SGA Minutes 10/15/17

I. Attendance
Co-Chair Wright is not present for today’s meeting. He has sent Charles Rainey as his proxy.
Senator Fleischer is not present for today’s meeting.
All other 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.

II. Acceptance of the Minutes
Senator Pustejovsky motions to accept the minutes.
The motion is seconded.
15-0-1
Senator Mahboob abstain.
The motion passes and the minutes are recorded.

III. Announcements/Senate Checkins/ Old Business/ New Business

President Sohn begins by telling the body that Senator Fleischer’s bill was on the agenda but he is not here, so she will send a message and see if he wants to make an update to the body. She then moves on to the New Business subject on “Night Cap” which she describes as a “cool program” but that the organizers requested more time to prepare their presentation for the body. These agenda items will be tabled for two weeks, since the body will not meet during Fall Break. She then motions to add the finance committee ratifications to the agenda.
The motion is seconded.
16-0-0
All are in favor.
“Finance Committee Ratifications” is added to the agenda.

President Sohn continues with the announcements. She continues to the current version of the Common Agenda. She states that there have been some “new edits” from the Senior Leadership Group and tells the body the revised document is now on slack. She asks her Deputy Chief of Staff, Annie Cowan, to pull up the revised document for the body to review during this discussion. She states that something the body realized after conversations is that they should “have done a better job at getting more student feedback.” She reiterates that this is a “partnership” between the students and the admins. She continues, “that is why we have a plan.” The plan is to an email to the student body with a survey to see what students believe the community should work on “first.” Also, what is missing from the discussions. It will be done digitally through email. She urges the body to send emails to their constituents to make them aware of this plan. She then continues with how the plan will help with the body’s physical presence among the student body. She asks the body if they can work as a team, and divide up the days, with table outside a cafeteria, one out each day. Like Senator Pustejovsky imagined last week, there will be a marbles and mason jars “kind of thing.” On the jars will be the different bullet points from the common agenda and then people will drop a marble in the jar, “bullet point idea,” that they think should be a main discussion this year between students and admin. There
will also be paper, in case something is missing from the agenda. She reiterates the importance of
a physical presence of the body among the greater student body. She also states that President
Patton might stop to show how this is not just SGA but is SLG too. She continues and describes
a “google sign-up sheet” that will be sent around so people can sign up and devote a lunch time
to this. She asks the body if they have any feedback on this plan.

Senator Pustejovsky asks about the final wording of the common agenda so that it will
might be confusing to people. She recommends condensing the language down at the tables.
President Sohn states Annie Cowan “condensed” the language for the survey.

Senator Goldfield agrees that the language should be condensed they should plan on
people going “really quickly” in the dining hall. He asks when they plan on implementing this
plan.

Speaker Aaron responds that they hope to do it this week. She asks if there are any more
comments.

Senator Goldfield reiterates that they need to make them more concise for students. He
would not easily understood them if he was in a rush.

Senator Pustejovsky agrees with previous Senator and adds that the email sent to students
should add more detail. She also discusses the language around MiddWorks like “admin units.”
President Sohn proposes wording like “departments,” “faculty and staff,” or “offices and
departments.” The body settles on the inner workings of Middlebury so students can understand
better how Middlebury works. President Sohn asks the body if they think it's better to put the text
in the body of the email or a separate document.

Senator McCormick recommends to put the text in the body because students would open
up the document if they are in a hurry.

Senator Pustejovsky agrees, “people are going to scroll through this.”

Speaker Aaron asks if “we have time to consider it” and “when do you want to send it
out.” She asks Senator Pustejovsky if she wants together and work at it.

President Sohn states that the body needs to make a judgement if they want to condense
the language or if they want to spell it out more to have more understanding. She states that she
would like more clarity on this point. She yields to Cowan.

Cowan states that “given the time” she would recommend just sending the email and
getting the word out there.

Speaker Aaron states that they “haven’t been apart of the process.” She expresses that the
President has been the most involved in this process.

