SGA Formal Meeting Minutes
September 23, 2012

The meeting began at 7:03pm.

I. Minutes

Minutes from last week were passed.

II. Executive Board Report

Morgan Lingar: Morgan welcomed the three new members of the Presidents Council: Williams dorm president Thomas Gregston, and the class presidents of 2016 Brittany Chin and Michael Loginoff. She also mentioned that there would be an email going out this week about how to become involved with task forces. Lastly, at the next informal meeting, the Presidents Council will be discussing how they will be reporting back from their committees and what will be done with that information to increase transparency.

Kareem Kalil: Kareem thanked the Presidents Council for the high proportion of attendance at the first Story Time event. He noted that Pandit gave an outstanding story, and that although he will be a difficult speaker to follow, the Executive Board is in the process of going through nominations and will soon be voting on who will speak at the next Story Time, which will be on Sunday, October 7 at 9pm. Kareem said that he is excited about the strong support and publicity for the event, and that we need to keep bringing the Colby community together. Also, Kareem thanked those who attended the pre-meeting dinner and invited the Presidents Council to get informally on Saturday.

Jean-Jacques Ndayisenga: Jean-Jacques had nothing to report.

Monica Davis: Monica announced the first Dinner with Dorm Presidents, which will occur on Tuesday October 2 at 7pm in the Dana Fairchild room. She would like at least half of the dorm presidents to attend, and would like this information to be spread through the dorm newsletters. Also, this week Monica will be filming the first Behind the Hill video, which will include reports from the class presidents of 2013 Nick Zeller and Erika Hinman. The video will be posted on the SGA Facebook page and should be included in dorm newsletters.

Rachel Jacobs: Rachel had nothing to report.

Jack Mauel: Jack announced the appointed members of the Housing and Facilities Advisory Committee for this academic year, and encouraged the Presidents Council to act as a liaison between students who have concerns that can be addressed on HFAC. He also mentioned that he had a conversation with a student about the lack composting in dorms and is looking into the a potential solution to that.

Anna Caron: Anna announced that committee appointments are complete, and that the Presidents Council members should expect to be contacted by a representative from their committees soon. Also, the Library has invited the Presidents Council to the annual SGA lunch, and Anna will be forwarding more information on that soon.
Ill. Dean’s Report

President William Adams began his report by updating the Presidents Council on the events planned for the Bicentennial celebration. He said that there are going to be many events on campus and events off campus both in the town of Waterville and across the country. The Board of Trustees weekend is going to be in October, there will be a formal speaker to begin the celebration, and in February there will be a convocation of multimedia composition. He encouraged the presidents council to check out the bicentennial website, which has a thorough list of events as well as an interesting history of the college. He also announced that there will be a documentary made by professionals. The wrapping up of the bicentennial celebration will be the dedication of the new pavillion of the museum. Throughout the entire process, there will be a distinguished lecture series centered on the them “In Their Footsteps.” Wayne Kim directed a question at Jed Wartman, asking how the administration and faculty are going to choose students to attend selective bicentennial celebrations. Jed answered that invitations are going out for some events this week, and those who selected students attempted to make those chosen the broadest representation of the student body as possible. About 75 people will be able to attend the dinner. President Adams added that this is an upper limit in terms of practicality for a dinner. Dean Terhune mentioned that any open seats would go to students only. Jed assured that the dance in the field house would be open to all students, as well as the community photo to be taken with bicentennial t-shirts at the football game. Ben Lester inquired about whether the events off campus would be accentuated towards Colby-Waterville relations. President Adams said that there would be events across the year in waterville, and that we would include those people in some of the events on campus and some of the events in town. He noted that the relationship between Colby and Waterville is as good as its ever been in his time at Colby. He mentioned that Waterville ahs challenges fundamentally and economically, but that it also has an important partner in this celebration, as Waterville is a significant aspect of Colby’s history.

