I. Attendance
Members Present: Senator Goldfield, Speaker Aaron, Senator Finkelstein, Senator Gosselin, Senator Vargas, Senator Vijayakumar, Senator Pustejovsky, Senator Salas, Senator Mahboob, Senator Schurer, Senator Koontz, Co-Chair Brook, Proxy Sohn (), Senator Low-Beinart, Senator McCormick, Senator Andrews, Senator Pandey

Members Absent: No members absent.

II. Acceptance of the Minutes from 2/25/18
Speaker Aaron: Is there a motion to accept the minutes from 2/25/18?

Motion.

Seconded.

Speaker Aaron: All in favor of accepting the minutes? All opposed? All abstaining? The minutes are accepted.

14-0-0

III. Announcements
Deputy Cowan: Staff Appreciation Night has been finalized for Monday, April 30th. If everyone could try and keep an hour or two open for that night to help us out, that would be greatly appreciated. Currently, Atwater is reserved from 3 to 9 p.m. If you are unavailable, we are also making a video where you can talk about a staff member that you appreciate for about a minute. There are many ways to show appreciation, more details after Spring Break. We would also like to plan to take any left-over food to a nearby homeless shelter.

Speaker Aaron: Can constituents help if they would like to or is this just open to the SGA?

Deputy Cowan: Yes, constituents may help.

The second announcement, a student at Middlebury Union High School reached out to the SGA. She is interested in supporting gun control reform in both the Vermont and federal levels. She has organized a walkout for the high school on Wednesday, March 14th and would like to organize a letter campaign. There is no organization yet to this, but I think contributing to this considering recent events would be a good idea as the SGA.

[Senators McCormick and Andrews arrive.]

Co-Chair Brook: If you are coordinating with the walkout, could you also take over coordination with Students Against Gun Violence? This is a student organization that was started this semester.
Senator Goldfield: In your mind, is this something the SGA is endorsing or something the SGA is informing constituents about?

[Senator Pandey arrives.]

Deputy Cowan: I’m not entirely sure.

Chief Alam: President Sohn is currently at a conference, however she did leave some words she would like me to relay. [Reads letter from President Sohn.] We have Cabinet Committee Ratifications. Jacob will provide information on the number of applicants and how many were selected by cabinet directors.

Jacob: We received a total of 111 applications, average of about 10 per committee. Each committee can take in as many as they deem necessary.

Chief Alam: The SGA was reached out to see if anyone was interested in working Commencement as ushers. It’s a paid opportunity that will allow you to stay on campus during graduation. President Sohn is working to compile feedback and work the SGA did on the Common Agenda last week. Leads, please create a Slack channel for your committee members.

Christine: Is the usher position only open to the SGA?

Co-Chair Brook: The position is open to everyone, they reach out first to organizations that have worked with them prior. After that it goes live on the go/SEO website for free applications.

Christine: Do senators have to apply or are they just picked?

Co-Chair Brook: Everyone is reached out to. You just have to send a reply to the email asking for interest. If you have any questions you can reach out to the SEO.

Christine: I’m just worried since it’s a paying job and there’s a lot of income disparity on campus.

Doug Adams: Right now, they are starting general recruitment. Anyone can apply for the general announcement for the student body. Applications aren’t being slanted, they are just trying to make sure they get enough applications.

Christine: If there usually aren’t enough applications, have they thought about having SGA members promote the event.

Doug: I don’t know the answer to that, but I would be happy to bring that up to the Events Management Office.
Speaker Aaron: We are going to move on if there are no more questions. Please save all discussion regarding the Tupperware for when we get to it on the agenda.

IV. Senate Check-ins

Senator Andrews: Nothing new.

Senator McCormick: Nothing new.

Senator Koontz: Nothing new.

Senator Salas: Senator Low-Beinart and I discussed our inclusive community project and received feedback.

Senator Gosselin: I met with Doug to discuss the Res-Life Bill, which I will bring back later in a revised form.

Senator Schurer: I met with President Sohn, Hannah Ross, and Andy Lloyd and shared my Meet Midd project with them. They want to expand it towards administration as well.

