SGA Formal Minutes

I. Dean’s Report/Concerns

- No Deans, so we will talk about concerns especially relating to our Halloween email if anyone has questions, concerns, or would like clarifications
  - Taylor: Eboard spent a lot of time working on and discussing this concern and met with Pugh leaders, administrators, etc. and we will be hosting a panel/forum on Thursday to discuss race and bias incidents on our campus. This is an opportunity for SGA and administration to both be present for hearing and responsive to student concerns regarding race and bias
  - Tyra: I would add that one thing we can immediately look at this situation and fix is our communication as an SGA both within Eboard and between Eboard and the rest of SGA. A lot of this situation dealt with time spent getting ever member of Eboard on the same page and fully informed. Additionally if there are legitimate concerns they don’t always have to turn into crises, so we can discuss things in a
  - Ashlee: It felt like there were lots of things floating around the rumor mill, so I wish we could have had this meeting a lot sooner because it is important that all of us get together to share opinions.
  - Zack: so for an incident like this going forward, you would like to have an emergency meeting?
  - Ashlee: in terms of being on the same page or at least finding a way for everyone to be informed of what the plan was going forward
  - Sam Lee: we were all on different pages but were trying to get ourselves on the same page in order to communicate
  - Taylor H: I agree there is communication that needs to be better in the future, but ultimately this was not fully intentional to keep people in the dark. A lot of other people on SGA knew about the petition prior to Diego, Sam, and I finding out. So even though there is a lot work to be done in terms of improving communication, we are very sorry that people were made to feel out of the loop on, we are working to improve
  - Shivani: can you disclose how the conversation with Carter went?
  - Taylor H: what Carter was saying was something we took very seriously. She was very upset regarding the language used, so we were doing our best to explain from our perspective why we worded it that way. Carter spent a lot of time explaining how the email made her feel and also how she viewed the email as opening the door for racism on our campus. Then, we discussed further our logic for wording the email the way we did and also the process we used in making those decisions. I think feelings on all sides of the conversation were hurt. By the end of the conversation all three of us were feeling pretty hurt and pretty bad after it and were not feeling like a particularly strong unit. I left in pretty bad shape because what Carter had to say was very important and needed to be
said, but it was challenging because it felt very personal and at times not objective and hurtful….

- Diego H: The meeting didn’t go exactly as planned. We thought it would be very productive, and it slipped out of productivity sometimes and I think that is a lot of why we had such a tough time getting you all in the loop. It was very consuming and emotional for us all and it took a lot for us emotionally and mentally just to formulate our own thoughts. It was very difficult to gather all the info and get it to you quickly

- Sam Lee: Carter said she wanted us to change the wording of our email from “try not to…” to very direct authoritative “do not…” statements, and we explained that we are not a disciplinary body. However, Carter explained that she did not understand why we couldn’t use directive language and that the lack of direct language made many members of the community feel unsafe. She also felt we were protecting the majority rather than the minority in our word choice.

- Taylor: it was a 90 minute meeting, and it wasn’t fully productive

- Shivani: moving forward is there a procedure for how to move forward if there are instances in which a message may seem like SGA is taking a policy stance

- Sam Lee: We don’t have a policy but we are working on it...

- Taylor: can you reiterate the question?

- Shivani: So, I don’t exactly know what the email drafting process was, but I’m wondering if there will be a more thorough process in the future so there are more perspectives rather than one or a few

- Tyra: like Sam said we don’t have that yet because we all come from very different places and have different opinions about things, which makes us a stronger team and a stronger SGA as a whole. Moving forward I also hope we will have a more thorough collaborative process between Eboard and also the rest of SGA. In future cases in which SGA sends out possibly sensitive emails where SGA is either highlighting existing policy or suggesting one

- Diego: sometimes there is a time crunch, and the process of this email I tried to reach as many people as I could both in SGA and also in the Pugh Center… There seemed to be limited time with people dressing up and celebrating Halloween the weekend before, so it felt like we needed to get the email out quickly. I’m sure there will be other instances like this in which we have to send out quick emails. I also think another thing to be considered in the future is how we sign off emails (i.e. signing off from me personally rather than from SGA as a whole)... i

- Holly: Yes, if it is an email being sent out signed by SGA then all of SGA should be considered and get a chance to provide input. If it is an email just from Eboard, then only eboard needs to be consulted. Also as Tyra said, we all have different opinions and we all think different ways, which is really good for our group. Thus, this won’t be the last time we don’t all agree on something, but being cohesive and coherent on these things and not
dividing ourselves because even if we have different opinions, we all have similar goals and hopes for the school and goals for what SGA can do on this campus. We can’t let the whole school see us fall apart.

- Taylor: we appreciate all the feedback this is something we have thought a lot about and there is a lot of room for growth. We as an eboard have thought a lot about changes to come from this. If anyone has further questions please feel free to ask us about our logic in the email, the conversation with Carter, our process going forward

- Olive Silverman: there was an event off campus last night called Akon Day. I don’t know how long this has been going on or how bad it has been in the past. But last night there were large numbers of white students dressing up and appropriating black culture. It made many people uncomfortable.

