Good evening. Thank you all for coming to the State of the College Address. I am Morgan Lingar, your Student Government President. (And I am Kareem Kalil, your Vice President.) Later tonight you will have the opportunity to hear ideas and plans for the year from Bro Adams, your college president. More importantly, you will have the opportunity to ask questions to all of us. However, we encourage you to remember that you can reach out to us at any time. Talk to us anytime you see us, stop by our office hours, or send us an email to find a time to meet! We have a lot of plans and goals for the year, but we are more concerned with what all of you want and need.

When Kareem and I decided to run to be your SGA leaders, we did so with the goal of bringing Colby together. Despite our small student body, sometimes our routines prevent us from meeting the amazing people with whom we go to school. This year, we will be focusing our programming and policy initiatives on ways to connect students who might not otherwise know each other. As these connections form, we believe that our campus will become a stronger community, and a stronger and more cohesive student body is key to helping everyone feel safe and comfortable on our campus.
The first way we will be pushing forth our ideas of bringing our diverse student body together will be by continuing to support efforts to rebuild our diversity requirement. We will take steps to actively support the JanPlan Multicultural Literacy classes that are in the second year of a pilot program. This is a program we both believe has the potential to bridge many gaps at Colby, and throughout this year we will do all that we can in our roles to support it. We will make our strong support for this program heard by our representation on the Academic Affairs Committee and by working to host an open Multicultural Literacy class in Jan Plan.

Another initiative we will be introducing is a monthly “Story Time” series. Every month, we will choose a nominated student to share his or her story with the rest of the student body in the Pugh Center. This program is being modeled after a similar program at Williams College, and its goal is to bring students outside of their normal circle of friends to listen to the stories of their peers. These stories can be about a certain life-changing event, a funny story from one’s childhood, or the struggles one has faced to make it to Colby. Our first speaker will be Pandit Mami, who will be speaking on his path to Colby from Sierra Leone, and he will be speaking in the Pugh Center this Sunday at 9:00 PM. We encourage you to mark this date on your calendars and join us for a half an hour of coffee, cookies, and what we hope to be the first of several fun and powerful Story Times at Colby. We believe that when we listen to each other, we will become a stronger community.

Just as we hope to create a strong and cohesive student body, Kareem and I want to improve our relationship with other groups of people with whom we regularly interact. Colby-Waterville relations have been a topic of concern for years. Unfortunately, it is easy to get caught up in our roles on campus and to restrict our trips into town to the occasional Wal-Mart run. This past spring we met with Karen Heck, mayor of Waterville, and Shannon Haines, the director of
Waterville Maine Street to discuss ways we can strengthen the Colby-Waterville relationship. We will be taking an active role in getting students involved in off-campus events like this past weekend’s Hill ‘n the Ville. Additionally, we have been working to make students living off campus more aware of their rights and responsibilities as Waterville residents. Last week’s informational meeting of off-campus residents with Waterville Police is an example of these efforts. Back on campus, we hope to increase student interactions with faculty and administrators outside of the traditional classroom settings. We will be inviting these groups to many of our events this year. We are also working with Campus Life to increase opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to connect and engage in the residence halls.

We think the campus social scene has the potential for great improvements. We are working to streamline the registered party process in order to make it more attractive for students to throw safe and successful parties. We want to serve as a liaison between students and administration in order to decrease student party host liability. As we believe student integrity, trust, and responsibility are crucial, we will be placing emphasis on student accountability. Last spring, the Board of Trustees decided to establish a committee of trustees, administrators, faculty, and students to discuss student accountability, and we are dedicated to ensuring there is a strong student voice in that process.

Morgan and I both realize that we will have important decisions to make this coming year. We know that while sometimes we will succeed, there are other times in which we will fall short. We pledge to be honest with you all about both our triumphs and our mistakes, and explain our decisions as best as possible. We will make all of SGA’s work both inside and outside of formal meetings accessible to our student body via our website and our e-mails. And most of all,
we will never turn down a student who expresses a desire to meet with us, whether it be to praise us or question us.

We are both very excited to be standing here as your leaders this year. We will do all that we can to serve you and your interests here at Colby through the rest of the year. Thank you for being here tonight, thank you for listening. It is people like you who we need the support of in order to be successful, and we thank you for expressing it tonight, and hope you will continue to do so in the future.