SGA Minutes 9/17/17

I. Attendance
All Senators are present for today’s meeting.
Speaker Aaron is present for today’s meeting.
Co-Chair Wright is present for today’s meeting.
President Sohn is present for today’s meeting.
The First Year Senators are not present because their election has not occurred yet.

II. Acceptance of the Minutes
Senator Pustejovsky motions to accept the minutes.
The motion is seconded.
15-0-0
The motion passes and the minutes are recorded.

III. Announcements/Senate Checkins/ Old Business/ New Business
Senator Aaron is the Speaker for the Senate this year. She begins her announcements by stating that the Quidditch Club is going to come into the meeting today to discuss overriding their budget cap that was set last year. She continues by stating the Senate will vote on adding the discussion with the Quidditch Club to the agenda. She states that if the senate decided not to vote on discussing the budget cap with the Quidditch Club that “they might miss a tournament.”

President Sohn clarifies that the body will not vote on the budget cap this week but rather the Quidditch Club will be presenting and then the body will vote next week.
Senator Aaron motions to add the Quidditch Club to the agenda and allocate them 15 minutes “whenever they arrive.”
Senator McCormick seconds the motion.
15-0-0
The motion passes and the Quidditch Club is added to agenda for 15 minutes “whenever they arrive.”

Speaker Aaron continues the announcements by explaining to the senate about “how we proceed with our time.” She explains the way that senators can “motion” like for voting or to “second’ something. She explains that instead of “aye and nay” Senators can “just raise their hands” and most of the time legislation requires a majority. “Motion to table” is like the end of discussion. She declares that her and President Sohn have discussed conduct, and for this year if everyone could be actively “conscious” just in the case that “you might miss something.” Also, if the body could limit their side conversations and “turn off your notifications.” Speaker Aaron asks the body if there are any questions. There are no questions for the Speaker.

The Speaker continues with the announcements. She encourages the Senators to invite speakers and guests. She states to let her and President Sohn know about the guest before they construct and send out the agenda on Thursdays. The Speaker emphasizes for the Senators to invite speakers and guests.

President Sohn continues and she states that having the Quidditch team not on the agenda is rare, and that the agenda will usually be set and sent out on Thursday. She moves onto speak about “MiddLink” which she states that Senator Pustejovsky might be able to “better explain.” President Sohn goes onto the briefly describe MiddLink as the site where all Student Organizations can officially post their leadership for the year and other details about
their org. She explains that the subscription to the site is expiring this upcoming year and so their needs to be a discussion about whether the college will continue the subscription or subscribe to another host. She passes the conversation about MiddLink to Senator Pustejovsky.

Senator Pustejovsky states her affiliation with MiddLink as she is involved in overseeing many of the student orgs with her involvement with Student Activites. She explains that the SGA pays for MiddLink and that it is “not well known.” She explains that this body controls the funds and can look into switching to a different platform in the upcoming year. There will be a Rep from the company that hosts MiddLink in the Grille at 11:30 on Monday. She invites the body to join the conversation about MiddLink.

Speaker Aaron asks the Senator how much the SGA pays for MiddLink.

Peter Dykeman-Bermingham, the Director of the Finance Committee for the SGA, states that the SGA pays around 8 thousand dollars for MiddLink.

Senator Pustejovsky continues and declares that MiddLink is a very useful platform for some but that it would be beneficial to do more research to see if another platform would work better for Middlebury.

Speaker Aaron asks if there are any questions or comments. There are none from the body.

President Sohn continues her announcements by stating that Derek Doucet is the interim faculty rep for the SGA, he is in charge of Student Activities. She also continues that Crossroads Cafe, in McCullough, are looking to put new furniture and have reached out to the SGA to play a role in this and to get volunteers. Senators Pustejovsky, Vijayakumar and Pandey volunteer for the role. President Sohn tell the senators to email one another and meet up sometime in the near future. She continues to tell the body to RSVP and attend the luncheon with President Patton next Tuesday and to please RSVP to Barbara McBride as soon as possible. She continues the announcements with stating that Committee Applications will be out this week and so everyone will have a chance to apply by next week. Finally, the First Year elections will be held shortly and she gives a “shout out” to all the First Years who showed up to observe the body’s first meeting.

The Quidditch Team representatives have arrived. Andrew Plotch and Tabitha Mueller are the representatives for the team today.