I met with Dave Donahue to brainstorm the International Flags Initiative, our conversation expanded into one about McCullough, which is my assigned Common Agenda item. I intend to continue these conversations with Senator Salas and others in the future.

Lastly, Senator Vargas and I hosted our Meet the Febs Ice Cream Social which was attended by over 300 people.

Senator Vargas: I am still working on the Plan B Bill. I will be meeting with Gus Jordan at Parton to discuss it. I’m also still working on the Tampon and Pads bill, it’s kind of come to a stand-still with facilities. There is also the Sexual Assault Survey, I’m waiting to hear feedback on that. I am trying to reinstate the Sexual Assault Oversight Committee, also waiting for feedback.

Senator Vijayakumar: I attended the Electher workshop. It came to my attention that many of the students on campus have great ideas similar to what we are already working on. I want to stress the importance of checking in with the people we represent.

 Senator Goldfield: I met with the Student Educational Affairs Committee to work on getting course syllabi online prior to course registration. There was a positive reception, but it will be hard to get faculty on board. Our small goal is to get required textbooks online first. Another possible step would be if professors could send out syllabi to students soon after course registration, so they might be prepared before the semester start.

Senator Finkelstein: I want to thank the first year senators for hosting Meet the Febs, everyone really appreciated it.
Senator Pandey: I’ve been discussing ways to increase sense of belonging on campus. I’ve also been having conversations with Custodial to see what things are like for them. It came to my attention that they only get 1 meal per week at the dining hall, and that a student must invite them. Based on the salary, that’s a huge cost for them. Also, just a general note that students can invite Custodial to meals.

Tomorrow I am meeting to discuss establishing a bill that would allow internships for academic credit. This would be helpful for people who are tight on money, OPT application costs $410 while CPT is free.

Senator Low-Beinart: Senator Salas already mentioned our work on our project. I also met with Peter Brook about my Common Agenda item. I still need more clarification on the forward momentum. He turned out to be the wrong person, so now I’m going to meet with the real Head of Public Arts.

Senator Mahboob: Nothing to report.

Senator Pustejovsky: The AFC, Student Activities Office, and other organizations are looking to do a community mural in McCullough. We discussed how to bring in SGA and other student participation. Soon there will be advertising as students will be allowed to help paint the mural. This will be happening in April.

Speaker Aaron: I talked about finding a wellness space on campus, we are still looking. The Finance Committee would like students to help in selecting new members for the spring term. If you are interested please contact them, however a reminder that each senator can only be on a maximum of 3 committees.

V. Community Council Check-in
Co-Chair Brook: There were two visitors at the last Community Council meeting, who discussed why course registration is the way it is. They are currently working on changing the digital platform which will also affect all forms of payment. Over a period of a few years, Bannerweb will be transitioning or Oracle. We are also looking at the advising system and ways to improve that.

This week we will be voting on inclusive bathrooms. I’d like to reach out to the SGA to help with the education process since that is the main priority in terms of implementation. I did not make this bill; other peoples’ input would be greatly appreciated as to why this change is an important one.

VI. Campus Pulse
Co-Chair Brook: I yield my time to Chief Alam.

Chief Alam: About protests, many schools are putting out statements regarding these protests. I think it’s instructive to look at Middlebury’s statement and think about how we treat protests.
Co-Chair Brook: Are you referring to the campus article that critiqued the way in which Middlebury approached this issue?

Chief Alam: No comment.

Deputy Cowan: The plan for the student walkout is for them to leave their high school at 9:30 in the morning and walk to the Town Hall.

VII. Public Comment Time
Leaf: [Addressing Co-Chair Brook] I would love to help with the education aspect of the inclusive bathrooms.

Christine: [Addressing Senator Pandey] Do you have personal experience eating lunch with Custodial? Are you aware of the IO system? [Explains the IO system.]

Senator Pandey: I do have experience. My point was that it should not be so difficult to invite them to lunch. It’s not practical and there’s no point.

Christine: Is your interest in making it easier to take them to lunch or not?

Senator Pandey: That is the encouragement, but I want to make it easier for Custodial to get lunch here in general.

