SGA Minutes: 11/19/2017

I. Attendance
Members Present: President Sohn, Co-Chair Wright, Senator Mahboob, Senator Warfel, Senator Fleischer, Senator Vargas, Senator Schurer, Senator McCormick, Speaker Aaron, Proxy Salas (Jasmin Animas-Tapia), Proxy Pandey (Ngor Luong), Proxy Vijayakumar (Kristine Su), Proxy Goldfield (Gareth Cordery), Senator Koontz, Senator Andrews, Senator Gosselin.

Members Absent: Senator Pustejovsky

II. Acceptance of the Minutes
Speaker Aaron: Thank you for being here. You're welcome to comment or vote, you can vote on anything. You have all the privileges of being a regular senator, and when I call on you say “Proxy Goldfield” or whichever senator you’re here for. Are there any questions from proxies before we start? Okay! So we don’t have minutes yet from Austin and so is there a motion to accept the minutes for last week at our next meeting?

Senator Warfel: Motion to do that.

Speaker Aaron: Is there a second?

Senator Mahboob: Seconded.

Speaker Aaron: All in favor of accepting last week’s minutes next week. All opposed. All abstaining.

15-0-1

Speaker Aaron: Those are going to be approved next meeting. Jin, would you like to do ACTR first?

All accept ACTR

III. Announcements
a. Winter Term Workshops SGA Financial Aid Program
President Sohn: Thank you again for coming in. So for announcements… there’s three. I have two up there, but the first one is winter term workshop registration has begun and this year we changed the financial aid program a bit so it helps students in terms of the organization and registration for it. Just spread the word. There was an SGA email that was sent out earlier last week. Essentially the financial aid program has changed so that when you register for a winter term workshop all you have to do is go on there and click the box that you're applying for financial aid and the student activities office, in conjunction with the student financial services office, will work to see if that student is applicable for financial aid. Then, instead of doing a reimbursement they just don't have to pay at all. So it’s a simpler and more convenient system for students. Any questions about that?

Senator Koontz: How long does that approval process take?

President Sohn: There is actually a deadline for the application process. The registration began today at 8:00 a.m. The aid applications close on December 5th which is earlier than when the registration itself closes, which is December 8th. Applicants will be informed on the status of their application by December 8th at 6:00 p.m.

Senator Koontz: Okay.
b. **Online Financial Literacy for Students Pilot Program**

President Sohn: Any other questions? Okay. Make sure you spread the word to your constituents. The next thing is “Online Financial Literacy for Students Pilot Program!” This is something that people from the Educational Affair Committee has been working on and this is also on my platform, because when I spoke with seniors last year who were about to graduate, they said they felt like they were graduating with a ton of academic knowledge but they felt like in terms of having real world skills: how to fill out a lease for an apartment or house, how do you do your taxes, what’s student loan repayment? Those are some of the things students felt like they needed most assistance on and didn’t really get a grasp of before leaving college. I am working with the Student Financial Services Office and so has the Educational Affairs Committee. I spoke with Kim Downs-Burns two weeks ago and she let me know that there is an online financial literacy program that our peer schools use called SALT, S-A-L-T. When I spoke with her last spring semester she said that because of the cost for it we would have to split with the Student Financial Services Office and possibly the CCI and us, but then we got really good news the other day. We don’t have to pay for it, it’s free! That saves everyone’s money and time, well, money and lives. What we will be doing tomorrow is a demo. I’m trying to get some members of SGA who are interested in being a part of this demo. It will be a video-skype conversation we have with some of the programmers over from SALT, as well as a few members of the Student Financial Services Office, and members of SGA. The demo will go through what the programming is like. The programming is set up so that the students can take the classes on their own time and at their own pace. The demo is important so that there are some students who understand how the programming works, and then we’re going to do a pilot program in J-term for a few students and then hopefully launch in in the spring semester for everybody. That is going to be paired up with some workshops, I believe, by Educational Affairs Committee, by some staff members, and by people from the community as well. Are there any senators who are interested in attending this demo tomorrow? It’s going to be in the Student Financial Services Office, which is in the Service Building, and I will send a reminder email with the specific location. It’s going to be from 11:00 a.m. until noon, so it’s going to be for about an hour. If you can’t go for the whole thing that’s fine, but it’s important to get some SGA members at the meeting so that we can get some feedback. Hopefully you can spread the word to your constituents. Anyone available tomorrow at 11:00 a.m.? (silence) Proxies you can come too.

Speaker Aaron: I can do it. (No one else raises their hands).

Senator Koontz: Is it possible that people who are interested from our constituency can go, or do you want more SGA?

President Sohn: I think right now it’s just SGA because it’d be great to have everybody go, but there’s only four people from SALT there so I don’t know if they’ll be able to answer all our questions. But we’re going to do a pilot run J-term so… Also in terms of telling the rest of the school about this, I’m hoping to send an announcement out through the SGA email post-Thanksgiving. I would hold off on telling everybody once we get all the organizational aspects of it figured out so that we don’t just tell everybody and everyone has a ton of questions, and then we can actually prepare ourselves. If you could hold off on announcing that to the rest of the student body that would be great. For the online financial literacy program itself, they are trying to build some topics that students might be interested in, so I would really like some feedback from you guys on what some of those topics are. There are things like purchasing homes and apartments, student loan repayment, credit scores, tax returns, what of those areas are important to you or you think your constituents would consider as important?