- Taylor: Lacrosse has done this “Akon Day” in the past and celebrated listening to music, but I would be very curious as to who dressed up and what they did. I feel that lacrosse team was very clear about how to act, but I don’t know

- Olive: it was mainly women and people who were not on the Men’s lacrosse team

- Molly: there is the forum coming up and I think this goes to show why we need this forum and it is another important forum for this to be discussed at….

II. Minutes
- Approved

III. Executive Board Report
- Forgoing Eboard report approved

IV. Community Forum
- Jess Mano
  - Jess M: Hi all, we are handing around end of the year checking photos from last year. At breaks CAs go through rooms to see if windows are closed etc. They do not check to see things like vandalism, spray paint, broken items, etc. The number of times that we send people through rooms will not be changed, but we will do health and safety checks done by a team of people from Dean of the College, Campus life, Athletics, etc. They will basically see if there is a serious problem building up (dirt, grime, uncleanliness, broken items, vandalized rooms)…. We will give people 2 weeks notice of health and safety checks and then a one week notice and CAs will also talk about it (essentially giving people the chance to clean up their rooms and improve health and safety and the quality of facilities)…. We hope this will prevent people from being charged with huge levels of room damage. Preserving rooms, facilities, health, and safety
  - Zack: how thorough are the checks, who comes in? Do they pry through stuff? What does it look like?
  - Jess: we won’t open doors, drawers, cabinets, refridgerators… if a bong is left on a desk thats. We will be opening the doors and checking that things look alright… that the floor
isn’t so sticky that we can’t walk in it, that the walls aren’t entirely painted black, etc. If there don’t seem to be problems, then we will leave.

- Sam Kane: there are a lot of people who paint their walls and do murals etc. and then repaint afterwards to the Colby colors
- Jess M: That policy won’t be changing, nice paintings and murals can stay, but derogatory or culturally insensitive stuff or completely all black painted living rooms will be problematic
- Diego: will people be getting in trouble for these things?
- Jess M: there will be a notice for every room either hey this was a great room keep it up, or there might be a notice saying it smells like urine or there are holes in the wall… for problematic rooms they would get the notice that there is a problem and then a follow up from facilities (if the problem is so bad that it needs fixing before the end of the year, then facilities will come in to fix it and the room will be charged - these violations and their costs can be found in the student handbook) they would also have to meet with student conduct
- Laura Polley: what about moving furniture out of a room?
- Jess: that would be more of an end of the year problem. If the furniture is missing then we’ll note it but there won’t be any charge or anything until the end of the year. We will wait to see whether it is returned. If there is a broken desk chair sitting there, though then that is problematic
- Laura Powell: what about if one roommate is responsible for something?
- Jess: if there is something in one roommates corner of the room or in their personal single bedroom that is very clearly their problem that could be noted
- Graeme: if the notice were sent the day before or something sooner that would be helpful so people would remember and get things done sooner.
- Sam Lee: last year the college said they were taking on all dorm damage, so how does this work?
- Jess M: that applies to common area damage but not personal room damage
- Taylor H: this is something I’ve been working on with Bob and Jess for a while. This isn’t supposed to be bogging down students, the goal is just that in walking in on first glance with 2 seconds glances and checking that there are not any horrible violations. It is not supposed to be a super in depth check. Unless there is an egregious violation that is very visible, it won’t be a problem
- Holly Lallis: maybe specify that nature of the checks in an email to students and then also list off what would constitute a violation
- Sarah Kaplan: Some students don’t lock doors or carry keys. If someone leaves door unlocked security or CAs lock the door which is surprising and problematic for them
- Jess M: I will clarify the expectation for doors to be left the way they were upon entering.

● Elizabeth Jabar
- I haven’t gotten the chance to meet tons of student yet. I have been teaching higher education for a long time and I am heading civic engagement here at Colby. I asked to come here because I am developing a strategic plan for civic engagement, so I could benefit from hearing student experiences and also hopes and thoughts on the future of civic engagement. I have been trying to get coffee with students, I am open to students just sending me emails with thoughts. I also have a faculty working group where they will also be contributing to this. ANything you want to share with me regarding strengths and challenges of civic engagement and what are the best ways to hear from students and engage with students…. What is important to you all, what should be considered…? Not just with downtown, but civic engagement with all students.…

- Laura Polley: Have you talked with waterville residents and seen what they want civic engagement to look like?

- Elizabeth: a lot of people are very open and excited about it. There is a community engagement committee made up of student like, students, CAs, staff, etc. there is also a database of community partners that the college has already worked with, and there is also a list of community partners that the Deans have been meeting with regularly for a long time in planning for this year. There is also another advisory committee. All the students downtown are doing direct service, and they have already started relationships with folks in the community. There are 43 different entities. There are different points where we are connecting, but the goal is to partner and ask community partners what their experience has been and what their needs are and how we can help them… We are doing a lot of listening too.

