



17th Meeting of the 2024-2025 Student Government Association Senate
January 28th, 2025 | 7:00 PM | Livak Ballroom

Call to Order

This meeting was called to order by Speaker Kennedy Connors.

Roll Call

Senators Denny, Reeder, Toomey, and Chapman not present.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes approved unanimously.

Public Forum

Student Trustee Katelynn Giroux – Introduction

- I am a 4th year medical student graduating in a couple months and wrapping up my term as a Student Trustee.
- I still have one big meeting coming up next weekend and I'm happy to take your perspectives with me.
- Undergraduate degree from St. Michael's College, involved in the Student Government Association as President especially focusing on making our meetings more exciting.
 - We worked on figuring out what the student body is talking about and what would be interesting for us to work on.

- Unlike UVM, St Michael's Board of Trustees is private and behind closed doors, so we were trying to push for a Student Trustee position and get student voices into that space.
- That made this a big transition to go from thinking about the short term student vision to long term care in the Trustee role. I think of it like patient care, where you need to offer immediate treatments that align with long term goals.
- Housing has come up at almost every meeting, we are all aware it is a big issue. We are trying to get a broader perspective of how to make sustainable housing which is financially viable even if our attendance drops.
- Another interesting topic has been tuition, we had to vote to increase it at our last meeting. As a student, that impacts me too and nobody wanted to do it.
 - UVM does private insurance paying for employees' health care costs. We found out that many don't have primary care providers and go to emergency or urgent care for most issues which are more expensive.
- I was able to do the Five Year Presidential Review and also part of the new presidential search. It was very interesting to compile so many perspectives about someone in a high up leadership role and figure out how they can improve.
- I would love to hear from any of you if you have perspectives that you would like me to have on my mind going into the next meeting or questions I can answer.

Treasurer Sorensen: Could you update us on the presidential search as much as you can?

- **Response:** Things are moving along well. We are talking about the environment where candidates like to come through where we don't see them until the end. I don't have any exact dates for you.

Senator Esbin: What are some topics that are coming up in this next meeting?

- **Response:** Lots about the presidential search. Housing always comes up.

Chair Jones: I know there was an email sent out addressing this particular topic, but an issue that many people are thinking about is the impacts on marginalized communities from the new presidential administration. Affordability is a big concern as well with strikes against federally funded grants.

- **Response:** Thank you, I appreciate that.

Senator Paquette: What was the main justification for an increase in tuition? What will that increase go towards on campus?

- **Response:** I got to hear this discussion twice as a Trustee. In the first year there was no raise for in-state tuition and this time there was. Nobody on the board wanted to raise tuition but the decision was relating to what we would be losing out on right now if we don't raise tuition. What would have to be cut in the coming years to keep tuition down.

Senator Talhouk: You mentioned a fear of lower enrollment in the future, would you consider renting to non-students?

- **Response:** The trend of University housing is going towards more apartment style buildings. Students and the broader rental community don't really want dorms, so yes.

Senator Tracy: Is there ever talk about an enrollment cap instead of just building more housing?

- **Response:** The general sentiment is that we don't want to lock ourselves into any particular situation and we want to be more fluid. What I've come to appreciate through meeting with folks who work in admissions and recruitment is how hard it is to predict the level of enrollment.

Senator Esbin: As you wrap up your term, what impact do you want us to acknowledge you as having left on the University?

- **Response:** I hope I have been a good listener on the Board and filled in spots for a student voice. I have tried hard in between sessions to talk with other Trustees and continue conversations from our meetings.

Old Business

Emergency Business

Swearing in of New Senators

- New Senators sworn in by Speaker Connors.

New Business

Bill Recognizing UVM Poetry Club

Bill Recognizing UVM Fermentation Club

Bill Recognizing UVM Doctors Without Borders

Bill Recognizing UVM Roller Skating & Blading Club

Senatorial Forum

Treasurer Sorensen – Midterm Elections and Budget Form

- This midterm election had triple the voter turnout of last year. It was very competitive with 12 candidates and seven open seats. The last seat had a tie so there will be a runoff election between those two candidates starting tomorrow and running through Friday.