Speaker Aaron: We have a couple… Oh, Proxy Pandey.

Proxy Pandey: How to maintain good credits.
Co-Chair Wright: Taxes, good taxes.

President Sohn: Everyone is very quiet today.

Speaker Aaron: We have a good list, I think we’re good.

Senator Schurer: Learn how to do budgeting.

President Sohn: What specifically about budgeting?

Senator Schurer: Something to do with the budgeting would be good, maybe something with personal management.

President Sohn: Personal management, I see. Thank you! I will keep you all updated on how that meeting goes.

c. Nutritionist

President Sohn: My last thing is, and I’m not sure if you have heard about this, but there is currently a petition going around on campus for a nutritionist and it’s sponsored by “Every Body” which is a student organization on campus. I am working with them, trying to see how we, as an SGA, can help them, especially in light of their petition they have going around. Seeing if it could be turned into a resolution. I would love to hear some other people’s thoughts, if they have had a chance to talk to their constituents about it, if any of their constituents are part of the people that are organizing this, now is the time to speak up.

Co-Chair Wright: Tory and I have strong feelings about this.

President Sohn: What are your strong feelings about this?

Senator Koontz: Just that we think it’s very essential. We think that we need a push to make sure that dietary restrictions are accounted for in the dining halls. I am gluten free and a lot of people have a severe dining allergy. A lot of times the list of ingredients that they offer either aren’t really inclusive as to all the different kinds of contamination that food can come into contact with, or they don’t highlight different allergies all the time. Sometimes I’ll see something that I know has wheat in it, but it isn’t listed on the allergies. Just being extremely mindful of that because there are people who have even more severe allergies than I do, and I know they just come to learn not to eat certain things in the dining halls which is extremely restrictive. I think just having someone who is extremely knowledgeable on this would really help.

Co-Chair Wright: to be very, very, on the record, I’ve met with Dan Detora multiple times about this to try and get some semblance of food accessibility options, and there have been an addition of general allergy free freezers, and some students have been able to reach out to dining services and get better access to foods, but it’s by no means integrated and I think it’s really a shame that we all pay the same price for the meal plan and can’t access the dining halls in the same ways. It’s not a great thing for our students and really impacts people financially and I can’t list the number of times that I’ve had a food related reaction because a label in the dining hall is not present. Those presents have been had and I’m really behind hiring a nutritionist, someone who is trained to be able to make sure food labeling is clear and knows how to deal with cross contamination. The fact is that dining staff, at the moment, does not have the capacity to institute those necessary changes to the dining halls.
Senator Warfel: Yes, I’m just wondering what the role of a nutritionist would be. Would it be working with the dining hall, you know, working with them for a week and giving a list of all the foods they make or something that’s going to be a permanent position?

President Sohn: I think that’s something that the organizers themselves are trying to figure out. I’m sure that once we get administrators’ support on it, it could be something that students have a lot of input in as well. I know one of the biggest challenges right now is finances. One of the things that is also a really important component to this, besides dining, is student health and wellness as a whole. Maybe trying to find a way to hire another person for student health and wellness because the college is already doing so much in that area. Possibly that person could be a specialist nutritionist as well.

Senator Koontz: Do you know if the petition is online?

President Sohn: It is online. I will share it with you guys after this meeting.

Speaker Aaron: Is it on weebly.middkids or is it just like a—

President Sohn: Oh no it’s not on there but we should bring it back.

Co-Chair Wright: We should get it on there.

Speaker Aaron: Okay, President Sohn.

President Sohn: Are any other senators out there who are interested in working on this with me.

Speaker Aaron: Yeah, sure! Alright, any comments on questions about the announcements? Are you ready to move on?

President Sohn: Mhmm!

IV. Senate Check-ins

Speaker Aaron: Now we can go to Senate Check-ins. For proxies, if you’re senator gave you anything to report on or if you have anything you would like to share, feel free to do so now.

Senator McCormick: Nothing new.

Senator Andrews: I’m working with Ross Commons Council on a new project like what we did last year, “One Hundred Daves of Ross.” Just getting more senior art in Ross.

Senator Koontz: Matthew Crin is having meetings during Thanksgiving break about poetry. That’s just the email I received on Wednesday, so nothing new to report on that field.

Speaker Aaron: Is it something you could call in on?

Senator Koontz: His office is in Marble Works, otherwise I probably would have been there already. It’s just extremely far away.

Speaker Aaron: Take the ACTR. (laughter)
Senator Koontz: I definitely have to keep up on him. I keep trying to reach out for a meeting but his general response is “I’ll meet with you after.” If something hasn’t changed after Thanksgiving I’ll probably ditch him.

Proxy Selas: Nothing to report.

Senator Gosselin: I’m continuing to work with the Student Organization and Publicity Committee.

Senator Schurer: Dave and I are continuing to work with the First Year Committee and develop some ideas for fun events for the class. Today I’ll actually be unveiling our new website.

Speaker Aaron: Awesome! Are we approving your members for your committee?

Senator Schurer: Yes, I will send those right now.

Senator Vargas: First Year Committee and I were working with Senator Warfel on a tampons and condoms bill and it should be done by next meeting.

Speaker Aaron: What is the bill on?

Senator Vargas: It’s similar to the pads and tampons Bill, in January 2017, where SGA paid for dispensers on several public spaces to fund a pilot program for residential hall spaces.

