



15th Meeting of the 2024-2025 Student Government Association Senate
December 3rd, 2024 | 7:00 PM | Livak Ballroom

Call to Order

This meeting was called to order by Speaker Kennedy Connors.

Roll Call

Senators Gottfurcht, Theroux, York, Osei, Quinn, Richardson, and Rice not present.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes approved unanimously.

Public Forum

Abby Bleything & Corey Berman – Sharing Updates From the Office of Sustainability

- **Abby:** I am the Sustainable Transportation Program Manager in the Office of Sustainability.
- **Corey:** I am the Zero Waste Program Manager. We are excited to talk about sustainability related to transportation and waste.
- **Abby:** Is everyone familiar with the Comprehensive Sustainability Plan or at least knows that we have one? It was put in place in 2023 during Earth Week to meet goals including carbon neutrality by 2030. We released a one year update to report on progress in 2024.

- I want to start by framing transportation and why we focus on that. Transportation is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Vermont and nationally. Specifically single occupancy passenger vehicle trips represent most of those emissions.
- Bird bikes are hibernating until the spring, the date for relaunch is weather dependent.
- Green Mountain Transit has several rounds of service cuts. This is due to issues with funding and making decisions based on ridership data.
 - The first round happened on Monday: City Loop (#8) and Pine Street (#5) buses moved to 60 minute service and there was a decrease in Saturday routes and the elimination of the Jeffersonville Commuter (#86).
 - The next round is planned for February-March focusing on Link routes to St. Albans, Montpelier, and Milton.
 - The biggest impact to the student body will likely be the elimination of the #8 City Loop which goes through Old North End and #11 which goes to the airport and through campus in June. There will also be further weekend service reductions.
 - UVM is submitting formal letters to minimize cuts and impacts. GSU surveyed their body about the impact of these cuts and wrote a formal letter, SGA could do this too. You can reach out to legislators about this as well.
- We are currently showing IDs to get on the buses, we will be moving to the app later. Please wait to download the app until you get a link in your email so that it works correctly. Then there will be a few months to transition and get everyone on to the app with the exception of people without smartphones.

- There is a new shuttle route on campus called the Gold route. It serves Catamount East to the Davis Center and Patrick Gym. It is running from 7:20 am to 6pm but looking to extend evening hours.
- If you have a sustainable commute to campus you can log that with the CATMA app and get points for discounts on local businesses.
- UVM Bikes! Co-op: you can get your bike fixed there, rent a bike or buy a lock/helmet. We also have workshops you can go to and get a free U-lock.
- International Bike to Work/School Day is February 15, 2025, we have an annual celebration with bagels. There is a winter safe biking workshop preceding that.
- E-bikes are becoming more popular now. They are currently prohibited in student dorms, but there are opportunities to charge in the Harris/Millis cube or if they are supervised in an academic building.
- **Corey:** I deal with all University waste from food to scrap metal or yard waste. This has to be financially and sustainably dealt with.
- We have about a 50% diversion rate, meaning about half of our waste is diverted to compost, recycling, reuse, upcycling, or something else.
- The Three Rs are still the most important thing: reduce, reuse, recycle. We tend to focus on recycling but we need to be looking more upstream at reducing waste before it gets to campus, then we want to figure out how to reuse it as much as possible.
- There is a new reuse pass with dining halls. There is an app now that goes with Ecoware to not throw away single use plastic.
- Rethinking and redesigning is the first step to figure out how to reduce and reuse. Recycling is only halfway down the hierarchy and landfill is way at the bottom.

- We are one of the few universities nationwide which has full coverage of residence halls for composting. We got an e-bike called Scrappy from the Sustainable Campus Fund to pick up food scraps.
 - We recently expanded our composting program with compost carts on every floor in Mercy, McAuley, and Marsh/Austin/Tupper which got great feedback.
- I want SGA to focus on swag and giveaways. These things are somewhat junky and often thrown away. A few years ago SGA came up with a swag guide to reduce waste and I don't know if that is enforceable but it could be good to look at again.
- A Pop-up Thrift Store is a popular idea. We are still trying to do this and would love you to make this happen similar to Rally Cat's Cupboard.
- We completed the first waste characterization study this week. We gathered 1 ton of UVM trash and sorted it for 5 days. We don't have the numbers yet but the general trend is that we are slowly reducing waste.
- We focus downstream, but there are approximately 70 pounds created upstream for every 1 pound thrown away. That is 4.5 pounds of waste per person per day in the US.