President Sohn replies that she has been showing the body the common agenda every
week.

Speaker Aaron agrees and states that all she is hoping for is to illustrate something to the
student body they will be interested in reading and connecting with.

Senator Pandey agrees with the Speakers points. He states that it could be good for the
body to make a go link where people could explore and understand more about the Common
Agenda.

Rainey expresses to the body that there are still three bills on the table which might take
some time to go through during the meeting.

Senator Pustejovsky agrees and states that their goal should be to get the basic idea out
there, using keywords, to the student body and then send out a larger message they can skim
through.

Speaker Aaron agrees and states it’s a “good compromise.”
President Sohn continues with the announcements. She met with Mike Roy the Dean of the Library about the open textbook discussion that happened. She recalls that Speaker Aaron and Senator Vijayakumar were also at the event who could help her debrief how the event went. The main point was that students can access electronic textbooks across different disciplines with this program. It will decrease the amount of money spent on these books by students and will increase collaboration between departments. She continues that at the meeting there was a representative from the bookstore, faculty from STEM departments, and library staffs. President Sohn expresses her takeaways that “students would love this.” She continues that there was hesitation from the bookstore, from her understanding a lot of their profit is made through textbook sale. However, there are ways the program was discussing ways in which other colleges have mediated this. By the bookstore selling the physical textbooks at a lower price than normal, she states that MIT and Macalester University have a program in place. Middlebury would become the first NESCAC school with such an open textbook program too. She continues that the library committee is having a skype meeting with Macalester University later in November. The committee is looking for student feedback too. Next is the subject of 24 hour library hours during final weeks. She states that this is a service the library is cutting this year due to budget cuts. She remarks that this occurred in 2008 and the SGA helped cover the cost to keep the library open. They are in a similar position this year. She shares a few of the library’s concerns like how in the past five years the amount of students from 2 to 6 am has significantly decreased. Also, the message 24 hour library times sends about health and wellness at Middlebury that the body might “want to be weary of.” There is the possibility of extending the hours too and not having the 24 hours. To open up for 24 hours the cost is around 3240 dollars.

Speaker Aaron shares that the cabinet was really against the idea and she proposes the use of other spaces like Hillcrest instead of spending the money. However, she states that if people feel strongly they should look at funding it.

President Sohn shares that Mike Roy will be giving a presentation to the body in two weeks and she urges the body to get more student feedback on the subject.

Senator Warfel states that people “camp out” in the library during finals week and so she is weary about Hillcrest because it is going to be “so packed.”

Speaker Aaron points out that the data shows there hasn’t been many students during those late hours.

Senator Pustejovsky asks if there is a possible compromise on extending the time.

President Sohn states that there is a possibility of extending the hours so rather than closing at 1 it would close at 2 or 3 and maybe open a bit earlier. It still needs to be discussed.

Speaker Aaron states that the body should be open to comprimes and what students want but also looking at the data too.

Senator Koontz addresses the mental health issue too and how it is not addressed enough at Middlebury. She questions the message the 24-hour time could be sending of the encouragement not to sleep.

President Sohn yields to her Deputy Chief of Staff, Annie Cowan. Cowan brings up the conversation the cabinet was having about how the SGA is taking the cost that stems from an administrative problems and that it’s a concerning issue. She then asks a question about the open textbook program. She asks how students can just receive a less expensive textbook, like the reduced price, at the bookstore.
President Sohn responds that she should ask the bookstore. She explains that if Middlebury is to be a part of this program it would allow them access and to purchase textbooks at a different price. She states that she “might be wrong though.”

Speaker Aaron adds that it's complicated how it is produced filters into how it is sold too. Then also book orders by faculty factor in too.

Senator Vijayakumar adds that the program necessarily allows for the infrastructure, where they mass print the text books, to print one and so it is sold at the cost of production.

President Sohn shares that there have been 3D textbook machines that can print textbooks but she does not know if the college would pay for that.