President Sohn: Have either of you, or do you know if, Sexual Relationship and Respect Co-Director has spoken to Peter about finances on this?

Senator Warfel: I’ll talk to you after this meeting if you want.

Senator Vargas: Every year, Middlebury puts on an event called “It Happens Here,” so I’m working with Charles about doing something with that for J-term.

Proxy Vijayakumar: Senator Vijayakumar and the Publicity Committee, with the help of Senator Schurer, have begun to transfer data from the existing SGA website to the Weebly platform. Senator Vijayakumar and Senator Schurer agree that hosting archival data on a platform like Google Drive would be more optimal, but please continue to offer your suggestions. In general, the social media outlets that Publicity has created are getting a lot of followers and heavy post engagement. This is quickly becoming one of the most effective methods of advertising and information dissemination.

Proxy Goldfield: Nothing.

Proxy Pandey: Nothing.

Senator Fleischer: Not much.

Senator Mahboob: Nothing.

Senator Warfel: Nothing.

Co-Chair Wright: Did you want me to go now?
Speaker Aaron: No don’t go now. I met with the super senior Feb who wants to work on getting rid of “To-Go” cups in the dining halls because they’re wasteful. She would like instead for the commons to give thermoses instead of water bottles to students when they come. If there are thoughts on that please don’t be afraid to voice them. I would hate for us to pass something and then for all of us to secretly think “why did we do that” since we asked the dining hall a couple months ago to bring back “To-Go” cups. It is important to me that whoever is working on it is committed to doing an education campaign ahead of time that starts multiple weeks in advance talking about: why we need to get rid of “To-Go” cups, what alternatives there are, etc. This way it’s not just a “we get rid of it and then next year SGA asks for it back again.”

Senator Koontz: I was wondering if they have looked into any alternatives? I know one of the biggest reasons to get rid of the cups is that they aren’t compostable. I was wondering if there are compostable alternatives we could switch to. I understand getting rid of them because they are wasteful, but so many students love them, so I don’t know if that would be popular among the student body.

Speaker Aaron: They are compostable.

Senator Koontz: Just not at Middlebury.

Speaker Aaron: They are not, I’m learning about this, there are two kinds of compostable: wet and dry. I think Middlebury has more dry than wet, so we can’t compost them. Looking into alternatives is definitely important. Do you have a response to that Senator Fleischer?

Senator Fleischer: We compost outside which is the way you do it naturally. If you’re in an urban setting you’ll have an industrial machine that uses certain types of bacteria that are petroleum mimicking, sort of like the equivalent of ethanol. That being said, you can’t really do it for a liquid, it’s going to leak through if you do it with the type of system we have to do. I think if we had thermoses you could sort of change the culture a little bit. No one really takes out water from the dining halls, so it’s not the best analogy, but it will have blow back. Considering we could save a lot of money too and the money could go towards a much better cause, I think it’s a good idea.

Senator Vargas: Not really related, but the thing you posted on NESCAC, looking for someone to pick up dishes, did you get a reply for that?

Speaker Aaron: I did not get a reply so I asked the other NESCACs from the student government conference if they had any systems for delivering reusable thermoses or “To-Go” boxes, and I haven’t heard back. The student taking this initiative is going to reach out to other schools to see if we can have a student job that would redeliver dining hall dishes so that we don’t have to use “To-Go” boxes.

Senator Warfal: The only way we can have this and not make people really angry, because we really rely on “To-Go” cups, is to… The student talking about having thermoses being given out by the common, but they only ever give first years the water bottles, they would have to make a system where they got them for everyone in the commons, not just first years and seniors. Then I don’t know what they would do, maybe deliver them through mailboxes or have them in the common’s office for people to pick them up at the beginning of the year, but somehow make that well known that they have one for every single person.

Speaker Aaron: That’s really important, and that would be a big expense too. We would either have to not give them to sophomores through seniors and just let them go out, or pay that price.

Senator Mahboob: I’m all for a campaign that aims to shift campus culture away from “To-Go” cups, but I don’t think that we should completely stop providing them. Based on the response we got from the
dining hall survey, which over half this campus took, that was one of the biggest concerns that they took away “To-Go” cups. I’m all for the school giving out thermoses and campaigning to change it, but I don’t think that we should take “To-Go” cups because people really depend on that. I have friends, and I myself, will not always remember to take a thermos and sometimes I just need a “To-Go” cup. If we do go through with this, next year’s SGA is probably going to bring it back.

Speaker Aaron: I think it’s important that we realize that we take for granted that in our culture we use “To-Go” cups, but at the same time we don’t need them. We should make sure we continue to talk about it.

Senator Koontz: I would also just like the point out the financial crisis Middlebury is in right now. I talked a lot with my commons council, there’s just been huge budgetary cuts already, so asking them to give even more money, for what would be a huge expense for the commons to provide, I think it’s something we would face a lot of resistance with.

Speaker Aaron: I think it would be just next year instead. Students would just have to survive without them or buy them from the book store.

Senator Fleischer: The money would come from dining because it’s like these cups are free, especially when you buy them in millions. It’s called an ROI on any green project, it’s your return on investment. If you buy something it saves you this much a year in heating or electricity, how many years until you make it up? The ROI for cheap thermoses is quite low, I don’t know the exact number.

Senator Koontz: I’m a little confused about this, I just don’t understand the relationship between that budget and common’s budget.

Senator Fleischer: Well I think dining would buy the thermoses.