Senator Demeo: What is the best way to submit a comment about the route cuts to Green Mountain Transit? I took the #11 today from Trinity to UMass and that was much more convenient than walking across to the #1.

- **Response (Abby):** Trinity is often neglected being further out from campus. You can write a letter to the president of the board and manager and also to your legislators.

Senator Talhouk: The compost bins in L&L are located next to the Marche and Fireplace Lounge. That is pretty out of the way for some people, is it possible to add one to each block?

- **Response (Corey):** Absolutely, we love to hear that feedback. L&L is complicated due to the mix of academic and residential. Email recycle@uvm.edu with more questions.

President Teferra: Can you talk more about the student carpool program? Also if you have gotten feedback on the new CATBus app, some people are saying it is difficult to use.

- **Response (Abby):** The carpool ride board is on Teams, you can google eco rep ride board. That is promoted through social media and eco rep channels. We offer gift cards to anyone who posts seats in their car because there are often more people looking for rides than offering. I have heard that the new shuttle app is confusing because you have to check the box of which lines you want to see. There are also very specific bus routes which are difficult to see. I can share all your feedback with the team.

Chair Espejo: Many students don't know the rules around recycling in Vermont. Do you have resources about that?

- **Response (Corey):** We are beholden to the Chittenden Solid Waste District which gives us the specs for what we can recycle. There are so many products and it is tricky to know at the time of disposal. We have explored point of disposal stickers and other options that can be quick to show people. This is why we want to focus on reducing instead of recycling. I am in the process of coming up with a new marketing program to educate people. When in doubt, throw it out.

Senator Esbin: Have you thought about working with student organizations to see if we can get carpooling going to resorts and ski areas?

- **Response (Abby):** The carpool board has sections for ski mountains to get students talking to each other. Students say after getting home or to a job, the next reason for a car

was to get into nature. In response to that, we created a guide on our website for bikeable, walkable, or busable places.

Old Business

Bill Recognizing UVM SACNAS, sponsored by Chair Halvorson

- Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science.

Working to bring underrepresented communities in STEM together and uplift them.

BILL: **Passed** unanimously, Chair Halvorson abstained

Emergency Business

Bill Changing the Name of Outing Council Club, sponsored by Chair Halvorson

- This is the group with the presidents of each outdoors club, they want to change their name to Gear Group.

Treasurer Sorensen: They manage Basecamp and give out sleeping bags and stuff for free.

They are trying to have all their equipment together and revamp that space.

BILL: **Passed** unanimously, Chair Halvorson abstained

New Business

Senatorial Forum

Chair Modun and Chair Jones – Discussing Week of Kindness Plans

- **Chair Modun:** Every year SGA puts on a Week of Kindness, this is the third year running.

- **Chair Jones:** It was started by my first Chair on CSAW, Brooke Dietrich. It is usually held in the winter during the dark and dreary times to uplift the community and remind us what it means to be kind.
- **Chair Modun:** Last year the mascot was a cute blueberry and it was in November. Last year we had flower bouquets, art, mindfulness, tie dye, and gratitude card making.
- **Chair Jones:** There was a theme for each day to tie in different aspects of kindness and we want to carry that over.
- **Chair Modun:** We are in the early stages right now. The plan is to do it the week of February 10-14 coinciding with Valentine's Day on Friday. Looking at potential themes: generosity, self-care, gratitude, love, and other potential ideas.
- **Chair Jones:** We would love to hear from you about other ideas.

Senator Steele: One of the days could be service to the community and tying into a service project or something small like donating to local charities or organizations.

- **Response (Chair Jones):** That is a great idea! We are actually thinking that is what generosity is as one of our themes already.