Senator McCormick moves the conversation back the the open library hours. He tells the body that the library is cutting the hours so the body is the one who is going to pay for it.

Senator Pustejovsky asks about the cost and information about buying into the open textbook program.

President Sohn states that there was a link for it and that she will look into it, and then spread it around.

President Sohn moves to the ratification of the new finance committee members. She calls for her Treasurer, Peter Dykeman-Bermingham to give a brief introduction on the selection and the body will also be able to see the names of the new members on the screen.

Dykeman-Bermingham greets the body and states that it took the “better part” of seven hours to interview and discuss over the twenty potential applicants for the finance committee this year. They took four members which he shares to the body on the screen. There were two sophomores and two first years. He states that this will take the committee from ten members to fourteen.

Rainey asks what they were looking for in applicants. Dykeman-Bermingham shares that he asked for the applicants to come into a finance committee meeting and then during their interview asked them what arguments were missing and who was missing from the room too. He states the “bifunctionality” of the committee so it is important that the body create a space that is visually inclusive. He states that were problems, when he first joined the committee, about these issues and he hopes that the committee will continue to address them more. When he first joined it was very male heavy so it was important during the process to look for more students who brought in different perspectives and a gender balance too. He also stressed the importance of the applicant to bring up financial aid and how their ideas incorporated thinking about financial aid in their application. Also, it was important to incorporate students from all years and they added four underclassmen this year. He stresses the work done by the committee and the “multi year” commitment that is important to the conversation.

Rainey shares his curiosity in the ethnic diversity of the committee since it is an important body on campus.

Dykeman-Bermingham states that “I am a white male and I am the chair of the committee.” He states that he is aware of his position of privilege when he look at the applicants and how he comes into each meeting aware of. He points out that two of the new committee members are students of color and that the body is aware of their progression to become representative of the student body beyond race and gender too. He remarks how he has always wanted a dance major to apply. He stresses the importance of members to do a wide variety of arts to club sports and to have various interests. He also wants to move away from the idea that
joining the finance committee does not have to allude to a career in the finance sector. He notices that a majority of applicants can be looking to pat their resumes and looking for a life at Goldman Sachs. However, he remarks that a majority of the applicants are outstanding and they received four great candidates.

Speaker Aaron motions to voting on ratifying the finance committee members.

16-0-0

The motion passes and the voting continues.

16-0-0

All in favor.

The new members are ratified to the finance committee.

Senator McCormick begins the Senate Check-ins. He states that he met with his CRD about Commons Counsel and finances.

Senator Andrews has no new updates.

Senator Koontz announces that she is working with res life on a bill and hoping to get some emails back after she reached out to some people.

Senator Gosselin will be presenting his bill today.

Senator Salas is still working with Amnesty International and has been in contact with MiddRock and will hopefully have some updates after the break.

Senator Schurer states he has gone to various meetings and is excited to hear some different ideas to discuss with his constituents.

Speaker Aaron jokes that the body is expecting the senator to know all his constituents’ names, per his comment at the last meeting.

Senator Vargas points out the email sent to the student body from the Office of President about Title IX and the commitment from the school to uphold it. Also, he is looking at the proposal of the shadow policy, which there will be an event on, and he is looking forward to working with that committee and the other committees he’s working with in senate.

Speaker Aaron announces that there “might” be a Green Dot session for all of SGA.

Senator Vijayakumar announces that there is an SGA snapchat and all the social media platforms the Publicity committee is using this year. Also, she updates the body that the open textbook program is an online database so that is why they are distributed at a lower cost.

Senator Goldfield states that his co-senator, Senator Vijayakumar, still does not have access to her email list. He calls this “flat out unacceptable” since these students were elected last spring and do not have access up to sixth week of this body meeting during the fall. He states that the sophomores are “lucky” because he has access to the list but his co-senator still does not.