Speaker Aaron: Let’s move on, we can have this conversation another time. Thank you for your contribution to this. The other thing that I was going to bring up was that a Junior Feb has started a gofundme to raise money for holiday dining services holiday gifts. If you could share it with your constituents, I’ll send you the link. If your constituents could contribute to it, I would like to have some sort of way to write cards to them so that we aren’t just giving them money. If anyone has ideas, one thing we could do is set up a table somewhere, but I wouldn’t want to do it outside a dining hall because it’s for dining. Maybe we could have drop in hours at the Arts and Crafts Center?

President Sohn: Or at the Crossroads or something?

Speaker Aaron: Crossroads would be nice. Are there any questions about that?

President Sohn: Do you want to get some people to volunteer?

Speaker Aaron: Is there anyone who wants to volunteer to work at the Arts and Crafts Table to make cards?

Co-Chair Wright: Clarification? Where are the arts and crafts supplies now?
President Sohn: They are right by Dave Kloepfer’s office on the first floor of McCullough, right across from the ATM.

Co-Chair Wright: Alright, awesome, perfect.
President Sohn: Nobody wants to help out?

Senator Warfel: I’ll do it.

Speaker Aaron: Thank you.

Senator Schurer: Sorry when would this be?

Speaker Aaron: Probably the week after Thanksgiving before exams.

Senator Schurer: (raises hand).

V. Old Business

a. ACTR Review of New Routes

President Sohn: Since we have a guest from ACTR, Mary, I motion to move the “ACTR Review of New Routes” ahead of announcements in light of our guest.

Senator Fleischer: Seconded.

Speaker Aaron: All in favor of moving ACTR. All opposed. All abstaining.

16-0-0

Speaker Aaron: Okay, we will go straight to the presentation.

Mary: I have some handouts I would like to send around. By show of hands, how many of you have used the local bus system? Great, I can get all these hands up tonight. Have you mainly used it for school or have you ridden around town?

Co-Chair Wright: Around town.

Mary: Great, so you may have noticed that over, in front of Twilight, there has been some construction going on this week that is going to be code of operations. That means that you have direct access to every route from North more to Middlebury. If you want to go to the new Hannaford’s along route 7 South, you can take a direct ride. I met with Gabby Stancheon last year and we talked about the bus stop configuration on campus. She was saying that Old Chapel wasn’t really working for the students and neither was the athletics center and they asked that the stop be relocated on 30 and that Public Safety didn’t feel that was a good spot for a stop. We re-negotiated and we moved it to Axxin at Mccullough which has a direct sidewalk and better access to class. And of course you have the stop over behind Atwater and Freeman Way, the name of has been ADK which in the past has been certifiable the college hospital route and the “College Route” but with the new pub, it’s put pressure on our system instead of being on top of it, so the college hospital loop that they split into two. Now you have a dedicated college _____ that can ______. (Gestures to part of the handout). There are commuter hours, as you can see it’s every half hour, then during the middle of the day we will provide them every hour. Like I said before you have buses arriving every fifteen minutes from Twilight hall. On the other hand that you have here is a take off from the pamphlet that I developed and helped to fund with ___ and _____. Because we have that direct route from Twilight Hall it doesn’t make sense to have time points anymore, and what they point out to me is focusing more on the destination. Major points of interest that students wanted to be able to access was: how to get well when you weren’t feeling okay, how to get downtown, where to go shopping, and how to get off campus. This is broken down, focusing on those main areas. I would love to meet with anyone who is interested to fine tune this and I would love to enlist your help in spreading this
message about where to find buses on campus, that they’re always fare free in the town of Middlebury, and that because of generous contributions from this group, Snow Bowl is also free. It is great for the environment, it advances your sustainability with mission, and ridership benefits the community because ACTR is held up against national performance benchmarks. All of our federal grants are tied to that, so the more fannies we have in seats the better the services for you. If you want to get to the airport and you need a cheap ride, or service wise you can’t afford a reliable vehicle so you can get here from a job, it’s times that they need us to provide consistency. Does anyone have any questions about the new service?

President Sohn: Thank you so much for coming in Mary, especially on Sunday night. My one question was, what were some of the issues that were faced in the past with trying to get students to use ACTR or trying to advertise it, so that it will help us know how to move forward on this.

Mary: Well, based on what Maddie and Kiki told me last year, the schedules were confusing for some of the students. They would look at the time tables and think “it was too complicated I’m just going to walk or get a ride from a friend.” And we hope to make that more approachable.

President Sohn: Is there an app by any chance for ACTR?

Mary: We have a google trip planner tool right on our home page. If you don’t want to navigate the schedule (gestures to a handout), you can go onto our website and scroll down about mid-way, type in your destination, your point of origin, time of day, and it’ll show you. You can see where the bus stops are located. It’s a great tool, takes all the navigating out of it for you.

President Sohn: Right, I almost wonder if there’s a way for us to make a “go link” for it. At Middlebury College we use “go links” a lot, like “go/cute short name of something.” If there is a way to use that to advertise to students about the services of the ACTR and the navigation it might help students a little bit more.

Senator Mahboob: Thanks for your presentation. I just wanted to ask, is this information available online anywhere?

Mary: It is. Our website is listed inside this cover here (gestures to handouts). It is ACTR-at.org

Speaker Aaron: And if you do “go slash” it takes you right to it.

President Sohn: There’s a “go slash ACTR!”