Senator Oreck: I know a lot of schools do cupid games or matchmaking with marriage pact. A survey like that could be fun even in a platonic way to match people with someone they might not have met yet.

Senator Demeo: We did something like that last year, I don't know if it was facilitated by the school though.

Senator Grace: I see a Clubs Carnival on Thursday, can you talk about that more?

Vice President Bednarik: That was an idea I had last year to allow clubs to run carnival games and people could put tickets into that. It didn't end up happening but it could get taken on this year.

Chair Knopp: I think it would be awesome to have clubs centered around volunteering and community service to table and give back to the community.

Senator Paquette: With love and Valentine's Day, make sure you are keeping everyone in the loop, not just typical romance relationships.

- **Response (Chair Jones):** I totally agree. One thing I had while discussing this was making sure that we don't limit this in any way. Kindness should be given unconditionally, that includes love to friends and family beyond romantic partners.

Senator Talhouk: Another suggestion for Valentine's Day, we had the opportunity to send a rose to someone in high school which was fun.

Senator Onorato: One idea could be a diversity/differences day partnering with identity centers.

- **Response (Chair Jones):** That is great, there was something like that last year.

Senator Arnone: The whole week could be themed around love with love to self, community, etc.

Senator Oreck: That reminds me that something related to romantic love and expressing kindness is sexual violence prevention.

- **Chair Modun:** The second reason we are here is to plug the ad hoc committee
- **Chair Jones:** This is the first year it is not solely a CSAW initiative putting the brunt of the work on the Chair and other Senators. We are doing a co-Chair, co-Committee situation which can increase the scope. We want to get the first meeting done virtually

over break. If you are interested please reach out to Chair Modun and myself by the end of the week or the semester at the latest.

Executive Reports

Speaker Connors

- Can't believe it is the last meeting of the semester. I am so proud of what we accomplished. I feel so lucky to get to know each of you in this role.
- Last week I discussed a form for Judicial to review the constitution which was sent out to Exec.

Vice President Bednarik

- If you use the SGA kitchen at all, please make sure to clean it. It is for office staff as well so make sure you are cleaning and organizing.
- I have dates for Spring Retreat, February 1st from 10am-3:30pm in Innovation. The exact location will be confirmed later. If you can't make it we will talk.
- Some people are leaving after this meeting which is sad but I wish you all the best of luck. Special goodbye to Senator Purple who is leaving:
 - While you have become many things to me over the years: a mentor, an inspiration, anything and everything, what I will always seem to find most incredible at the end of the day is that you have become my best friend. That may not seem like a lot to people, but when there is someone on this Earth who is ready to accept you with open arms at your best and your absolute worst, it truly feels like there is nothing that you cannot do. That feeling is what allows you to live. As my friend over these past three years, I have watched you grow into the

bold, fearless, kind, compassionate leader that you are today. From everything you have done on and off this campus, you made an impact here at UVM, on SGA, and on the people around you. I watch you in admiration and awe for your ability to see things not for what they are but what they can be and should be with determination to make those things come true. It has been a blessing and a gift to witness the greatness you brought to SGA. I am your biggest fan always. Even though I cannot contain my excitement for what you will do in life, it is bittersweet to know that this chapter has closed for you. Livak Ballroom will not be the same.

President Teferra

- Happy Tuesday!
- Student Trustee applications will be sent out by Friday.
- SRIAC is looking for a new member, they are the group in charge of approving SCF applications.
- Working on stuff for next semester such as inauguration effects and collaboration with Civic Engagement.
- I will miss you all, wish you luck and swag for those who are leaving.
- For those coming back, rest up and I am available to talk about anything.

Treasurer Sorensen

- I'm part of the UVM Hunger Collaborative meeting this morning with Speaker Connors. They're looking for more Senators to be involved with that.
- I will be the Elections Chair for Midterm Elections coming up.
- Last Senate meeting of the semester, so a couple goodbyes.