President Adams then discussed the progress of the museum and the plans for the new science building. Ground has been broken for this building, which will house the departments of psychology, computer science, and mathematics, and the construction will over the next 16 months, scheduled to be completed and open for classes by the fall of 2014. This project finishes the modernization of the science buildings, and provides a huge opportunity for residential life in Roberts Union, which will be able to house 50-75 students, bringing back more students. Carter Stevens asked for an explanation about where these students would be brought back from. President Adams answered that instead of the current 110 students living off campus, after Roberts is transformed into a dorm, only about 50 to 60 students will have to live off campus. He noted that off campus living will always be needed to supplement housing at Colby, but that it will be nice to have more students on campus than we have now. He recognized that there will always be students who should have the opportunity to live off campus. Dean Terhune mentioned that rather than squeezing more students into more rooms, we will have more beds. Jenny Sher asked whether the transformation of the building has been planned yet. Dean Terhune answered no it has not, and that at midyear, underclassmen students will be involved in this process. President Adams said that it will be a good thing to have more weight on that side of the campus in terms of student residence, especially with a dining hall right there. Dean Terhune also explained that Grossman will no longer be a dorm room, and security and human resources will be moved from Roberts to Grossman.
President Adams lastly that brought up that last year, the Board of Trustees voted to mandate the creation of a task force which focuses on academic and social accountability in an attempt improve student culture on campus. He emphasized that the plans to act on these issues were initiated and strongly influenced by last year’s members on Student Government. Kareem asked what the structure of the task force is going to be. President Adams responded that the Board of Trustees Chair Bob Diamond will be selecting individuals from the Board and Dean Kletzer will be working to appoint faculty to the task force. He also said there would be student engagement. Dean Jim Terhune clarified that they anticipate taking a three-pronged approach, where there would be an overarching committee that would split into two focus groups: the academic side and the out-of-classroom side of accountability. The task force will likely consist of 4 to 5 Trustees, the same number of faculty, and the same number of students, making a group of about 15 to 18 individuals. He said that the administration will be appointing students which will represent the three upper class years, as first years probably do not have the Colby experience necessary to contribute to the task force. There will be at least on student representative from SGA, and there will be a conversation about how the SGA member will be identified. Nick Z asked if there was an end product in mind, or the task force is just a place for discussion to take place. Dean Terhune responded that the task force will be aimed at identifying action steps that can be taken, and that they do not want to presuppose an honor code so as to consider all possible options. President Adams agreed with Dean Terhune’s characterization of the description, and reinforced that the task force came about as a result of SGA’s previous work towards the creation of an honor code. They do not want to predict the end product, but the honor code is where the conversation came from. Students nor faculty were not able to definitively decide whether there was a need for an honor code in last year’s discussion, and in the thirteen years that President Adams has been at Colby, he has witnessed three distinct times when there have been student initiatives towards an honor code, none of which have been successful. Dean Terhune acknowledged the grassroots initiatives that Keith Love is involved in. President Adams mentioned the accountability issues currently at Harvard, and noted that we are indeed parallel with some of our peer institutions on this topic.

Jenny S asked President Adams how he thought the implementation of the smoking ban was going. President Adams said that he had received two complaints about one of the identified smoking areas, the one next to Williams. Mark Crosby from human resources, who planned the implementation, has been notified of these complaints, and they are discussing whether the smoking area should be relocated. He emphasized that this is a process because this is a transitional year, and he would like to know from the Presidents Council how the tobacco ban is going and how it can go better. He also said he understands how some students resent it. Monica Davis said that she hears no complaints about the ban itself, rather that the mood of the student body is similar to that of the hard alcohol ban. She said she thinks it is going to be a struggle moving forward because students do not feel like they were involved with it. Dean Terhune said that students were involved with the process the entire time, but President Adams clarified that it was true that students were not involved with the decision, as it was his personal decision. The decision was based on student health and welfare, as well as the face that the College has formal responsibilities for its 700 employees including health care, which students are paying for. Monica asked where the saved money is going, because there are issues like students not receiving financial aid that are not being addressed. President Adams said that the College is not saving money yet, but rather this is a long term play. This is a broader issue of health, wellness, and welfare. He gave examples of how these issues are prevalent in the presidential election, the University of Maine system, and Mayor Bloomberg of New York City, who is even banning certain sugary drinks. Dean Terhune assured that the Colby administration is not going to go that far, but that the tobacco ban will be one of the major topics on the agenda for the College Affairs Committee. President Adams said that there are now sanctions for
employees but not for students, and that this system is a work in progress. Bowen Tretheway commented that he has not noticed a difference at all in student smoking culture. He said that he spoke with security guards on their smoke break, and that he thinks that nobody is talking about it because students are not complying with the ban. President Adams said that change is going to be gradual and that the process is more important than the means. He also noted that students and the rest of the College need to use peer pressure to help the progression of the smoking ban. Justin Deckert said that he has seen a significant decrease of smokers on campus, and that is it is nice to see many people using the designated smoking areas.

Justin D thanked Dean Terhune for the warm Colby Bubble email. President Adams commented that the emails are a nice addition to what Dean Terhune’s office is doing.

IV. Community Forum

No community members were present at the meeting.

V. Old Business

Motion 1: Jill Riendeau of Averill proposed that Students for the Exploration and Development of Space (SEDS) be approved as an official campus club. Club representatives Julian Giarraputo and Melanie Ross spoke about this new “space club” and how it would incorporate the technology available in the astronomy department. Julian said that there is a void on campus when it comes to talking about astronomy, and that they would like to fill that space. Morgan L asked where the chapter bank account will be coming from. Julian responded that they used a template from the national organization to form their constitution, and that the funding would need to be discussed. Wayne asked if they would be using the observatory. Julian said that is the plan. Jean-Jacques asked how the club will benefit the student body outside of the club. Julian replied that a representative from NASA can come to speak at Colby for free. Jack M asked whether they have received much student interest. Julian responded that just within their close friends, he and Melanie know about 20 people who are interested in joining the club. They are interested in gathering to talk about astronomy and watch documentaries together. Melanie added that most of their friends are seniors, but they would like to get underclassmen to get involved. Julian mentioned that he is an English major and that Melanie is a physics major, which proves that this club is open to a wide spectrum of individuals. Wayne said that he loves the idea, and moved the question. The Presidents Council voted and passed the motion unanimously. SEDS is officially a campus club.