Mary: And there is a hot link to our site on the sustainability page as well.

Speaker Aaron: What are the most popular uses of the ACTR?

Mary: The Snow Bowl. The students fill that bus during ski season. That’s been totally refurnished, and I thank you all again for helping fund that service for students. Hannaford’s is a hugely popular destination and also the Saturday life that we’re going to have at Burlington.

Speaker Aaron: Great! Does anyone have any questions?

Co-Chair Wright: I understand that the Saturday bus going to Burlington is changing its times for return trips, but the motivation is unclear.
Mary: That’s true the last week of the day hasn’t been filling and it’s been a driver safety issue. Because you’re arriving to an empty lot, empty building, 9:30 to 10 at night. If we can, for the rest of the day, use our resources better and improve driver safety.

Co-Chair Wright: That’s good. Thank you.

Speaker Aaron: Any other questions?

President Sohn: I saw on this sheet, and Doug also told me, that students can wait to be picked up from a safety location.

Mary: Yes, thank you for bringing that up. Besides the fixed bus stops that we have throughout Middlebury, we’re what we call a deviated fixed route. That model is mainly to benefit people with disabilities, so if they can’t access the stops, they’ll go off route about a mile. If we do that for every rider we won’t be able to stay on schedule, but it is possible. That could also help students with temporary disabilities. Anywhere along the route we have _____ handles, because drivers are supposed to follow the same route every time, and if you’re walking to class and you know there’s a bus that goes by you at 1:15 every day, just put your hand up and wave and the bus will take you up the rest of the way up the hill. You won’t have to make that trudge. Just be visible and you need to be in a safe place, obviously, or you can’t do it.

Speaker Aaron: Great, thank you for coming and we’ll look forward to hearing more about your meeting. Hopefully people will be able to send out information to their constituents about the bus so that we can increase ridership.

Mary: Thank you. I have table prints going around right after Thanksgiving. Doug Adams has an army of interns that are putting these around residence halls. If you can just help out with spreading the word, I’d love to meet with you to develop this more.

Sohn: Yes, can I get your email address?

VI. Campus Check-ins
Speaker Aaron: Are there any campus check-ins? Does anybody have something that’s been going on? We’ve kind of gone over a lot already, but anything that you would like to share about the climate.

Senator Fleischer: I think the protest on Monday showed a lot about what hundreds, at least of Middlebury students, think about the administration here. I suggest you check it out, it’s a ten minute video. I shared it on my Facebook page so you can watch it there.

President Sohn: While we are talking about this protest, there was piece of paper that they were handing out, by “they” I mean the student activists. It’s an updated list of demands. I don’t know if anyone else has gotten a chance to see this. I passed this around during community council at our Monday meeting but I don’t think other people have seen it. I am more than willing to pass this around but I need this back. Take a look at that list of demands, it’s a bit different than the original demands, and it would be interesting to see what ways SGA can engage in that. I know there is a resolution that both of us worked on that we might be able to add some things on to there.

Co-Chair Wright: Do you have updates specific to this?

VII. Public Comment Time
Speaker Aaron: Public Comment time. Mikayla, you’re the only non-SGA person, do you have anything you would like to say?

Mikayla: I just wanted to say for ACTR, I know what they were testing out a Middlebury app last year with the CCI and it had a transportation section with some ACTR information that wasn’t very accessible. Maybe talking to them about the developments of that app and getting ACTR up there, and also just accessibility and materials and pamphlets and dining halls, just that kind of thing.

President Sohn: You said CCI?

Mikayla: Yeah. I don’t know what the status is with that app, but it had dining and a bunch of other stuff.

President Sohn: I think you’re talking about the Middlebury College App.

Mikayla: Probably. Also, about the online financial literacy, something that I thought might be helpful is talking about how Social Security works and how a bunch of employers set mutual funds and what that means. Also maybe a little bit on retirement and investment. On the nutritionist thing, I have a friend here who is diabetic, it’s been kind of crazy that there’s no sugar in the food and it’s hazardous to her health. Senator Andrews, you mentioned something about senior art work in Ross? Some Febs and I are trying to set up an art gallery in Bi-hall for science, I’d love to talk with you about that later. Lastly, I know that in the SGA there is a Sexual and Relationship Respect Director, I don’t know who that is.

President Sohn: They’re not here right now but there are two senators who have been working closely with them: Senator Warfel and Senator Vargas.

Mikayla: I was talking to a friend about campus culture, she had a great idea about the bathrooms. We have a lot of reactionary posters that talk about what to do if you’ve been sexually harassed, but what would be great is if we could have benefit posters. Posters that would talk about how to ask for consent, and what would be great is if we partnered with different local organizations like Women Safe and different clubs on campus to make it a communal effort to get the best situation we can.

VIII. New Business

   a. Maryam Mahboob: Middcore

Speaker Aaron: Okay so new business, Maryam, would you like to talk about Middcore?