- Eloise, it is always hard to see a Finance Committee Chair go, it has been an honor working with you. There have been a lot of great Finance Committee Chairs in my time, but you have been the best. The innovation and competence you approached this with has been amazing to watch, you have left everything you worked on in a better place than you found it. We are sad to see you go, the best committee in SGA is only the best committee because of our best leader.
- Carter, not many people had as big of an impact on SGA as you have. It was September 15th, 2021 when we both walked in to SGA Galaxy Space for the first time at our First Year Elections Info Session. I didn't know then what we were in for. For the last four years since our first meeting you have been someone I looked up to, a great member of SGA, and a great friend. From Freshman Senator, to Speaker of the Senate, to Vice President, and now Elections Chair, you have left your mark on every aspect of SGA. Every meeting and long hour you put in has left our SGA and University in a better place. I am so glad to know you and work with you. It is sad to see you go, we'll miss you.

Committee Reports

Public Relations Committee

- There is now a form for when you want PR to post something on Instagram. This will give us and yourself more time.
- We are working on the end of semester newsletter.
- Fun Fact of the Week: Rhythm is the longest English word without a vowel.

Committee on the Environment

- Working through projects to start next semester.
- I ended the fantasy season in first place!
- I am leaving and want to thank everyone for making the space so welcoming for me.

Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity

- Yesterday's meeting with WAGE went well. They have a family dinner tonight with catering from Tiny Thai. They are trying to do this every week to combat food insecurity. Also setting people up with Three Squares Vermont which is equivalent to SNAP.
- The Student Transportation Accessibility Forum is coming up, I will put the time in the Teams.
- Senators Leaving of the Week: Surak, Murphy, Purple, Lynch.

Committee on Legislative and Community Affairs

- I hope you all had a restful break.
- Community Coalition is this Friday with trivia and free food.
- To my lovely Chair Murphy, I didn't write anything but I never knew when I was attached at the hip to you during Orientation that this would bring me where I am today. You made all of UVM for me, I love you so much. Don't stay in Australia forever.

Committee on Student Action and Well-Being

- Goodbye to Senator Bibens moving onto bigger better things and Senator Purple. I can't live up to what just happened, but Senator Purple is one of the reasons I am still on SGA and has allowed me to do what I have done. I'm very grateful to have had you for this time and sad to see you go.
- We talked about our goals for next semester and what we want out of Week of Kindness.
- Artists of the Week: Mother Mother and Brett Dennen in honor of Senator Purple.

Club Affairs Committee

- We are wrapping up confirmation of clubs and giving them all the right resources.
- Last meeting I mentioned additional resources. We created a terms document and outline for how to start a club. Lastly, a Good Standing Tracker is on the UVMClubs page as an excel sheet listing club standing with SGA for allocations and what to do.
- To everyone going abroad or leaving us, thank you for all of your hard work.
 - Eloise, working with you was a true privilege. I will miss your smiling face and ability to speak your mind and still be the most liked person in the room. Your unwavering commitment to SGA and everything else you touch is something I aspire to. You left the Finance Committee better than you found it and you really do improve everything.

Academic Affairs Committee

- Farewell to Chair Murphy and Chair Surak for making Exec meetings so wonderful.
- Senator Purple was the first person I interacted with in SGA and encouraged me to come back after I didn't make it on Senate in my first semester. You are quite literally the reason why I am still here.
- Senator Lynch, love you so much.
- Finals season can be very difficult and tiring. Please take advantage of the events being put on to recharge.

Finance Committee

- Gearing up for finals season, excited to see what Senator Rice and Finance Committee will do. I am happy to leave this committee in the way it is,
- Treasurer Sorensen, the only treasurer I know. You make my job easy.

- Chair Halvorson, there is no other person I would want to work with Club Affairs with.
- To everyone else, leaving or staying, have a great next session or a good time abroad or wherever is next.

Senatorial Comments/Announcements

Chair Jones: Thank you Chair Knopp for the reminder that mental health is in the dumps and there are resources about that. Familiarize yourself with CARE forms and the situations you might want to use them in. Get some sleep.

Senator Laychak: The Assistant Dean of Students search is coming into the final chapter. We are doing final interviews and need to get together a small group of students to give feedback.

Adjournment