, and Co-Chair Sanderson.

President Toy says that she will reach out for other important guests to join the conversation around the legislation.

There is a motion to adjourn.

The motion is seconded.

16-0-1

President Toy abstains.

The motion passes and the meeting is concluded.