Senator Mahboob: I did Middcore the summer after my freshman year. I’m not sure how many of us are aware about the program, essentially it fills in where a liberal arts education isn’t as scrutinized. If you’ve ever felt like you aren’t very good at public speaking or interviewing and you want a platform to help develop some professional skills, I highly recommend applying to Middcore. There are two times of the year when it is offered, J-term and over the summer. The summer program is normally in Lake Tahoe, when I did it the summer after my freshman year we had it at Lake Tahoe but they’ve since changed it to Monterey. The first time this summer they’ll have it at Monterey. I think the summer program is especially intensive because all you focus on are the weekly challenges they have. By the end of Middcore there’s an innovation project, my innovation project idea is that Mac & Cheese delivery service on campus. I actually did that for a couple of semesters, it was a lot of fun but it was also a lot of work so I dropped it last year. It’s a great way to meet new people and some of the mentorship that Middcore provides is amazing. We had Governor Shumlin and Governor Jim Douglas provide a Resolution workshop, we had a marketing guide from youtube come in and talk to us about some of the topics that youtubers face. If you’re interested in learning more I’d be happy to talk about that and I’d recommend reaching out to your constituents about it. The first deadline just passed on November 15th but there is
another deadline coming up soon. You can probably find it online and you get a reduced tuition rate if you apply before the next deadline.

Speaker Aaron: Email Maryam, she knows all about it.

b. **John Schurer and Jin Sohn: Support for Black and Minority Students Resolution**

Speaker Aaron: Next thing, Senator Schurer has created a new SGA website for us. If you would like to take five to ten minutes to walk us through?

President Sohn: Should we get it going on the projector?

Senator Schurer: That would be great.

Speaker Aaron: The last thing on our agenda is the bill we’re discussing tonight. If everyone wants to pull that up while we’re waiting for this, we can be ready to start discussing it.

Senator Schurer: Today I am very excited to present the new Middlebury SGA website. Although it isn’t finished yet, Senator Vijayakumar, Senator Gosselin, and I are working with the Publicity committee to finish it up shortly. If you want to compare our new one to the old one you can go to go/SGA to see our old website, or middleburycollegesga.squarespace.com. (proceeds to show and explain the new website). SGA archives are located underneath the “about” tab. Once these links are active, people will be able to view past bills and resolutions, senate meeting minutes, cabinet monthly reports, finance committee reports, etc. Senator Gosselin is working with Special Collections in the library to retrieve SGA archives that date back to the year 2000, hopefully even earlier. For students looking to get involved in SGA, they can visit the “get involved” page listed underneath the “about” tab. Here we will list upcoming elections and the results for the senate. We will also link informative pages for each of the cabinet committees and have their respective applications available. On the “people” tab, there are two options “cabinet” and “senate.” Under the “cabinet” tab, it helps put a face to the members of the SGA. On the “senate” drop down each member has their own profile page where people can come to understand more about each member and even send them a message. The third tab is “services” which will hopefully expand as we add more to it, and the fourth tab is “contact” which is broken down into three main categories: meetings, communication, and 10 o’clock Ross. My main priority in creating this site was keeping it user friendly and well organized while having a nice aesthetic. My hope is that the new website will increase the communication between the SGA and the student body by making information accessible to all. I would be happy to answer any comments or questions at this time or hear what you have to say.

Senator Mahboob: Yes, I wanted to say thanks for taking the lead on this. I’m really happy with it.

Senator Schurer: Thank you.

Proxy Pandey: Amazing, but I have a quick question. I think under “services,” I am seeing the bills that have passed or the bills that you are working on. I wanted to know who will be updating this and if you will also be putting _____?

Senator Schurer: I believe you’re talking about the homepage, the “weekly updates” if I have it correct? Is this what you were referring to? (referring to the projector screen). The documents will be past documents and I believe the people updating those will be from the Publicity Committee. As for “weekly updates,” I’m not exactly sure whose responsibility that will be. Maybe it will be Publicity or Speaker Aaron, not quite sure.
Proxy Pandey: If we could also know who is working on what bill. If I was not proxying today I would want to know who can I reach out to.

Speaker Aaron: On the bill it says who is sponsoring it and who wrote it and who is signing onto it. As far as more information, let us know if you think there is a way to put more specific projects.

Proxy Pandey: Voting history?

Speaker Aaron: On each bill it says who voted for it and against it. This should be on most of the bills, this year we haven’t been good about updating that. Hopefully once we get the new website we’ll figure it out.

President Sohn: Thank you so much for working on this. You’re not even getting paid to do this, so this is incredible. Speaking about money, is weebly 100% free, what aspects of it do we have to pay?

Senator Schurer: Currently it’s free. There are a few different site plans. There is an $8 site plan, $12, $25, and $38. I talked with the Publicity Committee, they were interested in either the $8 or $12 monthly option which is cheaper than our squarespace. In that $8 pack we get a free domain, so we wouldn’t have to use (censored url), we could use one under the Middlebury domain. There are also a bunch of other great features, the most important one would be no weebly branding, the other one being unlimited storage. If we decide to post our files on this website, that’s going to be a necessity. One thing that Senator Vijayakumar’s proxy said is that we consider hosting them in a google drive and having those links available from the website. We’re going to work through that with the Publicity Committee and see what works best, but my guess is the more files hosted on the site the slower it’s going to run.

President Sohn: Thank you for that. One other question, for the senators and cabinet directors who haven’t had a chance to get a headshot, are you going to be rescheduling?

Senator Schurer: Absolutely, we wouldn’t want to leave those filler images up on the website. I’ll do it until they’re done.

Speaker Aaron: Feel free to talk to John if you have any more questions and we can talk about this at our next meeting.

Senator Schurer: Just one final thing, I know it’s a really busy time, but whenever you get the chance to send your profile information, that would be very helpful.

