

## SGA Minutes 3/7/17

### **I. Attendance**

Senator Lantigua was not present at the time of attendance but arrived at 7:43.

Senator Wright is not present but has sent a proxy in his place.

Co- Chair Sanderson is not present at today's meeting.

All other Senator's are present for today's meeting.

Senator Duran leaves the meeting at 9:00.

Senator Waddell leaves the meeting at 9:21.

### **II. Acceptance of the Minutes**

Senator Pustejovsky motions to accept the minutes from last week.

The motion is seconded.

16-0-0

The motion passes and the minutes from the previous meeting are recorded.

### **III. Senate Check-ins**

Senator Cohen, acting as the Speakers, asks the body if there are any check-ins.

There are no check-ins.

### **IV. New Business**

President Toy introduces the Cabinet Reports for 2016-2017. She yields to the cabinet.

First is Chief of Staff Jin Sohn. She states that the one of the main thing she focused on in the year was the Staff Appreciation Day with the capstone film and dinner. She also states the idea for a "town and gown day" which would be a "carnival-type event." She also discusses staff appreciation awards and collecting information on televisions in common rooms. There will also be a bill presented today: The Grill Bill.

Next is Director of Membership Weightman. He first discusses the "institutional aspects" of the elections council and the creation of their new email. Next, he discusses the progress on archiving election's data on a google drive. He also worked with the Senate of pass electoral reform.

Next is Taylor Banaszewski. She states by stating she hired all the students for the SGA like the Secretary, the Arts and Crafts Manager, and 10 o'clock Proc managers.

Senator Duran asks if 10 o'clock Proc is still in operation.

Banaszewski answers by stating that it is but that she recommended to next year to look at "revamping" the program.

Next is the Director of Transportation. She states that she worked on a new platform for more students about ACTR so it was easier to read. They also implemented a price scale for break buses and she recommends to "buy early for break buses.

Following is the Director of Technology. He states that there are three thousand more likes and that it crossed the ten thousand threshold for the year. He also updated and coded the site manually.

Institutional Diversity is next. They begin to discuss the "spring retreat" which was cancelled because many people cancelled ahead of the event. They state that they are hoping to have the retreat in the fall which would be a better time for it to be more successful. They also

speak about sending out emails and working with President Toy preceding the Murray event to draft emails, and talk about next steps. They also state their “good” relationship with Miguel Fernandez.

The Finance Committee is next. He discuss that they allocated about 1,110,000 dollars to 111 organizations, which include clusters with other organizations too. They also brought on six new members and helped to pass bills to “solidify the processes.”

Following is External Affairs and they begin by discussing that majority of their time was sitting on meetings with the Better Middlebury Partnership and the Chamber of Commerce. One topic they discussed was bike safety which was inspired by their re-established relationship with the Chamber of Commerce.

The Student Organization Oversight committee is following and they discuss the “significant” reform that they have gone through. They approved 12 new organizations and denied 10 new organizations and they helped “5 or so” clubs with their constitutional amendments.

Following is Social Affairs who discusses the three parties they had this year. They also met with Public Safety and want to emphasize that Public Safety wants more student contact.

Student Educational Affairs is next and they first talk about midterm course evaluations. They also passed the bill about the Student Advisory Committee which they hope increases the number of departments with their usage. They are also working to possibly implement a grade free first semester but they are just in the talks right now. Other things they are working on are: financial literacy workshops, a professor speakers series, and a black studies major/minor.

Senator Goldfield asks more about the grade free first semester.

They respond by stating that it needs to be passed by the board and the faculty but that they are just in talks right now.

Following is Athletic Affairs they begin by discussing their “big event” of the spring which was Panther Pride. They talk about the “ongoing case” of the missing ice skates and they are looking into finding a place to house those. They also met with Erin Quinn and discussed club teams which can’t be official because NCAA and Middlebury rules like a club tennis team. They are also having a “hyper masculinity” conference next fall.

Environment Affairs is following. They begin by discussing the local food table tents and then working with the Office of Sustainability which helped them put on a sustainable film series. They did not have the chance to have their “inclusivity in the outdoors” retreat at Burgin Lodge but they are still hoping that will happen next year.

Health and Wellness is next. They talked about it being a “challenging” year but they are hoping to work in the future on a “wellness center” which will house yoga classes, essential oils, and various speakers.

The Director of Sexual and Relationship Respect is next. They, over the year, have been working on the Consent Project and also helped President Toy with the free tampon initiative. They also organized a joint green dot training session with the senate and cabinet.

Director of Publicity follows and they discussed working on posters for the election debate and staff appreciation day. They also reached many people with their publicized events online and they state that the video done for staff appreciation day has a lot of likes and has made an impression on many people online.

