SGA Minutes 4/12/17

I. Attendance
All senators are present for today’s meeting.

II. Acceptance of the Minutes
Senator Pustejovsky motions to accept the minutes from last week.
The motion is seconded.
16-0-0
Senator McCormick was not present at the time of voting.
The motion passes and the minutes from the previous week are recorded.

III. Announcements
President Toy announces Faculty appreciation award nominations which are “due in 5 days.” The SGA gives money and hosts these awards. She also encourages people to tell their constituents about dinner with administrators which they should have received an email about. She states that they are hosting students in their homes and that people should sign up because she does not know when this could happen again.

IV. Old Business
President Toy states that the body can’t vote on the Constitutional Reform bill just yet due to parliamentary rules. There will be an “informal” vote for the upcoming election about having one student on the ticket for the “fall” and then having another student on the ticket for “spring. This would be about the upcoming Co-Chair election like they do with the Junior Senator election. President Toy presents the idea of having people be able to choose when they want to run rather than having a pair on a single ticket. Just so it would not allow for chaos in case one of the people on the ticket drops out. She states that she would rather have the ticket as a split. She states that it is not truly necessary for the Co-Chair position but that it is necessary for the President. She finishes her statement by stating that she discussed with Katy Smith Abbott about this topic and that the administration is “fine” with any decision the body makes.

Senator Wright asks Co-Chair Sanderson what is his feelings since he has been Co-Chair for a semester.

Co-Chair Sanderson states that it is still possible to be effective within a semester framework if you “run your campaign like that.”

Senator McCormick brings up the possibility of a senator filling the empty seat of the Co-Chair if they were to drop out. He asks President Toy if it was “manageable” to fill both roles.

President Toy says it was manageable and she questions what Senator would be nominated to take the role.

Senator McCormick responds that it would be a nomination from this body.

President Toy reiterates that the work was not too much but she would be open to the idea. She states that it’s also a temporary position until the emergency election is held.

Senator McCormick yields to William who states that anything like the idea on the table would require a constitutional reform and then a full referendum.

Senator Wright states that those who are considering running for the Co-Chair position, which he admits that he is apart of, that they are very qualified and he does not doubt their ability to correctly utilize their time if its even just one semester.
Senator Wilson states her appreciation for the comments made but she speaks about her personal findings as a one semester Junior Senator and she remarks that she has found it “difficult to adjust.” So she wonders how and if that would affect the Co-Chair.

President Toy makes a counter argument stating that without having people being able to be on the ticket that it prevents Juniors going abroad to have this position.

Co-Chair Sanderson responds and says that it truly comes down to “personality” which should be weighed in and he states that people who run on a one semester ticket will be “inclined” to have their position targeted towards what they can succeed in one semester.

President Toy motions to vote and states that the yes vote would give candidates the opportunity to run on a one semester ticket and a no vote would keep the Co-Chair position as it is.

The motion is seconded.
11-3-3
Senators Wilson, Waddell and Duran vote against the motion.
Senators Fleischer, Aaron and McCormick abstain from the motion.
All other Senators are in favor.

The motion passes.

President Toy then goes through the By-Laws Amendment Bill and projects the bill on the screen to show the body the clarifying changes. The bill clarifies that the Co-Chair position will now be shown the same way as the Junior Senator. It also clarifies that Feb Senators will stay on the senate until the position is filled with a the February election. President Toy shows the Senators many of the clarifying edits that were made in the last meeting including: voting stations, money allocated to campaigns. President Toy also makes a comment about clarifying about what the body should do during a tie and asks the body if they have any ideas.

President Toy motions to vote.
The motion is seconded.
17-0-0

The motion and the bill passes.

President Toy comes back to her comments made about tie breaking policy and what the body should do to end a possible tie in the election. President Toy yields to William.

William states that nothing passed, except the Co-Chair decision, will “apply to this election” to maintain fairness. He proposes the idea that candidates who are apart of the tie that they will make a speech to the senate and then the senators will make a blind vote that would vote on the outcome of the campaign.

President Toy states that “re-running an election” might result in voter fatigue so William’s solution might help with this happening. However, she does state that it would give the body a lot of power so any solution needs to be discussed.