Speaker Aaron: Now it’s 8 o’clock and I was hoping to have this meeting finished by 8 o’clock. We have one thing left on the agenda, I think it would be great if we limited it to twenty minutes? Is that okay with everybody? Is there a motion?

Senator McCormick: I motion to limit it to twenty minutes.

Speaker Aaron: All in favor of limiting it to twenty minutes? All opposed? All abstaining?

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Speaker Aaron: If everybody could pull up the resolution. Usually we start off by presenting it for ten minutes and then we discuss it, but I think it would be nice if we just started discussing it since we’ve all had a chance to read it. Then we can talk about what direction we want it to go in or if we like it as it is. Thoughts, feedback?
Senator McCormick: Can you explain the thing behind creating a new website.

Speaker Aaron: The idea is that there would be a page on the Middlebury website that would be a central point with the timeline on the different initiatives that the administration gave us on their handout of information. This way students who are interested in staying updated, instead of it being reactionary, it would be a place to see that progress.

President Sohn: Where is your questioning coming from? Is there another website that’s already—

Senator McCormick: Oh no, I was just wondering, cost-wise and accessibility-wise.

Senator Gosselin: I had two questions about number five. I was wondering if you had done any research to see if there were some other policies at other institutions and how those went, or if you also got feedback from any of those boards.

Speaker Aaron: Feedback, yes, some. I think there are definitely pros and cons. It’s unfortunate that Charles is not here and that nobody from BSU is here since we sent this in an all student email. For accountability that’s really frustrating, but this is our bill so I’ll defend this point and say there are students that come to Middlebury not understanding the honor code and things that seem reasonable to other people that might be harder for students that came from an inner city school who didn’t go over MLA in the same way other schools did. To have that on your permanent record as a violation, students should be able to go back and look at it in the future. I would love to hear your thoughts on this because this is something that I didn’t want to put in that Charles wanted. He was supposed to be here to explain to all of you why we compromised on this. Where I wanted us to go is to be less toward judicial board and more toward the initiatives that we already have. If this is something we want to take out I would be willing to list that.

Senator Koontz: I was going to say all freshman receive an overview of the honor code, correct? I would think it’s reasonable to say you could claim that all students are aware of the honor code. For instance, I, as part of res-life, had to sit in on the Brainerd Commons one for freshman and it takes about two to three hours. It’s pretty comprehensive, in my opinion. I just would think that most people have a pretty good understanding of it, and especially in a lot of the classes I took freshman year there is a lot of leniency with the professors in making sure it was understood.

Speaker Aaron: It totally makes sense to me, I told him that I could understand where he’s coming from but that I’d bring it up with you all.

Senator Vargas: I support this portion of the bill because four hours is extensive but still this needs to be practiced and ingrained in you. I’ve interacted a lot with people that have come from disadvantaged schools that don’t really have that MLA format. I do think that the honor code is something that depends on the difference in our backgrounds. Sure, the training is four hours, but that’s not enough.

Speaker Aaron: We could also look at making this more specific. I don’t want to make the bill too long but someone who reads this might have no idea what we’re talking about. Maybe if you have some suggestions, Senator Vargas, we could talk.

Co-Chair Wright: I’ve also facilitated the training for honor code here at res-life, and though I think it is comprehensive, I also know that instances of plagiarism can occasionally be array. Particularly when it comes to the discretion of a professor to accuse of a student of what they believe to be plagiarism. I think that having this clause can only help, also because I don’t read it as it pertains to academics. I read this
more as it pertains to community and academic judicial boards. It also pertains to a lot of conversations
that happened last spring surrounding what may happen to students who are put on probation and official
discipline, should handbook laws be changed per the SGA. I think it provides flexibility to say: “if we
decide to change policy because we think that that policy was not just or functional, there should be the
ability to retroactively repeal if the students are sitting with violations that are no longer relevant on their
record. I support that clause. As I read it, it doesn’t necessarily have to be specifically…

Speaker Aaron: Any other questions on that part?

President Sohn: Today was more about introducing this to you all, test the waters, and see what your
thoughts are.

Senator Fleischer: I’m not sure how you could do this, but I’d really try to sit down and think of ways for
this not go on Administrative’s desk and then be thrown out. In retrospect, I think that’s the problem with
my bill. This is doing much more sweeping stuff with much less detail, and while I am a big fan of it, I’m
very afraid it will do absolutely nothing. We just don’t have sovereignty as a body.

Speaker Aaron: You’re right, that’s something you’d have to talk to Charles about. I wanted to pass
something because we need something symbolic that goes on record to the students here that we are
supporting these endeavors and that the SGA is doing something. It has changed a lot since Charles has
worked on it with me, I know he doesn’t represent all black students on campus, but a lot of these are
points that would have follow up. Even if they don’t follow through and do all of them right away, I think
it does make a difference.

President Sohn: What if it’s a matter of putting someone’s name that we think should be responsible for
implementing it, whether it’s a staff member, someone from President Patton’s SLG, or if it is President
Patton herself?

Senator Fleischer: I think that would help. Especially on the website we could say it’s the role of an
administrator to do that. Our immediate response to the role of a Title IX Coordinator in that situation.
I’m still in favor of this bill, but I think that’s something we should take into account when we’re saying
specific roles that should handle each of these issues.

Speaker Aaron: I think after we pass this we could sit down with someone from the administration and
follow up on these, follow up on what they gave us and see what they recommend.