Finally is the First Year Committee. Senator Goldfield states that they had accomplished a great Atwater Dinner and a Netflix and Grille night. He said they were very well attended.

They wanted to look into getting therapy dogs on campus and having a first year party but those plans fell through do to registration.

President Toy thanks her cabinet for their presentations and then moves onto the next agenda topic choosing the new SLSEA. She states that the candidates will give their presentations and then the senators will choose the liaison for next year.

The first candidate is Amosh Neupane. He begins by introducing himself as a Junior Sociology major with a minor in religion and classics. He was born in Nepal and currently lives in New York. He first learned about endowments when he was applying about colleges and he wondered about the “billions of dollars and what sense does it make.” He references a past liaison, Nick Garber, who discussed how the college generates revenue and how the endowment in a single term. He gives the senators a “brief description” of the endowment and how it operates. He also applies this to financial aid funding which he is interested in increasing funds and working with the body on maintaining a great financial aid fund here at the college. He also brings up his major and how it would be fascinating to him to have this role and he states that he is prepared to learn about the business models that make up the endowment. He also states his interest in learning all the “financial language” associated with working on the endowment. His final statements have to do with social justice and bringing in diverse narratives to the processes and the impact of the endowment. He states his willingness to work with divestment to hopefully bring the amount invested down. He also stresses his willingness for open forums and an open communication by having office hours, and he wants students to know of the “bridge” that exists to connect students to the processes of the endowment.

The second candidate is Will Dowling. He first introduces himself and then discusses “a refresher on the endowment” to the body. He states his background in working with this body over the last three years and his dedication to “advocacy” for the SGA and the Finance Committee, which he has served on. He also cites his position on the swim team and being an intern at the Scottish Parliament as great background material in helping him with the role and his leadership skills. He also wants to increase the “coverage” of his conversations and the way that the community interacts with the money invested and the assets owned by the college.

Senator Fleischer questions the current investor that Middlebury is using for their endowment.

Dowling says that he would have to have a conversation first without making any huge recommendations like “advocating to ditch them.”

President Toy motions for an executive session.

The motion is seconded.

16-0-0

The body will now move into an executive session to discuss the candidates.

Following the session, President Toy advertises that she will email the candidate, Will Dowling who the body voted to be the liaison for next year, tonight. President Toy then motions to change the agenda so that they can quickly go through the “easier” portions of the agenda.

The motion is seconded.

15-0-1

Senator Fleischer abstains.

The motion passes.

President Toy yields to Kevin Benschmidt to introduce more budgets over ten thousand dollars.

He introduces the ICC and he states “they historically get 40 thousand dollars” but he admitted his skepticism with this large budget due to inconsistency in some events. He admits that there are great events that come out of this budget like “Bite of Brainerd” but he states that he would rather propose a 20 thousand dollar for the next year and then if there are any more requests then they can put a new money request in.

President Toy motions to accept to fund the ICC with a 20 thousand dollar budget.

The motion is seconded.

16-0-0

The budget is passed.

Then he introduces a mistake in the Religious Life Cluster budget because their “flex fund” is around 4 thousand dollars but that they did not put it in their budget. He states this “flex fund” is used to fund various initiatives and has been used very wisely by the cluster in the past.

Senator McCormick questions the flex fund again.

Benschmidt states that the fund is used for funding student initiatives and continuing past initiatives.

Senator Aaron cites her work with the Hillel group here at Middlebury and how the the fund has been positive in continuing initiatives within the group.

Senator Lantigua motions to accept the budget.

The motion is seconded.

16-0-0

The budget passes.

President Toy introduces the Grill Bill and she states that it essentially installs two grills on campus “thinking ridgeline” and can be utilized by students, student organizations and the language schools. The bill costs around 1200 dollars.

Senator Pustejovsky discusses the possibility of having the grills in two separate places.

Senator Wilson agrees with this idea as it would encourage people to explore other places around campus.

President Toy states that hopefully this will be the first of many.

Senator Goldfield questions who will maintain the space.

President Toy yields to Doug and he states that the college, and facilities would be the best possibility.

Senator Pustejovsky motions to pass the bill.

The motion is seconded.

16-0-0

The bill passes.

Next is the Accessible Exercise Equipment bill presented by Senator Aaron. Aaron states that pretty much the bill will look at getting gym equipment in dorms like the basement lounge in forest. She thinks it will be a healthy addition to campus. The bill does not have a set price but after the SGA support then the conversation will move forward about the cost and space.

Senator Wilson adds that she has received nothing but positive feedback about this bill.

Senator Pustejovsky states that the MCAB is considering changing their zumba program so it could be a possibility to fund this project and have conversations with MCAB.

Senator McCormick questions why students just can't walk to the gym.