- Budgets are due for clubs next Wednesday February 5th at 3pm. First fill out the questions tab and inventory, then go on to other tabs. Don't fill out the red parts of the summary page, it should auto populate from the other tabs. Clubs asking for \$20,000 or a 20% increase from last year need to meet with myself or the Finance Committee.

Chair Jones: How has the runoff been promoted to the general student body?

- **Response:** We are sending out an email and pinning it on UVM Clubs. We had to have a runoff within a week and allow voting for the same period. The candidates are Jordan Grabo and Annie Woodward.

Senator Renallo: How would I find the budget form as a club signer?

- **Response:** Search SGA Finance on the UVM Clubs page, the file and a submission form are linked at the bottom of the page.

Senator Esbin: When are those budget advising sessions held?

- **Response:** Today 3-4pm, tomorrow 5-6pm, Thursday 3-4pm, Tuesday next week 3-4pm, and probably Wednesday as well. Walk-in, no appointment, in the SGA Galaxy Space.

Senator Zubarev: Shoutout Matt, this is his last budgeting season and he does a great job with all of this. This new form was made by him, if we can't answer questions talk to Matt.

Senator Peterson: Do you have any office hours before the budget deadline?

- **Response:** I have weekly office hours on Mondays from 2-3pm in my office, 311K in the SGA Galaxy Space on the third floor of the Davis Center.

Executive Reports

Speaker Connors

- Congratulations to our new Senators. I am Kennedy Connors, a sophomore majoring in Public Communications with a minor in Law and Society. Fun fact: I can make balloon animals. We can make balloon animals or get coffee, I like strawberry lemonade iced tea from Henderson's.
- Motion cards are at your table, if you don't understand it don't worry because Spring Retreat is this Saturday and you will get more information there.
- Exciting news: this Sunday from 1-3pm is UVM's first Groundhog Day celebration on the green outside. Burlington Brett is coming to town.

Vice President Bednarik

- I am Liv Bednarik, a junior studying Political Science and Sociology. Fun Fact: I'm an Eagles fan, go birds!
- I had so much fun at the soccer parade and Lunar New Year celebration recently.
- Shoutout Club Affairs for running Activities Fest.
- I met with President Prelock last Wednesday. We discussed the new presidential administration, all of you should have received an email from her addressing concerns. She was very open to hearing how University administration can support students.
- My office hours are cancelled this week, but they are usually Thursdays 10-11am.
- SGA Retreat is this Saturday in Innovation E102 10am-3:30pm. We will learn about SGA procedures, play fun games, and there will be lunch.
- If you are interested in being Vice President next year, come talk to me.

- I was invited to the UVM Dining Tasting event. We have to renew our contract every few years and it came down to a few finalists so I need to vote on what tastes the best.

President Teferra

- Happy Tuesday!
- I am Mahder Teferra, a senior studying Agroecology and Landscape Design. Fun Fact: I used to live in Ethiopia where I was born.
- Our office is also down in the SGA Galaxy Space. My office hours are Tuesday 5-6pm.
- I sent out a weekly presidential email, possibly will be bi-weekly instead.
- The new Student Trustee has been selected and will be sworn in on March 1st. It is an undergraduate student, which is exciting.
- Friday breakfast colab with the Mosaic Center is next Friday, February 7th.
- I will add the new Senators to the Teams tonight.
- If you are interested in running for President next term, you can talk to me.

Treasurer Sorensen

- I am Matt Sorensen, a senior studying Political Science with minors in Business Administration and Community and International Development. I serve as the Treasurer and Elections Committee Chair. Fun Fact: I have the same birthday as my younger brother who was born 2 years after me.
- I am a Student Representative on the Board of Trustees Budget, Finance, and Investment Committee which meets this Friday. If you have any questions, come talk to me.
- Tomorrow is Mental Health Advocacy Day at the Statehouse in Montpelier. A group of us is going down around 7am, I will send the agenda if you can't stay the whole day.

Committee Reports

Public Relations Committee

- I am Merrick Modun, Chair of the PR Committee. Fun Fact: I love fun facts and do a fun fact every week.
- Week of Kindness planning is coming along well. I will be going on Senatorial Forum with Chair Jones to talk about that.
- Fun Fact of the Week: Honey never spoils so make sure you all stay sweet forever.