Christine: Have you considered publicizing the IO system?

Senator Pandey: I will talk with the person who works on the website.

Christine: [Addressing Co-Chair Brook] Regarding education on inclusive bathrooms, I come from a conservative political background and I am wondering if your goal is to make people with views like mine agree with you.

Co-Chair Brook: I invite you to come to meetings if you would like to know more details. There is a line in the resolution that people who come from certain cultural/religious backgrounds may need the right for separate bathrooms. This is in no way trying to change peoples’ views, just trying to make them understand why these changes are occurring.

Christine: From personal experience, when I expressed to my Dean that I was uncomfortable with the idea of gender inclusive bathrooms in my dorm, he moved me to another building. I think there should be a discussion in the Commons system how it’s not safe for students like me to express discontent.
Co-Chair Brook: I cannot speak to that in particular, however this recommendation is specifically around public spaces. There will be gender segregated bathrooms made available. I’m sorry to hear about your situation.

Christine: I think it’s something you need to consider that since we are a residential college where students can’t choose to live off campus, it’s important to keep residential areas a safe space. Either you leave Middlebury or accept the system.

Co-Chair Brook: I would be open to having a separate conversation with you regarding private locations, but this is in regard to public spaces.

Senator Mahboob: I do agree there are people that come from a background where they are more comfortable using gender segregated bathrooms. However, I do know of people who don’t identify with either gender, and they have a very difficult time using public spaces. I think this is a very important issue for people who don’t fall into the gender binary.

Christine: Would you be making the decision based off the quantity of people that would be affected or are you just wanting to privilege a certain group?

Co-Chair Brook: In the interest of time, I recommend you attend the Community Council meeting.

Speaker Aaron: I would like to rearrange the agenda to follow the order of Sustainable To-go Boxes, Smoke & Tobacco Presentation, and then the Trustees Bill. Is there a motion?

Motion.

Seconded.

Speaker Aaron: All in favor of rearranging the agenda? All opposed? All abstaining? The agenda has been rearranged.

17-0-0

VIII. Old Business
    a. Sustainability Office Intern & SGA Environmental Committee: Update on Reusable Tupperware in Dining Halls
Leaf & Hayley: This has been a project long in the running and a lot of work has been put into it. We would be more than happy to discuss any questions or address any concerns you may have. [Gives presentation.]

    We saw the concerns posted on Facebook and have done a lot of research on addressing these concerns. Regarding safety, the containers are microwave and dishwasher safe.
Current To-go containers are called “compostable” however they cannot be composted here, hence they are not considered sustainable. These re-usable containers will be able to go through at least 2,000 washes making them a much more sustainable alternative.

Lastly, these containers make life easier for staff in both Dining and the Recycling Center.

Matthew: I think this is a great idea. I would like to put into question the representation the SGA has for the student body. The early purchase of the containers, while necessary, makes me want to ask if that had an influence on the vote of the SGA? I’m curious as to who was involved in the trial period and whether the sampling was fair? Was there bias? I don’t think the decision the SGA made was right, but I want to see how we can move forward in fair representation of the student body.

Christine: Is someone recording these questions down?

😊 Yes, tis I, the SGA Minute Taker. 😊

Leaf & Hayley: I can’t comment on the SGA process, but we did our best to keep the trial fair. We reached out to people we knew, heads of organizations, and team captains via the Green. Based on the feedback from the trial period, we decided to have a larger sample size, hence this bill.

Matthew: It’s good to hear that there’s a reassessment stage. I’m afraid that the people who didn’t attend the meeting were the ones who weren’t interested, might this have resulted in misrepresentation of data?

Leaf & Hayley: We tried very hard to get everyone to come. There were three people who didn’t come, we don’t know why.

Senator Pandey: Maybe we should move the attention towards what will be better for the people that are against this. This saved money can now be used for the same students benefit. If the benefit is higher than the cost, they will be more willing to do it. Have you asked Dining about this? There was also lots of backlash on the $5. There are many ways to incentivize people to do this, get more specific about the kind of dining hall programs that will be available with these new containers.