Senator Aaron states that it helps with accessibility and making equipment more accessible to those with disabilities and just to maintain a healthy attitude on campus.

Senator Andrews questions the trust that we have for students because the equipment could be vandalized.

Senator Aaron states that getting cardio machines would be hard to steal and that we should have more trust in our constituents.

Senator Wilson also states it's not the first time the school had an accessible exercise room.

Doug states that it was removed though because of vandalism and upkeep.

Senator Pustejovsky states that we could enforce the access by possibly having a sign-up sheet or a monitor who would sit there for a couple hours.

Senator Aaron states that she doesn't want the space to be monitored and she wants all students to have access. She would not be opposed to a key card idea like Senator Ou brought up during the conversation.

Senator Pustejovsky motions to pass the bill.

The motion is seconded.

16-0-0

All in favor of voting.

14-2-0

Senators Andrews and McCormick vote in opposition.

The bill passes.

Next is the bill on Academic Freedom and Viewpoint Diversity.

Senator Pustejovsky begins by stating that she was upset by some of the rhetoric used by senators in their emails about this bill and she wants this body to maintain a respectful place.

Senator Goldfield states that he is hoping to pick up the conversation again and make this meeting a productive conversation and then they will motion to vote.

Senator Pustejovsky cites a survey that is going out by the Institutional Diversity and Affairs and states that she wants to hear more about that data and wants to reiterate that this bill as of now does not get to the true source of the problem.

President Toy states that first the Murray protest did not have a financial impact on the college and did not further reduce donations. She also reiterates her want to table the bill and that they are working on something similar in faculty council and they have not voted yet. She states that she wants "to get it right." This bill will be making a statement and she questions the true impact it would have at the end of the year.

Ivan Valladares a co-author of the bill states his want to "vote on this today." He states it's this body's responsibility to address these issues on campus even though it might be difficult. He reiterates the bill speaks to a lot of people on campus about this pressing matter, and gives them a voice.

Senator Pustejovsky brings up the fact that her constituents were also apart of the protest too and they are going through this hard time right now. She does not now how reiterating the same policies that are already ingrained in the college policies is a timely matter and she would rather have more discussions and go from there.

Senator Aaron reiterates that this is pressing matter that will send a message that this is a place where free speech is allowed.

Senator Fleischer tells his own personal story about going through a judicial process and how this bill does not consider those narratives of the protestors as well. He also states this bill does not talk about the idea of free speech and peaceful but disruptive protest. The bill does not confront anything new he states.

Senator McCormick brings up the faculty bill and discusses a “push back” on the bill.

President Toy asks the senator to explain more about his comments.

He states that the free speech motion was brought but was tabled until December.

Senator Wilson agrees that we should not push back voting on this bill. She also states that she has heard a lot of support for this bill and she thinks it's important to vote on it tonight.

Senator Cohen reads a statement by Senior Feb Austin Kahn. It states:

“As someone receiving sanctions from the college because of having protested, I'd like to weigh in on the SGA resolution that supposedly defends "academic freedom and viewpoint diversity.”

First off, anyone who asserts the inherent superiority (intellectual or otherwise) of white people over other races cannot claim academic legitimacy. There exist (and have for generations) norms that govern the academy. After the holocaust and other such attempts at exterminating socially categorized groups of people, "academic" discourses that would logically lead to a eugenicist agenda have been taken off the table.

People at Middlebury who believe in an absolutist ideal of "free speech" make it sound like there are but two options: a) the wholesale restriction of speech (speech you like could be restricted just as easily as speech you disagree with or find detestable) or b) all speech regardless of its content or impact must be protected and - in the case of our campus - even ensured a platform. This is a false dichotomy. There must be a middle path.

I'd venture to say that we can identify some salient feature of the speech that should be prohibited (or at least not given space to be "debated"--eugenics is not a debatable position anymore). Restrictable speech could include speech that is deeply discriminatory (e.g. ideas and words that perpetuate the widely recognized history of violence done to Black people in the United States). I'm not saying Charles Murray has to be arrested if he comes onto our campus (that would be repression/censorship). All that I'm suggesting is that maybe we shouldn't lend him legitimacy when his ideas, however couched in academic and pseudoscientific jargon, are actually doing harm to people in our community and particularly to those who have been most consistently oppressed throughout the history of the United States and most absent or underrepresented at this institution. If we as a community are going to commit to ending discrimination, we will also have to commit to denouncing speech that constitutes discrimination (either by further normalizing white-supremacy or engendering violent/discriminatory action).

The idea that bigotry will simply collapse under academia's enlightened rationality is false. We must name white supremacy and deprive it of power. Robbing Charles Murray of one platform for his racist pseudoscience is a small but important part of that resistance."