Motion 2: Wayne Kim of the Class of 2014 proposed that the Sociology Club be approved as an official campus club. Wayne spoke about how there is no sociology club and that having one would increase communication and transparency, as well as allow the sociology department to establish a stronger alumni network for students who study sociology. Essentially, the club would be a communications hub. Plans include revamping the website and creating an academic calendar for the sociology department which would include events like speakers and dinners with professors. All funding would come directly from the sociology department. Bowen moved the question, and the Presidents Council voted and passed the motion unanimously. The Sociology Club is officially a campus club.

Tentative Motion 1: Cole Yaverbaum of the Class of 2014 proposed that SGA sponsor a new position entitled Multiculturalism Officer. A position proposal was attached. Cole spoke about
how it is hard to enforce a learning differences task force, and that it is helpful to have a position to ensure that we are having these conversations. Kareem talked about the ridiculous amount of people who wanted to serve on the committees concerning multiculturalism and race, and that even though these were all excellent candidates who have the willingness to get involved, SGA was unable to appoint them to a committee because of imposed seat limitations. Without the organization that this new position intends to uphold, we will lose the positive push to keep multiculturalism going. He mentioned that Berol Dewdney held a position like this for gender and sexuality issues last year, and even though we now have a professionally trained person to deal with these issues, we still need to have a student who can push from the grassroots level. Bowen asked why, if the task force was to work independently of SGA, do the SGA President and Vice President would get to appoint the Multicultural Officer. Morgan reminded the Presidents Council about the SGA goals oriented towards multiculturalism. Lots of work goes into events like Story Time, and because we want to expand these initiatives it makes sense for someone to be appointed to assume some of these responsibilities. Erika Hinman asked why learning differences and multiculturalism were being lumped together. Kareem responded that learning differences falls under the category of ableism, which is a component of multiculturalism. Alexandre asked if the Officer and task force are independent of SGA, how would the discussions and initiatives be monitored. Kareem said that the position is intended to help upkeep a mutual awareness between the task force and SGA. Monica expressed her concern about how a stipend of $1500 is a little much. She also spoke about how this position might put a burden on a student when it should be placed on the hired professional, Andrea Breau. Kareem said that the idea for this position was pushed by Andrea because she recognizes that students might not always want to speak with a professional about these issues. He also noted that Berol’s stipend was $3000 last year, and that they simply cut that stipend in half. However, he would be willing to discuss negotiating that. Morgan said that it is realistic that these issues are falling on the shoulders of the students, and that it would be helpful if one person could focus specifically on these issues. Jack spoke about the dangers of lumping learning differences and multiculturalism, and that taking away the focus on learning differences has clinical implications that we should be wary of. He said he is worried that this is being rushed and that we should reconsider the differences between the two issues. Ethan Crockett said that it is great that so many people applied, but that he has heard the Multiculturalism Committee has not been particularly effective, even though SGA is appointing highly qualified people. He asked what the incentive would be to having a task force. Morgan replied that the committee is limited in terms of students and faculty who can be directly involved, and that task forces are open to all students without limits. She also noted that task forces tend to have a different grassroots-environment compared to committees. Jean-Jacques said from a financial viewpoint, the responsibilities need to be more clearly outlined before the position can be confirmed. He said that a lot of effort is going in to finding solutions to these issues, and that it is difficult to compensate everyone who gets involved. However, he agrees the position is a good idea, but needs to be further developed in terms of outlining definite responsibilities. Jed said that if the implementation of this position happens, he recommends that the position is linked to Andrea or Dr. Bradley so that the appropriate burden on students and accountability can be addressed. Nick Z said that he is a big fan of the idea in general, but that perhaps this is a topic that would be more effectively discussed at a formal meeting. He moved to table the motion, and the motion was tabled.

VI. New Business

Jenny said that she had dinner with some of the students from the Mule Mob, who asked how they could do a survey of the entire school. Jenny asked whether they could use the SGA Survey Monkey account. Jean-Jacques said yes. Jed also said that the Mule Mob could use the
Campus Life Survey Monkey account.

Cole said that she works in the Career Center, and that they have been talking about a business clothes closet where people could donate formal clothes that people can rent for free. Morgan said that the business clothes closet is now operating under Dr. Bradley in the Pugh Center. Matt Mantikas inquired about where the money that students pay for parking tickets goes. He would like to know if that money could be used towards a student event.

Jed thanked everyone for this year’s orientation, and said that it was as successful as ever. He lauded SGA for playing a huge role in setting the tone for the year, and that things are off to a great start.

Bowen adjourned to move the meeting.

The meeting ended at 8:13pm.