Co-Chair Wright: I think that that’s actually a really wonderful point. If we could have a sit down after
this and negotiate what some of the ambiguity, for lack of better word, in this wording represents. I agree
strongly that this body, too often, many bodies that are meant to represent students on campus, pass
legislation to the desk of the Administrator and then it just gets swept up. Not really acted on in the ways
that we would like it to. Even things that we do have a clear course of action laid out for. Since I didn’t
give an update tonight for Community Council I would love to encourage as many of you to come to CC
in two weeks. We’re talking about a very similar piece of legislation that has five very similar points in
tone, but outlined in very concrete steps and mechanisms in which CC could partner with a body like
SGA. Make sure some of these recommendations are really seen through. That’s worked undertaking as
well, we’d love to partner with you all on. I think it would be very effective to combine our forces and
really help to delegate to people who are going to have impact. Ideally if we could get this on a lot of
desks, which is what Community Council is for, it doesn’t just get tossed in the trash.

Speaker Aaron: We have ten more minutes, Proxy Vijayakumar.
Proxy Vijayakumar: Regarding the regular direct communication with leads of cultural organizations, what did you have in mind as to the nature of this communication? Emails? Or maybe participation in a meeting? Something in between? Also, would the de-escalation and diversity training be virtual or in person? I’d prefer at least a mix of both, because online trainings in my opinion don’t carry the same weight/impact as an in-person training.

Speaker Aaron: To answer the first question, after we pass this and talk to the administration, we could see if maybe once a month someone could show up to BSU meetings, or the person who’s in charge of cultural organizations could do a report specifically on the status of—

President Sohn: Is that for number seven?

Speaker Aaron: Yeah. Do you want to add anything to that?

President Sohn: For the SGA there’s a co-director of Institutional Diversity Committee and they should be the ones meeting with the cultural orgs, but I’m going to check up with them to make sure they are doing that. Is Varsha’s question specifically to point number seven or just in general: “what has the communication been so far?”

Speaker Aaron: Probably to point number seven because it says establishing regular or direct communication.

Proxy Vijayakumar: Yeah, I think that’s it.

President Sohn: For de-escalation training, this is one of the points that came up directly from the list of demands that a couple of student activists came up with. In terms of the de-escalation training, they already have the online trainings implemented, but we have been notified that they aren’t mandatory. One of the things that we included is mandatory trainings. Also, like Rae brought up, constantly having in person training once a month is something that we’re looking to implement as well.

Senator Goldfield: Is that the same thing for the diversity training? Is it not mandatory?

President Sohn: I think diversity training is currently happening through Andy Lloyd. They’ve brought in three speakers at three times throughout the school year for faculty to get diversity training. I’m not sure if it’s mandatory or not.

Senator Goldfield: So that part of the bill is more about staff?

President Sohn: Yes.

Co-Chair Wright: I received an interesting piece of feedback from staff members of Community Council that I don’t necessarily agree with. I was approached by two staff members for us to keep in mind as a body to be warned against the use of the word of mandatory when requiring something of staff. I think for partially cultural reasons and partially historical reasons, that shuts down participation.

President Sohn: What about required?

Co-Chair Wright: I think that we need something in there.

Speaker Aaron: Okay, if they don’t like the word mandatory we can do required. I think the idea is that it should be mandatory.
President Sohn: What about highly recommend?

Co-Chair Wright: Certainly, I’m just trying to provide the context that there are staff who have approached me about similarly worded phrasing and that there is an aversion to the word.

Speaker Aaron: We have three minutes left, are there any questions you would like to discuss before next time? Senator Mahboob.

Senator Mahboob: I was just going to make a point and say I would really prefer having this conversation with at least one black student present. I understand that Charles is running a little late but he’s on his way and I don’t know if we want to extend the discussion, but I don’t think we should vote on this without having the black voice represented.

Speaker Aaron: Just to clarify, we’re not voting on this today. We might vote on it next time, definitely before winter break. I would just like to say I’m trying to get black students to come and if we’re having a hard time, which is why I’ve met with him so many times to go over this.

President Sohn: What if we, as an SGA senate, invite at least two people from our constituency that we think would be really impacted by this bill, and could benefit from this bill to attend next Sunday’s meeting? Hopefully they will come with opinions and thoughts. If they’re members of cultural orgs even better.

Speaker Aaron: I like that idea.

Co-Chair Wright: Just to reach out to BSU, to Charles, because I know Charles has a lot of things to say but I also know he does not explicitly represent the views of all the black students on campus. It seems that we hear just his voice. As valuable as it is, I would love to hear more. I know that’s a sentiment that is commonly shared here.

Speaker Aaron: Thank you for saying that. Why don’t we reach out to the who BSU board and if everyone can reach out to a couple constituents.

President Sohn: Bring two people with you. That is a must.

Co-Chair Wright: It’s mandatory.

Speaker Aaron: We can call it for 7:30 or something. We’ll send you a specific time and location to be here and we can just get straight to it.

President Sohn: One other thing we have to do, First Year Committee Ratifications.

Speaker Aaron: If you have any other comments on this bring them to the next meeting or send up recommendations. Last thing, committee ratifications. Are there any objections or points of clarification?

Senator Fleischer: Motion to vote.

All seconded.

Speaker Aaron: All in favor of voting? All opposed? All abstaining? All in favor of approving these people? All opposed? All abstaining?
IX. Adjournment

Meeting end 8:20