Senator Cohen expresses her doubts in the solution proposed by Weightman. She states her concerns in maintaining a truly “democratic election” and she states that she does not feel comfortable playing a role in breaking a tie. She proposes eliminating those who did not get enough votes and having another election with those who tied.

Senator Lantigua agrees with the sentiments made by Senator Cohen and likes the proposal to call for a re-election in the case. She asks the body if “anyone likes this?”

Senator McCormick motions to straw poll.
The motion is seconded.
12-4-0
Senators Duran, Ou, Wilson and President Toy vote for the proposal made by William.
Following the straw poll, President Toy asks if there are other ideas.
Senator Goldfield states that he likes the idea of having a “runoff” election with the two candidates who tied possible “a day or two” after the election results had been announced.
President Toy agrees that it would a possibly and she hopes “people will change their mind.”
Senator Lantigua states that “voter fatigue” shouldn’t be a problem either because people should vote “if they wanted to vote.”
Senator Waddell proposes possibly having a first candidate and then a second possible candidate that a voter would want. It would eliminate the worry of any ties.
Weightman states that it would not work with the program and that there would be no way to “tabulate the results quickly.” It would just be a huge tedious process.
Doug Adams weighs in and states that the body would have to buy a new program to tabulate the results which costs about two-thousand dollars.
The conversation about the tie-breaking process stops and Weightman begins talking about the upcoming election and their details. He states that the election will have a debate at 7:30 for the Co-Chair positon and the President position back-to-back in Crossroads.
President Toy states that changes are “basically what we used to have.”
Senator McCarthy motions to vote.
The motion is seconded.
17-0-0
The motion passes.

President Toy begins to present the Constitutional Amendment Bill and states that the first part looks at the Senate and the Cabinet and then it gets rid of the House Senator position which is no longer utilized. She states that she “basically rewrote things so they were clearer.” She states that the bill clarifies everything in general and those who the president appoints. There are changes to the first meeting of SGA to elect the Speaker at the end of the first senate meeting. It also clarifies that the agenda will be set at least 24 hours before the meeting and that the Speaker and the President should be given bills by 5 pm on Thursday. She also continues to talk about emergency meetings and that the agenda should be set and approved by the President and emailed at least 24 hours before the meeting. She again reiterates that the bill is pretty much “housecleaning” and making things “nicer and cleaner.”
Senator Goldfields asks about a change made which states that anyone from the community can bring legislation to the SGA.
Co-Chair Sanderson agrees that this topic should be discussed.
Senator Cohen states that she sees “both sides” of the conversation but states that should outside legislation be handled better in Community Council.
President Toy remarks that she has no real to fight to keep it in or out but was just thinking that a Senator must sponsor any bill so not every bill that someone wanted to present would make it to discussion by this body.
Senator Pustejovsky brings up MiddView as a possible example of including the whole Middlebury community.
Senator Cohen agrees and states that any legislation still has to be sponsored by a senator.
Doug brings up that only staff can bring legislation to staff council.
President Toy states that it will state “any student” now. President Toy motions to table.
The motion is seconded.
17-0-0
The bill is tabled.

President Toy yields to James Callison to present the bill on the Staff Appreciation Dinner. He states that April 20th they are planning a day where the staff has dinner at Atwater catered by Waybury Inn to cater so the Atwater people can have a break. The bill is expressing for funds around 5,000 dollars and it would be annual. The day would also have video made by students that would express their thanks.
Senator McCormick asks if the day was chosen for a specific day and Senator Cohen asks about the funds.
President Toy states that it was the day that Atwater was open and that the funds are all accounted for and would come from the newspaper subscription and then be written in the budget later.
President Toy motions to vote.
The motion is seconded.
17-0-0
The motion passes and the bill passes.

Senator Pustejovsky asks if the video has been made yet so she can tell her constituents about the video.
The video has not been made so senators should be ready to send an email to their constituents.

Co-Chair Sanderson begins to talk about his proposal for the Protest Policies Amendment. He states in the last five months this is the perfect time open discussion about the protest policies at Middlebury. Co-Chair states that he has a personal experience with organizing a protest and when he contacted public safety they did not know the protest policy. He said it is important to discuss the policies that are now being used following the Murray protests which he states as “highly problematic.” The bill confronts the point of “arresting and criminal charges” that are illustrated in the policies. He also confronts in his bill that the policy refers to not distributing leaflets that are “non-confrontational.” He also confronts in his bill to look at public safety and violence. Co-Chair Sanderson yields to Senator Wright.