First, Peter Dykeman-Bermingham begins by explaining the history of “capping club sports funding.” He states that last year the SGA passed an amendment that capped club sports funding based on their last 3 year averages and were guaranteed 90 percent. The Finance Committee spends a lot of time looking at these club sports funding and making sure that the clubs funding is valuable and not just going to a food budget, or something like that. With any new legislation, it was not so clear what the policy is for these clubs to spend more than their cap has allocated to them. It originally said that all requests would propose to the SGA and then the body would vote on whether the club could “ignore their cap.” However, Dykeman-Bermingham expresses his concern for this process especially when the Finance Committee works so close with these budgets of these clubs and the SGA that it would important to think about the “critical decision making power.” He then goes on to explain
why the amendment was passed and discussed by this body. He states that club sports funding was growing at a significant rate than any other club or cluster. The rise of their larger budget was due to transportation. He also explains how come clubs have a “hybrid” with fundraising too while some do not. He states that the budget cap is not to lose the door because “we want to leave the door open for innovation.” Finally, he states that student innovation is incredibly important but it is also important to critically think about finances and making sure that every student has access to be innovative not just certain communities here at Middlebury. He passes the conversation to the Quidditch Team representatives and states that he has been “working with them” as well.

Andrew Plotch begins by describing the club’s “innovation for this year.” They have been greatly increasing their presence on the campus in the past year. They state their desire to “do something new” for the Middlebury community. He gives a brief description of the club and their founding at Middlebury. From 2006 to 2010, he describes the club as incredibly influential and involved in the Quidditch league which involved thousands of spectators and dozens of teams. He states that the team is trying to produce this innovation in the league again.

Tabitha Mueller continues the conversation. She describes the upcoming the “Middlebury Classic Quidditch Tournament” which is taking place at Middlebury on October 7 at 10:00 on Battell Beach. There are “Daily Prophet” advertisements being put up around the town and the college. The Classic is hopefully looking at connecting the outside community and the college while also helping to connect students here at Middlebury to the commons system, which Mueller describes as being an integral part to the Middlebury College community. There will be local ice cream from Lu Lu’s and hopefully music, they are currently in conversation with WRMC, and other teams from RPI, UMass, UVM and Champlain College. It is hopefully going to help students revitalize the commons system around the Commons Cup. There have already been a lot of demand to participate in the event from first years and other students. There are “at least 75 freshman” signed up for the event. They are also looking at working with Tammy Grant to get local districts to participate with the event and to increase their numbers and awareness on campus. So, the “big change” from the budget from last year is that the Quidditch Club is looking to join the US Quidditch League which has around 200 teams and can be seen as the “governing Quidditch body” that ironically was started here at Middlebury. They are looking to become a “more competitive team” which will require a higher travel budget. There was a majority of demonstrated interest from the team last year in joining this more competitive league. She also states that they had around 50 people show interest during the clubs recruitment outside of Proctor and Ross in the past week. She finishes her statement by describing the team as one of the only “co-ed sport clubs” at Middlebury that has “one team.” She illustrates the Quidditch sport as “special” because their emphasis on gender equality in the sport. She asks if there are any questions.

Senator Goldfield states that it is common for first years to sign up for clubs but then end up not joining the club. He expresses his concern about the clubs expectations of new first year members.
The Quidditch Club reps understand the concern presented by Senator Goldfield but state that even if half the first years did not go through with their commitment with the club they would still have more than the average team which is 15.

Senator Pustejovsky asks Peter Dykeman-Bermingham about how much over the budget cap is this request.

Dykeman-Bermingham states that they are still working on a “raw number” for the budget which was around 2826 or around 220 percent above their cap which was 1100 last year.

Senator Mahboob states that all the clubs success and having the common’s system involved is a “great idea” and she thanks the reps for their work. She states that she hopes this passes this body so Quidditch can continue their good for the Middlebury community.

Co-Chair Wright seconds Senator Mahoob’s statement. He describes their action to revitalize and work with the community as “admirable.” He has a question for Dykeman-Bermingham about how to allow the cap to change so their budget does not just get recapped back to their original number.

Peter Dykeman-Bermingham states that while that is a great idea and important to think about. The body should be aware that there is a common trend at Middlebury where there are enigmatic leadership from Seniors and upperclassmen but then it loses that action when those students graduate. He also explains that it is easy to amend the cap for the future but that the body should look at the progress of the club before their allow anything for the upcoming years.

The Quidditch Team reps state that they are hoping to continue the energy with first years and they do have a junior and sophomore who are extremely involved in the club’s future.

Senator Goldfield ask Dykeman-Bermingham about if the budget gets sent to the Finance Committee. Dykeman-Bermingham states that yes the budgets are sent to the committee and they are looked through with extreme detail.

Senator Goldfield questions why the club did not present this new budget last year even if the club knew they were going to join this new league.

Dykeman-Bermingham states that there was a little “snafu” where the club did not meet their required minimum and then there were other complications involved as well.