He calls on this problem to be fixed immediately. He continues that he has heard some discussion and comments about Senator Fleischer's bill. He states that per his discussion with some constituents that there “a lot of this bill isn’t clear” and he urges for the body that, if they are to enact the bill, to make it as clear as possible.

Senator Warfel also does not access to her email list. She also met with her committee on Sexual and Relationship respect and they are working on what they want this year.

Senator Pandey met with Aumit, the president of the computer science club, and they discussed how students would be interested in getting paid for their work on programs. He is looking to meet with Derek Doucet to talk about this.
Senator Mahboob announces that she is working with the student initiative affairs committee and they are planning a financial literacy class and some lecture series during J-term. She also still does not have access to her email list.

Senator Pustejovsky received data from David Provost on the number of students in the Dining Hall from September 11 to the 30th. It is broken down by totals for that day and she passes the data around to the senators. The problem is that there are around 1400 students visiting the dining halls during lunch on Tuesdays and Thursdays. She is hoping for the next step to talk with the Registrar’s Office about shifting schedules and where to go in the discussion.

President Sohn replies to the comments about senators not having access to their email lists yet. She says that it is “out of her hands” and in the hands of administration. She has tried to check in during the process and she will email Derek to call the Tech Desk. She asks Doug Adams if he knows anything to speed up the process. He replies that it should not be a hard process.

Senator Vijayakumar replies that it is making her look bad since some of her constituents have commented on her not doing the work and this is by her not being able to send people emails. She does not want to make this impression on her constituents and wants email access as soon as possible.

President Sohn asks the senators if they have tried reach out.

Senator Warfel replied that she reached out to Derek Doucet.

President Sohn states that hopefully Doug Adams can help too since he has had a lot of experience with the SGA.

Senator Pandey states that he has spoken to friends who work at the helpdesk and that “everyone just wants it to be done.” He has no clue why it is not actually happening.

Speaker Aaron describes it as “weird.”

Senator Schurer brings up the idea of having a mutual email address that class year senators could share. So, no one will know who sent out the email and it will not look like one senator is doing the work.

Senator Pustejovsky states it a good idea and could be useful as the year goes on, but she also brings up the idea that students are more likely to answer emails from another student’s account.

Speaker Aaron reiterates that they will keep checking up on this.

President Sohn updates the body on Senator Fleischer’s bill. She met with Karen Guttentag and Brian Lind this week on the open disciplinary hearing itself. She wants to clarify that first it should be referred to as a “hearing” not a trial. She states the meeting “went great” and there were some edits made to the bill. She wants to table the bill until the next meeting. She will ask Senator Fleischer to send an updated version in terms of small edits.

Senator Goldfield asks if the bill has changed drastically.

President Sohn states that the message is the same.

President Sohn begins the conversation on MiddDay. She continues with updates and states that they have gotten good feedback from constituents. She asks the body for any comments and states that during a meeting with Dan Detora there was discussion about having a BBQ at the Snow Bowl for this day or Bread Loaf. She stresses that it will be “revolving” around Vermont instead of the just the outdoors.
Senator Pustejovsky brings up an idea she heard from a senior of the option to do community service too on this day.

Speaker Aaron replies that Middlebury does need more community service options but that this might send a mixed message because she sees the day as not being productive for a day and allowing the student body to destress.

Senator Mahboob changes the language on a clause to make it accessible to “those with disabilities.” She states it’s important for the language to reflect all abilities.

Senator Goldfield asks who will oversee planning this day and who this work is falling on: MCAB? The SGA?

Speaker Aaron refers to the legislation a “roadmap” which will give student support and then a committee will be formed.

Senator Pustejovsky speaks from her MCAB experience that if this is in the spring it could be more doable for MCAB to help but that the fall semester, due to its shortness and having more events, it would be a lot for MCAB. She also announces there will be a Homecoming Festival.

President Sohn asks if Senator has a recommendation for a sub clause that would recommend for someone to oversee this after the bill is passes.

He states it was not a recommendation just a question.

Speaker Aaron states what this bill is doing is showing the admin that there is student support for this.