Leaf & Hayley: They put that towards other programs in dining hall which is where new foods in the dining halls come from. Nutella is one example. The declining balance money came from saved money as well.

Senator Pustejovsky: I would like to clarify on the $5, it’s only if you lose the box. Just don’t lose your box. It can come out of declining balance. It would be interesting to talk about maybe making this a trial period without the initial $5.
Addressing the SGA side, this bill has been in the SGA for a month. It has been highly publicized, and the feedback has been mostly positive. We have been trying to get feedback, I would love to know if there are other ways of obtaining feedback. The backlash is coming more from a resistance to change rather than a resistance to the bill itself. Depending on framing, the responses will change.

Chief Alam: I want to clarify that this is not necessarily an SGA initiative. This was going to go through no matter how the SGA voted, this was just a way for the SGA to endorse this change.

Senator Mahboob: While the SGA might not be directly behind it, we have had lots of conversations with constituents. It seems more students have been in favor of this bill, and we have also heard flip side mainly rooted in inconvenience. There have been many historical instances where something that was thought to be a great idea and revoking that idea would have inconvenienced many people. Slavery is one very potent example. Sometimes a small group of students is what it takes to create a positive impact. It increases the responsibility of students in the right ways.

Co-Chair Brook: I was the only one who abstained from this vote. [Quotes minutes from 2/25/18.] This does seem like an executive decision where students don’t get any say. I acknowledged split. This vote was not to say whether we wanted this to happen, it was to say whether the SGA would support this for the environment and financial benefits laid out in the bill. We did listen to the students, even if it didn’t seem like it. The SGA will be working on ways to outreach, but we need student opinion in order to move forward.

Speaker Aaron: I brought this to Community Council before I brought it to the SGA. We do plan to address concerns that arise.

Alec Fleischer: The SGA is not a direct democracy, SGA can pass a bill even if the student body is not in favor. This is because of a difference in education, this took a month to pass as the SGA became more and more educated about the matter. Was this rammed through? I don’t think so. I’ve never seen more thought put into a bill than this.

Christine: [Addressing Senator Mahboob] I was very disturbed, as a black female with ancestors who were slaves, that you used slavery to make your argument. The justification for slavery was that these people were morally inferior and that we were Christianizing them. As a model minority from an Asian background, I am repulsed by your argument and its lack of empathy. There is a lot of moral superiority in this argument, thinking that it’s alright to make students, who pay $14,000 for dining services, to pay addition money to go through pain and suffering because we are better than them with our environmentalism.

I deeply support the environment, but what you said showed me the general lack of empathy for the student body. This was shown by my ability to hear the voices of 22% of the underclassmen body and the mere 15 people in the trial period.

[Explains downcycling.] Recycling plastics is a mis-notion to keep us naive.
[Provides personal backstory.] Women who work in the factories that make these containers are 400% more likely to develop breast cancer. From your morally superior environmentalist standpoint, it sounds like you want to let those women have breast cancer because you need your sustainable containers. In slavery, the argument was to let the slaves die in plantations because we need our free labor. Mentioning slavery was relevant, but very inappropriate.

I also think it was inappropriate that 5 or 6 members of the SGA tried to personally approach me over Facebook about this issue. There is a power distance between us that needs to be recognized. This attempt at private correspondence was very inappropriate and was borderline harassment. This is another instance of moral superiority.

The root of this issue is the SGA thinking the student body is ignorant and needs to be educated.

Proxy Sohn: President Sohn is the type of person who wants to reach out and listen to people. She used Facebook because she was unable to do so in person.

Christine: Email would have been the appropriate means. Facebook is inappropriate since it is private and not monitored by the school.

Proxy Sohn: I’m sure she will take this into account.

As an Environment Studies Major, I can relate to environmentalism not being inclusive and I am also a person of color. Your argument is valid, and a lot of decisions cannot be based off what mainstream environmentalism deems more important. The money saved is an important to consider, and a lot of decisions are never black and white. Having a space like this, to bring up issues, is important to assess where the grey line is.