The time allocated to the Quidditch Club is up. However, Senator Goldfield motions to add 2 more minutes to the discussion time.

The motion is seconded. 15-0-0

The motion passes.

Senator Goldfield questions why the club did not include the registration in their budget proposal from last year.

The reps states that there were some lingering feelings from “graduating leadership” that did not desire the change that the team wanted. It was a mishap that never should have happened and it was more an individual’s own action than rather the whole feelings of the team.

Senator Salas ask if they have any information on fundraising activity with the club.
The reps answer that they do not have it “here.” However, there have been different ways in the past years that they have used to get different funds for hotels and such.

Peter Dykeman-Bermingham thanks the body for listening and that the conversation is not finished.

Plotch asks the body if they have any questions to email quidditch@middlebury.edu.

Speaker Aaron asks the Senators to state any “check-ins” they have.

Co-Chair Wright states that the Community Council is hoping to have “big conversations” this year about the commons system and “additional heavy conversations.” He is hoping to talk and discuss the way other peer institutions go about their reslife community at their own institutions. Speaker Aaron tells him to connect with NesGov too.

Senator Andrews states that she met with the new excited treasures and tri-chairs of Ross Commons.

Senator McCormick states that he has been talking to the new CRD.

Senator Koontz states that she has been working with their new CRD. She wants to work on her platform too which includes affordability and financial aid here at Middlebury.

Senator Gosselin is looking forward to discussing the bill on the table.

Senator Salas is working with Amnesty International and working to get it involved in the community here. They will get “back” to the body.

Senator Goldfield is working with the Athletic Affairs Committee and the Academic Committee and looking at what the clusters look like. Also, looking at possibly posting the hours of different sports teams when they are in the gym online.

Senator Warfel states that she is excited to reach out more to the Junior Class and hear about what they want to discuss for the upcoming year.

Senator Pandey is excited to have discussions with this body especially in reference to this data given culture.

Senator Fleischer shares his problem about the trials that occurred last year in reference to the Murray protests and he is looking to draft a bill so that it can go back to the “old form” of a truly open trial. He is looking to meet with the Judicial Affairs Office and is not looking for a cosponsor on the bill but if anyone’s interested they should contact him.

Senator Pustejovsky is working on Dining Hall stuff that the body will discuss during “Old Business.”

Senator Mahboob states that she is working with Senator Pustejovsky about Dining and Dan Detora, and discussing different ideas with her constituents.

President Sohn states that senators should maintain to keep in contact with the cabinet directors.

Speaker Aaron states that she is working on getting a few workout machines for students closer to campus.

Senator Pustejovsky is worried about spaces where the machines could go since the Crest Room was taken away and MCAB is possibly looking to use the Forest Basement. The two Senators will further talk about this at a later time.

Speaker Aaron tells the senators to add their phone numbers to the Google Doc. She also presented that she heard an idea of buying everyone an id holder for the back of their
phones as a “sorry for the swipe system” which would be around 800 dollars but she is working on that, and wanted to know other peoples feedback.

President Sohn thanks the senators for their checkins and she explains the checkins as a great way to “get involved” and learn from your fellow peers. She also stresses the importance of slack and to use it to post drafts of bills and discussion as well.

President Sohn introduces the next agenda topic as formally creating two ad hoc committees one on Sexual Health and Relationships and the other on External Affairs. She begins with the Sexual Health and Relationships and the committees want to have a larger voice on campus and do more with programming and student support. External Affairs is working on some different events like the Town and Gown Da and working with possibly having a conference here with NesGov. She motions to create the ad hoc committees.

The motion is seconded.

15-0-0
The motion is created and the ad hoc committees are formed.

Senator Pustejovsky continues that her and Senator Mahboob after the SGA retreat reached out to Dan Detora and created a survey and have sent it out to the Senior class and have already received 200 responses. She states “people really care” since they are giving some very detailed responses about that they are feeling. She is hoping that this can be super productive in creating a dialogue about the swipe system. She asks for the body to please send the survey to their constituents.

Senator Mahbobb continues and states that they are meeting with Dan Detora Friday to continue this conversation.

Senator Warfel asks if she sends the survey out where the data goes.
Senator Pustejovsky states that all data will come to her email.

Senator Mahboob asks for the senators to also take the survey too. She states that Dan Detora is seeing positive changes so hopefully we can get narratives from the students as well on these changes.

President Sohn thanks the Senators for their work. She tells the senators to also reach out to last years ad hoc committee on the Dining Halls. She states that Angie McCarthy would be a great person of contact.

Senator Gosselin begins the conversation about the bill An Act to Record Meetings. He states that the intention behind the bill is that we can start collecting a records of all our meetings and it would also allow for more open communication with the Student Government.