Senator Pustejovsky motions to vote.
The motion is seconded.
16-0-0
All in favor of voting.

16-0-0
All in favor of the motion.
The motion passes.

Speaker Aaron motions to limit the discussion of Senator Gosselin’s bill to 10 minutes.
The motion is seconded.
16-0-0
The motion passes.

Senator Gosselin begins the presentation of his bill which he has been editing the past few weeks to make it “more practical.” He decided not to put the live stream on the legislation and that it is authorizing putting the records on the website and then the audio recordings taken by the Secretary at the meetings through an app on their phone.

Speaker Aaron speaks about the live stream and references Simpson College and University of Maryland who have a Facebook live stream. She states that we take minutes during the meetings but that this would reach and be broadcasted to more students. She also wonders if anyone will listen to audio recording too.

Senator Pustejovsky states the body should reach out and see if their constituents would think it’s “ridiculous or not” to do a Facebook livestream.

Senator McCormick also shares his doubts about audio recordings in comparison to a Facebook livestream.
Senator Koontz questions the size of the files and data on the person’s phone who is taking the audio recording.

Senator Gosselin states that the person taking them would take them, send them, and then delete them. It would never be more than one at a time and wouldn’t be too much data.

Speaker Aaron states that the body should send the emails to their constituents about watching the live stream on Facebook. She states that maybe the body should table the legislation to add to the legislation.

Senator Gosselin states he will do more research on the Facebook livestream and if the different options and setting like instant playback and recording. He states that this will hopefully help keep accuracy and he references the previous meeting when two people made motions at the same time.

Senator Pandey shares his curiosity about the Facebook live stream and possibly making it only available for a group like Free and For Sale so people in the group can watch it. Personally, he is in favor of a Facebook live option.

Senator Pustejovsky also proposes using the school’s livestream so people would need to have a Middlebury login to see the livestream.

Senator Goldfield warns against pushing back the bill for two more weeks when this body is pushing to make it as transparent as possible. He does not see anything wrong in recording the meetings too and that they should send an email to constituents on the Facebook livestream.

Speaker Aaron announces that the 10-minute limit is up. They will add a “therefore clause” that will consider possibly doing a livestream.

Senator Gosselin motions to vote.

16-0-0

The motion to vote passes.

14-0-2

Senator McCormick and Andrews oppose the bill.

The legislation passes.

President Sohn limits the conversation about 10 o’clock Ross to 10 minutes. She announces that “it is back on.” There will be an email sent out tonight telling people. She states that a couple members of the body sat down with Dan Detora and they went over all the possible stuff that 10 o’clock Ross could have and possibly looking at having student monitors who also work in the Dining Halls itself because those students are already certified and state certified. For now, it will be the regular plus bread, peanut butter, and Nutella. The panini machines can’t be used because of the fire hazard involved. They are looking at possibly getting a popup toaster.

Senator Pandey asks for information about a budget

President Sohn states that there is no budget for the event except for paying the student monitors. Right now, they are just working with dining like Dan Detora paying for popup toaster.

Senator Goldfield states how important it is for senators to help too and he references the events that occurred last year with the beer cans brought in. In case there is an influx of people, the senators should be ready to help the monitors or in case there are rowdy students. He will give his number in case of this.
Senator Pustejovsky proposes to do trivia like MCAB does and could recycle those questions and do something there too.

Speaker Aaron likes the idea shared and adds other games, and board games.

President Sohn adds that she also spoke about the possibility of student orgs leading certain events during 10 o’clock Ross as an avenue to intersect student orgs into this program. Also she asks if there are any other ideas for possible initiatives to talk to her.

Speaker Aaron asks if there are any more questions.

President Sohn ends with speaking about how the Night Cap program will present after break. She tells the body to enjoy their break and she also welcomes Doug Adams back. She motions to adjourn.

The motion is seconded.
16-0-0
All in favor.
The motion passes and the meeting is adjourned.