Committee on the Environment

- I am Matisse Arnone, a sophomore majoring in Sustainability, Ecology, and Policy. Fun Fact: Both of my parents are musicians.
- Welcome to our new Senators, specifically Senators Wheaton and Powell on COE.
- Senator Forrest is working on a project relating to Indigenous Education in the curriculum. Also working on accessible outdoor activities with DSU.
- Senator Powell is trying to continue the On-Campus Thrift Store project
- I am working on expanding drinking fountains in dorms. I need SGA's help because we are presenting a survey and have posters we would like people to put up in the dorms.

Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity

- I am Rubi Espejo, a sophomore majoring in Political Science with a Religion minor. Fun Fact: I can make the bird noise of the Eurasian collared dove and the mourning dove.
- Senator Petrcek met with the Interfaith Center about supporting the identity centers.
- Senators York and Theroux are working with Senator Laychak about a statement supporting students during federal changes.

- Yesterday, I met with Dr. Ruggles to continue SVAM planning. Next week I plan to go on Senatorial Forum. The theme this year is around Our Common Ground and highlighting the student activism and history behind SVAM.
- Sport of the Week: Broomball. Come to Gutterson Fieldhouse Monday at 8:45pm I am playing with my friends.

Senator Esbin: Are there any ways for students to get involved in SVAM?

- **Response:** I am planning to establish the ad hoc committee with specific liaisons. I will talk more about that next week.

Committee on Legislative and Community Affairs

- I am Emily Garcia, a 2nd year majoring in Political Science with minors in Global Studies and Spanish. Fun Fact: I collect vinyl records.
- Started a new initiative to show that SGA is not just about clubs and good standing.
- First Community Coalition of the semester is Friday February 7th 3-4:30pm at OSCR House.

President Teferra: Could you explain Community Coalition for the new people.

- **Response:** We work with the Office of Student and Community Relations. We meet with community members to outline problems and how we want to address them one Friday each month at 12 Colchester Avenue.

Senator Demeo: What is your favorite vinyl?

- **Response:** I have a Five Year Limited Edition Stranger in the Alps that is a beautiful clear lavender.

Committee on Student Action and Well-Being

- I am Catherine Jones, a 4th year majoring in Computer Science and Political Science with a minor in Law. Fun Fact: I speak Korean from when I studied abroad in Korea.
- Excited for our two new Senators on CSAW.
- Week of Kindness planning is moving along. Come see us about opportunities for getting involved.
- I will be going down to Montpelier tomorrow, it is great to see a whole day dedicated to mental health at the Capital.
- Artist of the Week: Jon Bellion. I recommend Guillotine and Morning in America.

Treasurer Sorensen: It is also Cannabis Advocacy Day tomorrow if anyone wants to go for that.

Club Affairs Committee

- I am McKenna Halvorson, a senior studying Political Science and Psychology. Fun Fact: I grew up 10 minutes from the biggest mall in America.
- Activities Fest went well, I was really happy with the turnout.
- We are busy with new clubs, training our new Senator, and getting clubs back into good standing. We currently have seven Club Affairs members which is crazy.
- We will have a presentation at Retreat.

Academic Affairs Committee

- I am Lauren Knopp, a 2nd year studying Computer Science and Math. Fun Fact: I know how to fly airplanes.
- Congrats to all the new Senators and Treasurer Sorensen for putting on amazing midterm elections.

- Senator Toomey and I meeting with Jay Dickinson about academic resources for First Gen students.
- Our committee is exploring what the process for retaking and rescheduling exams looks like.
- Go to Friday morning breakfast, volunteer in the Teams.
- Go birds!

Finance Committee

- I am Maddie Rice, a sophomore studying Economics with a minor in Law.
- Budget advising sessions have been a blast, we're excited for budgeting.
- I am also a Student Representative with Treasurer Sorensen for the Board of Trustees Budget, Finance, and Investment Committee.

Senatorial Comments/Announcements

Vice President Bednarik: President Teferra and I will be here for 10 minutes afterwards if anyone wants to talk or ask questions before Saturday.

President Teferra: Norovirus is going around, practice good hygiene. Wash your hands with hot water.

Chair Jones: Remember that CAPS and LivingWell is available, and 24 hour hotlines if you need it.

Adjournment