Senator Pustejovsky thanks the Senator for showing initiative about transparency and wanted him to elaborate on the position of the Historian.

Senator Gosselin was hoping that the Historian role could help keep all the records organized digitally for students and for this body. Also, this role could allow for this body to “digitize” the archives and put it on the website.

Senator Goldfield states that it would be a good idea to include bills that don’t pass too be put on the SGA website and their archives.
Senator Gosselin sees this as a friendly amendment and accepts it and puts it in the bill.

The senators discuss the wording of this friendly amendment.

Senator Pustejovsky points out that to clarify these bills failed it would be important to put a watermark on them that said “Failed Bills.”

Senator Goldfield asks if this is about transparency that if the body wanted to discuss mandatory emails sent out by the SGA.

Senator Gosselin points out that one bill passed in 2015 declared that the SGA would send out a mandatory email. He is curious to see how this actually played out or if it was “overridden” because it had not been in place.

President Sohn states, like she discussed at the retreat, the SGA website is “under construction” because their is an issue with payments to Squarespace. She states that they are asking for double the amount then they have asked for in the past. So, they are looking at possibly getting a new host but also that the body needs to think about how much digital space an archival might cost to the body.

Co-Chair Wright questions whose responsibility this would be to do the audio and set up the equipment for the livestream.

Senator Gosselin did not have anyone in mind particularly mostly because he does not want to vote on the bill this week but rather start a conversation. He brings up the idea that the audio could be taken by the minutes taker possibly.

Co-Chair responds and states that it is a lot to ask of the role of the minutes taker especially when it is not in their job description to do that yet.

Senator Pustejovsky expresses her concerns with audio files and how they might be manipulated by outside aggressors. She states that she would have been extremely concerned last year with an audio recording during the discussion about the Murray protests and how some outside sources could have manipulated that audio. She agrees with the transparency for the student body but questions how this data could be used by others outside the Institution.

Speaker Aaron states many student governments have Facebook livestreams.

President Sohn explains the employees the SGA employs and states that if we were looking to create another position and write legislation for that, even if it were to change the role of the Secretary.

Senator Godfield asks how much it would cost to add on another employee

President Sohn is not exactly sure especially because of the changes in faculty leadership with the SGA. However, she points out that Derek Doucet and Maria Farnsworth are usually great points of contact.

Senator Mahboob shares her concerns about the possibility of people taking sound bites out of context. She states that the minutes in writing is a great way to keep transparency with the student body.

Senator Gosselin expresses his concerns about the total accuracy of “minutes” because it is seemingly impossibly to keep “accurate minutes.” Many of the times it just “summarizes” a lot. He thinks the audio recording could help people get a total accurate picture.

Senator McCormick motions to extend the conversation for another 10 minutes. The motion is seconded.
Senator Mahboob abstains.
The motion passes.
Senator Warfel asks if the Facebook livestream would offer after your post it.
The body answers by stating that other platforms used by other schools so that it could be just friends with the SGA or possibly using the livestream that the school utilizes when they have their own speakers.
Senator Pandey states that one possibility could include doing the audio recording and making them available at request rather than public.
President Toy reminds the body to be conscious of the time. Since the senator does not want to vote on the bill tonight.
Senator Gosselin states his awareness that the bill “needs work.” He hopes to work with the cabinet too. He emailed the Publicity Director who replied that they “didn’t want to make any changes.”
Senator Fleischer shares his concerns too about the minutes and their accuracy.
Senator McCormick motions to table the bill.
13-1-1
Senator Goldfield opposes.
Senator Mahboob abstains.
The motion is passed and the bill is tabled.

President Sohn begins the conversation about the “Common Agenda” which will help bridge the communication between the SGA and President Patton and the SLG. There is a google doc where one can post what they possibly want “to tackle for the upcoming year” with this body and with President Patton and her team as well.
Senator Mahboob asks for clarification about the “Common Agenda.”
President Sohn states that it is a way for the cabinet and senate to have a google doc that President Patton and the SLG can refer to so both bodies can work on it in the upcoming year.
Senator Fleischer expresses his concerns that this body might not be able to agree on one “Common Agenda.”
President Sohn states that it should be broad ideas like the Dining Hall rather than specific questions. The point is to have a common place where both bodies on campus can refer to these broad topics that are wanting to be discussed.
Speaker Aaron thanks the body for their first meeting and states that if anyone wants to add anything to the agenda then they can email her and President Sohn by latest 5 pm on Thursday. “Surprise parties are fun, but surprise bills are not.” Also if anyone has suggestion for how the Speaker should run the meeting they can email her directly.
Senator Pustejovsky motions to adjourn.
The motion is seconded.
15-0-0