Christine: Are you aware that environmental justice was started by a group of African American women? Environmental justice was started by people of color. I think you should inform your friends of that. The way you described it was not representative of that.

Speaker Aaron: Thank you, and we’ll move on to—

Christine: I don’t think my issues have been adequately addressed.

Senator Pustejovsky: About the Facebook poll, you mentioned that Facebook is inappropriate, so we usually use email or face to face correspondence since it is most effective. A lot of time was spent thinking about bias in polls. Phrasing automatically biases a poll, and I think it’s inappropriate to use Facebook in that way. We would love to know better ways to reach students than what we are already doing. It’s great that you’re here and talking to us, but it is not fair for you to call us out for not using all channels when you consider Facebook inappropriate.

Christine: I have experienced a lot of harassment on campus. The idea that a female will not be harassed if you don’t party and don’t get drunk is a myth. I’m not saying Facebook polls are bad,
they are very good. I’m saying it is inappropriate for multiple people from the SGA, most who aren’t even my senator, to want to speak with me. It is intimidating.

Speaker Aaron: Thank you so much for commenting, we have one more person in line to speak—

Christine: I don’t think Senator Mahboob referred to the racist comment she made to me. I would like to hear her respond.

Senator Mahboob: May I refer to you as Christy?

Christine: Christine is my name.

Senator Mahboob: Christine, thank you for bringing up your points and sharing your feelings. When I made the analogy, I meant it within the context of bad ideas that have been widely accepted. By no means did I mean to make any moral superiority question. Thank you for sharing your comments about how environmentalism was sparked by African Americans. I think that fuels the discussion that sometimes it takes small group of change to implement change. I hope I addressed your point, I did not mean to make point about moral superiority.

Christine: Are you trying to apologize to me or educate me?

Senator Mahboob: I am only clarifying my earlier statement.

Christine: Do you understand why it’s inappropriate for you, as a model minority, to make that analogy to slavery since your ancestors were not enslaved?

Speaker Aaron: Christine, I appreciate your comments. In the interest of time we can continue this later.

Co-Chair Brook: Regarding how you are addressing the body, considering that we are showing our utmost respect to how you are speaking and bringing your ideas to us, I would hope that you speak to us with the same respect.

Addressing your comment about bridging the gap between the SGA and the student body, how are we meant to reach out to our constituents if Facebook is not an appropriate means? I would love to hear any feedback in another conversation at another time.

I am an indigenous woman from New Zealand, subject to this moral majority of saying that environmentalism isn’t a key for my people to survive. That’s something to take into considering when thinking about who has the right. Environmentalism is extremely important to my peoples’ survival, and not just mine but indigenous peoples worldwide.

Christine: I apologize, I didn’t have an opportunity to educate myself on that matter. If you would have liked me to speak about issues in New Zealand, I apologize.
Alec (2): I was a participant in the trial period. There is a loss of convenience with these new containers, but there is also the gain of new, useful features that aren’t widely focused on.

Proxy Sohn: [Reads letter from President Sohn.] There is a need for engagement between the SGA and the student body beyond email. One idea would be in person straw polling. [Explains process.] We could also partner with the campus newspaper so that straw polling can reach further.

Speaker Aaron: In the interest of time, we need to come back to this next week. We can take a few further comments.

Leaf: Moving forward, I want to continue working on educational materials and make sure they are distributed to a broader audience to clear up any confusion.

Co-Chair Brook: [Addressing Leaf] Please reach out regarding what your end goal for SGA to do is before next week’s meeting. This way, we can address goals next week and be more productive.

I. New Business
   a. Presentation: Smoke/Tobacco Free Campus

Laura & Sandy: [Give experience background.] We just want to see if there is any will to make Middlebury a smoke/tobacco free environment. From a health care provider perspective, there is no healthy does of tobacco or second-hand smoke. One thing we want to prevent is students coming here as non-smokers, and then leaving as smokers. We also want to make it an easier environment for people that want to, to quit smoking.

   A tobacco free and smoke free campus are not the same thing. In 2019 all Vermont colleges are required to become tobacco free, so we figured this fell in line with the impending change.