Senator Wright states that time needs to be a factor in the bill. He also agrees with Co-Chair Sanderson’s discussion about questioning the protest policies that might be targeted towards a certain group. He states that illustrating protests as “disruptive” in a negative light is wrong because by nature protests are disruptive and they give a valid form of “free speech” especially to minorities. He states that it is important to protect protesting as a valid form of questioning the power structures of our society and the way they marginalize minority groups. Senator Wright discusses the way Columbia University faculty responded to Charles Murray coming to their campus and how they illustrated protesting as a valid “form of free speech.” He also brings up the University of Colorado system that had “designated protest zones” but the governor discontinued these because peaceful non-violent protesting is a valid form of free speech.
President Toy asks if the authors want to get the bill passed tonight. Co-Chair Sanderson states that they do not want to vote on the bill tonight but that we should make sure to question protesting. Senator Pustejovsky asks if the authors had talked to anyone in the administration to talk about if they are working on something similar. Co-Chair Sanderson responds and states that they have not had formal conversations but that they are willing to open dialogue anytime. Senator Aaron also urges the senators to talk to pub safe and see what they think since they are a part of the policy reform. She states this could affect the ways in which they operate and the future.

Co-Chair Sanderson expresses his concern about talking to pub safe due to allegations made after the Murray protests that is the reason they are writing this legislation. Senator Wright agrees with the Co-Chair and states that he is surprised that we need to even have a conversation about pub safe using violence during a non-violent protest. Senator Pustejovsky questions what would happen if there was a violation to these policies. She also states that she wants to also have a discussion with her constituents too.

Senator Wright asks that he would be happy to start conversation with the administration and bring back “some intelligence.” Senator Aaron appreciates the comments that have been made but she still states that she thinks it crucial to have an open conversation with everyone especially those effected by the future policy.

Senator Cohen questions what the problem is that the policy would state that they can’t use violent force against students. She reiterates that she does not see a problem in this policy. Senator Wrights asks if a clarification is needed to make the senators feel more comfortable about this policy. Senator Cohen states that it seems clear but that this should not even “need to be a conversation” because using violence against non-violent protesters is wrong.

Senator Lantigua agrees with Senator Cohen and states that we need to look at “easing a lot of tension.” Senator Wright states that “standing up,” “chanting” are not violations and should not be looked at and punished. However, he states things like “pulling a fire alarm” becomes more threatening and violates laws so that is a different conversation.

Senator Fleischer questions why the police should be called for “non-violent disruption.” Senator Wright agrees and states that the bill should clarify it to non-violent disruptions. Senator Goldfield brings up the last line of the bill and says that he is confused by the discussion on the disruption because it’s not targeted towards a speaker but towards the college policy.

Co-Chair Sanderson considers the senators feedback and wants to make sure that the body addresses major issues that affect the college. Senator Cohen agrees that the bill should look at fleshing out more of how it relates to current policy. Senator Wright states that he wants to stress how important it is to look at the “arrests” of breaking violations and how they lead to further conversations. Co-Chair Sanderson asks if there are any more thoughts on how to expand the bill. Senator Lantigua states that the bill should expand its thoughts and look at the rest of the clauses.
Senator Fleischer states that he feels very confident in the bill and states that the body should try to get rid of the possibility of arrest and the disruptive policy. Senator McCarthy brings up the relation to Middlebury PD. Doug Adams makes a clarifying statement that he urges the body to open the conversation and all the people who work on the administration and policy. Senator Wright agrees that there needs to be opening of conversation but he still expresses his wariness in opening too much conversation that might not include all the students’ voices. He urges for the conversation to have “more people at the table” who have never been a part of the conversation.

Co-Chair Sanderson states that he would like to be able to vote on the legislation in the next week or two. He motions to table the bill.

The motion is seconded.
17-0-0

The motion passes.

President Toy finishes the conversation by stating that there was an email sent out that asked for a response and nomination on a committee that would look through suggestions made. There are hundreds of responses to the Murray talk that this committee would look at. These emails asked for nominations and President Toy will pass around the name of the nominees for Senators to check out to reiterate the nominations.

There is a motion to adjourn.
The motion is seconded.
17-0-0

The motion passes.