- Genesis C: I feel like a partnership with the Education department would be helpful here. There are a lot of good resources in that department and there are a lot of students in that major and department that are very open to and could be helpful with this.

- Elizabeth: we have partnered a lot with Mark Tappan and are meeting with Adam Howard, so we are doing our best to connect with them.

- Laura Polley: have we considered having civic engagement credits in a similar fashion to how we have wellness credits… that might be a nice way to convince people to do that.

- Molly: Piggybacking off of that, I am a math major and there are emails regularly within the department looking for students to tutor at local schools, so fitting that into our education curriculum is an interesting factor - could we make civic engagement part of our courses or departmental requirements.

- Carolyn Jones and Marcques Houston
Carolyn: I am very involved with the Democratic party, but I and Marcques are here in a non-partisan capacity. We were notified that about 170 Colby votes will be thrown out and this is because we have PO boxes as our registration address…. The law in Maine is that P.O. boxes are not how we register to vote, but in 2016 the city clerk trained students at Colby to register to vote is that the P.O. Box is sufficient. Students that have recently been registered to vote their registrations have been thrown out, students who have been registered since 2016 have had their votes thrown out. I would like to see SGA speak out about this because it is a serious attack on Colby’s vote. It is Colby students’ rights to vote… there will be a line on voting day to re-register and vote again. We will likely get a list tomorrow about whose votes will be rescinded. The administration has been unreceptive to speaking out about this…. We hope you will encourage people to vote and engage.

- Sam Kane: What is the proper way for a Colby student to register?
- Carolyn: Typically we have always been told we only have to have our P.O. box numbers
- Taylor: Where are we with the City Clerk?
- Marcques: we have not heard back from her, but we have requested a list of the ballots that have been challenged.
- Tyra: if you do get a list, how will you let the students know that their vote has been thrown out
- Marcques: we would have to email or personally contact them
- Tyra: what kind of response are you looking for from SGA?
- Carolyn: there is a chance that someone will be coming to campus to help student re-register and vote, but that has yet to be approved by Waterville. If that happens, we would love SGA to push that message so people come vote, but if that does not happen we would love for a message to be sent out that just says
- Laura Powell: I tried to register to vote in Waterville and I wasn’t even registered, it just got declined… I received several calls saying I could not be registered.
- Avery F: is this a problem for people who are registered and trying to vote in Maine or is this an issue other places?
- Carolyn: voter suppression is an issue all over the country, but this is particularly an issue only to Colby students voting in Waterville… we were told that this was a political tactic (a candidate requested that these votes be questioned) and that the administration does not have to respond to political tactics
- Graeme: is this a concern only for voters downtown?
- Carolyn: no, it is actually only a concern for on campus students
- Sam Lee: would it be confusing if we sent an email about this without

V. Old Business
- Motion 1: I, Julia Gonzalez, of the Class of 2020, move to make all SGA meetings paperless.
- Julia: We were thinking we don’t really need anything printed… it might just be a waste of paper
- Maddie T: Possibility of people being on their laptops being a concern… I don’t think it will
- Holly: formality purposes, we have to second to talk about the motion after someone reads it….
- Zack: We will now vote, we need two thirds
- Approved!

● Motion 2: I, Morgan Honor, of the class of 2022, move to amend the SGA Constitution to make it so that senators have to win their elections by a plurality not a majority.
  - Ellie: we want to change language in Constitution to make it reflect that a Senator does not need to win a majority, but they just need to win plurality - just top four would win
  - Zack: I ran the last elections, and plurality is just top four win - they don’t need to win over 50%... we have been running it as a plurality system, but the official constitutional language currently calls for a majority not a plurality
  - Laura Powell: would this remove run-off elections?
  - Ellie: this would largely remove the necessity, but if there were a really close election we might need a recount
  - Approved!

VI. Committee Reports
● Academic Affairs:
● Academic Honesty:
● Budget:
● College Affairs:
● Mission and Priorities:
● Student Conduct Board:
● Admissions and Financial Aid:
● Athletics Advisory:
● Campus Life Residential Program:
● Cultural Events:
● Diversity and Inclusion:
● Information and Technology:
● Library:
● Off-Campus Study Advisory:
● Parking Ticket Appeals:
● Security:
● BIPR:
● Dining Services:
● Health Care Advisory:
  ● Finance:
  ● Housing and Facilities Advisory:
  ● Community Engagement:
  ● OCOC:
  ● Publicity:
  ● Traditions:

VII. Class Reports
  ● 2019: not present
  ● 2020: we are doing a collaboration with the senior class to do a campfire event in about two weeks. We are also hoping to do another collaboration soon involving a weekend night get together.
  ● 2021: working on events, getting class stickers sent out, working on a collaboration event with 2022, also working on a trivia night, and a class dinner
  ● 2022: first class event went well and we got out a ton of class t-shirts. We had an ice cream social. Working on bounti-fall fest with 2021. Class council is going well.

VIII. New Business
  ● STORYTIME WITH JACKIE!!!