   This is just a dream and we want to see what people think about it. Implementation could look very different depending on the will of the people.

Co-Chair Brook: I yield my time to Chief Alam.

Chief Alam: What do you see as repercussions for someone who is found smoking? What are your thoughts on strategies to support people who are already dependent on tobacco?

Laura & Sandy: It would be different depending on who you are, employees there is more leverage than there is with students. We see as more of a step-wise approach. As this gets implemented, this will have to be decided in more detail. Community enforcement would also play a roll.

   We already one staff member being trained on how to support people who are tobacco dependent. There are many resources for people going through that.
Speaker Aaron: President Sohn wanted to ask where you were hoping the SGA would help.

Laura & Sandy: It’s so early in the conversation that we’re not sure how this is going to go. We are just starting a conversation and would like to hear any thoughts on it.

Co-Chair Brook: I am a previous smoker who quit while at Middlebury. The number of smokers at Middlebury is a minority number and we are a tight knit community. How are you going to combat the community versus community aspect of this? Many people use smoking as a means of stress release, and this might create more stress if it is taken away.

Addiction is another huge part of smoking, making quitting very difficult. How do we present this idea without hindering the process of quitting? Vapes, used to wean off smoking cigarettes, are hugely popular on this campus. If you could take that into consideration when considering a smoke free versus tobacco free campus.

[Senator Mahboob leaves.]

Laura & Sandy: No policy would be successful if it was a quickly made decision. We want to make sure there is plenty of time, resources, and support to make this happen. There are many ways this could be implemented over an extended period, something we want to make sure to provide a sufficient amount of.

Senator Goldfield: Is this tobacco or smoke free? Which term is broader?

Laura & Sandy: Tobacco free which is a broader policy. Tobacco free covers cigarettes and vapes.

Senator Low-Beinart: [Addressing Laura & Sandy] I think you should focus on the idea of social smoking and how to get a possibly angry community to go along with this.

Laura & Sandy: Thank you, that’s very helpful. One reason many colleges go completely free is because it’s hard to distinguish vaping versus cigarette smoke.

Senator Pandey: Do you think would be a band-aid solution? People might find more ways around the rules if it’s prohibited altogether. Maybe encouraging the weaning of tobacco and including why it’s bad, then offering more support.

Laura & Sandy: If this was to move forward, it would have to be implemented in a way that would promote people rather than punish them.
b. *Ish Alam & Jin Sohn: Students—Trustees Representation and Engagement Bill*

Chief Alam: This bill was made regarding the serious issues in student representation in the Board of Trustees, which is the highest level of control at Middlebury. We have compiled some introductory information as to how the Board operates and have suggested some changes.

[Reads suggested changes.]

Senator Pustejovsky: [Addressing Chief Alam] What do you think the feasibility of this is? Do you think there will be pushback?

Chief Alam: For the meetings that don’t happen here, the student representative could always skype in.

There is definitely pushback.

Senator McCormick: This resolution has no actual power, it’s just a recommendation?

Chief Alam: Right, it is a statement of support for the recommendation.

Speaker Aaron: Is there a motion to table this?

Motion.

Seconded.

Speaker Aaron: All in favor of tabling? All opposed? All abstaining? The resolution has been tabled for next week.

17-0-0

Speaker Aaron: We have new cabinet members to be ratified.

Senator Pustejovsky: These are people who just applied?

Speaker Aaron: Yes.

Senator Vargas: Don’t see a section for the Sexual Relationship and Respect Committee.

Speaker Aaron: That means they aren’t adding anyone new to their committee or they haven’t sent in any new members to be ratified to be ratified this week. Is there a motion to ratify?

Motion.

Seconded.
Speaker Aaron: All in favor of ratifying? All opposed? All abstaining? The new cabinet members have been ratified.

17-0-0

II. **Adjournment**
Speaker Aaron: Is there a motion to adjourn?

Motion.

Seconded.

Speaker Aaron: All in favor of adjourning? All opposed? All abstaining? We are adjourned.

16-1-0 [Senator Salas against.]

Meeting ends at 8:54 p.m.