Senator Aaron appreciates the sentiments made by Kahn. She states that they are hoping this bill is finding the middle ground because people are afraid to speak and she states that this bill "is a great starting point." This bill is not constructing a hierarchy of speech in any way and it is stressing the importance of diverse speech, and opinions.

Valladares stresses that this bill does "present an absolute." He states that the bill is not advertising for hate speech but it is reinforcing the integrity behind free speech which gives a platform to a spectrum of diverse narratives.

Senator Pustejovsky would like for there to be a section about the protest because it does seem to be a reaction from the events. She states that her problem with the bill is the redundancies of the policies that should be debated and looked at before the body passes the legislation.

Senator Fleischer motions to add an amendment that will discuss the protests. He states that there should be a line that under extreme circumstances peaceful disruptive protests are warranted and they should not result in disciplinary actions taken against the participants of the protest.

The motion is seconded.

5-9-2

Senators Duran, Fleischer, Wright, Pustejovsky and McCarthy are in favor.

Senators Cohen and Lantigua abstain.

All other senators are in opposition of adding the amendment.

The motion fails.

The senators then discuss the possibility of limiting speech on campus.

Senator Aaron makes the argument that the bill "is not saying who should come speak."

President Toy disagrees and states that it reaffirms that anyone is allowed a platform to speak at the school. She also motions to add an amendment about speech that threatens the community wellbeing.

The motion is seconded.

13-1-2

Senator Goldfield is opposed.

Senators McCormick and Duran abstain.

Senator Duran speaks about his abstention. He states that the body still has not discussed what the "community well-being is."

Senator Wilson responds and states that we will never come to a complete consensus on the definition of this community well being. She states that we should vote on the bill and “if you disagree then you should vote against it.”

President Toy reminds that body that at 9 pm they are permitted to leave but there is another bill after this.

President Toy has a friendly amendment and adds “any college affiliated body” to the bill to define a scope of the bill.

Senator Goldfield reminds the body that “people are looking from the outside.” That we should not be focused on that but what is truly right for the community.

President Toy understands the senators sentiments but admits the ongoing discussion with the community has just begun and this bill is just reiterating the same things that people are just beginning to discuss and critique.

Senator Aaron states her “respect” from the other senators and wants to make sure that the bill is voted on tonight. The senator motions to vote.

The motion is seconded.

8-4-4

The motion to vote has passed and the senators will now vote on the bill.

6-9-1

Senators Aaron, Hayes, Goldfield, Andrews, McCormick and Wilson vote in favor of the bill.

President Toy abstains.

All other senators vote in opposition.

The bill does not receive enough votes to pass.

EatReal now presents their bill. They present the senators with similar data that they saw earlier this year. The bill looks at reducing meats in soups and salads and incorporates them more into dishes that would be available at lunch and dinner. They cite animal cruelty as one of the reasons for going about this and climate-change, and the environment. They also talk about protein intake and then how a majority of the student population agree with this bill.

President Toy acknowledges that the SGA does not proportionally represent the amount of athletes that truly do make up that student body so we should consider different narratives when confronting this bill.

Senator Andrews expresses her concerns at putting meat in the dishes because of dietary restrictions that people have in place. So thinking more about plain meat she states.

EatReal replies and understands the concerns expressed and that they will consider this and advocate for more “sauce on the side” options.

Senator McCormick questions the “average protein needed” and states that on this campus there are diverse protein intakes for students.

EatReal understands the concerns but also understands that that is “not every person” who needs that much protein intake. There are also studies done about the health effects of a too much protein diet.

Senator Goldfield brings up an email that was sent out by Dan Detora that invalidated the bill that EatReal is presenting tonight.

EatReal explains how that was a miscommunication and that the wording was not as set as it should have been. It was stating that it would not be implemented right away.

Senator Fleischer brings up the various risks that a diet based on meat brings like diabetes and heart risk. He states that “we eat too much protein and then pee it all out.”

Senator Wilson agrees that there are “great health benefits” but questions the body’s role in deciding other people’s diets.

Senator Pustejovsky reiterates the point made by Senator Andrews about being cautious of incorporating meat into the dishes due to allergies.

There is an amendment on the table that will look at making sure that the meat is not just “incorporated” into the dishes.

Senator McCarthy agrees with the amendment and illustrates it as a sort of “Chipotle” of the dining hall.

President Toy questions the wording of the amendment.

EatReal also is hesitant on the amendment.

The conversation on the bill ends with the senators and EatReal discussing the options for less meat in the dining hall and where protein would be distributed elsewhere. They come to the conclusion that EatReal will work on the wording and present it next week.

There is a motion to table.

The motion is seconded.

13-0-1

Senator Fleischer abstains.

There is a motion to adjourn.

The motion is seconded.

14-0-0

The meeting is adjourned.