



22nd Meeting of the 2024-2025 Student Government Association Senate
March 18th, 2025 | 7:00 PM | Livak Ballroom

Call to Order

This meeting was called to order by Speaker Kennedy Connors.

Roll Call

Senators Osei, Woodward, and Toomey not present.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes approved unanimously.

Public Forum

Old Business

Bill Recognizing Archery Club, sponsored by Senator Alarafi

- Give people a space to practice and learn to shoot a bow and arrow.

BILL: **Passed** unanimously, Senator Alarafi abstained

Bill Recognizing Women's Flag Football, sponsored by Chair Halvorson

- Group seeking to make a place for women and non-binary students to play flag football.

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

Bill Recognizing Fellowship of Christian Athletes, sponsored by Chair Halvorson

BILL: **Passed** unanimously, Chair Halvorson and Senator Esbin abstained

Bill Recognizing Landscape & Design Club, sponsored by Senator Alarafi

BILL: **Passed** unanimously, Senator Alarafi abstained

Bill Amending Article IV, Section E, Part I of the SGA Constitution, sponsored by Senator Carroll-Millins

- Making some updates to the Academic Affairs part of the Constitution to reflect what we are currently doing.

BILL: **Passed** unanimously, Senator Carroll-Millins abstained

Bill Amending Article IV, Section E, Part II of the SGA Constitution, sponsored by Senator Talhouk

- This is just a very small change to not step on Civic Engagement's toes. We are removing the sentence: "Shall encourage students to vote locally by holding voter registration drives."

BILL: **Passed** unanimously, Senator Talhouk abstained

Bill Amending Article IV, Section E, Part IV of the SGA Constitution, sponsored by Senator Marchant

- Including Week of Kindness in the Constitution as part of the Chair's job and other updates.

BILL: **Passed** unanimously, Senator Marchant abstained

Emergency Business

New Business

Bill Amending Article IV, Section E, Part V of the SGA Constitution

Bill Recognizing Student Veterans Organization

Bill Recognizing Brain Science Initiative Club

Bill Recognizing Italian Club

Bill Approving FY '26 Budgets

Bill Amending Article IV, Section E, Part VII of the SGA Constitution

Bill Amending Article III, Section B of the SGA Constitution

Bill Amending Article IV, Section F, Part III of the SGA Constitution

Senatorial Forum

Chair Halvorson & Senator Demeo – Discussing Club Affairs Amendment

- **Chair Halvorson:** In my position as Chair of Club Affairs, I have come to recognize that the position is not sustainable and thought over potential solutions. Like every other constitutional change this will require an amendment. I am proposing introducing a co-Chair position. I have thought of many alternative solutions and believe that this is the best option.

- **Senator Demeo:** Club affairs has distinct responsibilities including overseeing and advising over 250 RSOs, ensuring that clubs follow the Code of Conduct and Standard Operating Procedures, maintenance of the club affairs inbox which has a lot of traffic, and handling new club requests. Considering all requests requires forms, meetings, etc. Placing RSOs in good or bad standing requires checking in and maintaining the tracking spreadsheet. Planning and holding events for ClubSigners and keeping records of attendance including holding makeup events.
- **Chair Halvorson:** That is a brief overview of what the committee does but I will also go over the specific responsibilities of the Chair.
 - Serving on the Executive Committee and attending weekly meetings like all other chairs.
 - Training all new committee members for the specific work that we do in recognizing clubs and all the steps that go into maintenance of that.
 - Responsible for updating all of our manuals and documents.
 - Running events such as Activities Fest. We are not expected to work over the summer but if I didn't then New Student Orientation Activities Fest could not happen. I am also in charge of running many different trainings for ClubSigners.
 - Putting out monthly emails, compiling information from office staff, Finance, and Club Affairs for everything that ClubSigners need in the next month. There are a ton of emails coming into the inbox and often are difficult to track down and respond to. This is ultimately my responsibility to respond to.
 - Tracking data of which clubs attended which events and what standing they have which takes a lot of time and happens nearly every day.

- Delegating and approving new RSOs with other committee members.
- Specifically this year, giving many makeup training sessions to lots of groups to bring them into good standing.
- This year, I spent 15-20 hours of work a week on this. I love this work and felt the role was not upholding its constitutional duties when I was a Senator and wanted that to change. This is a very forward facing role and reflects on all of SGA. This position is too much work for one person.
- **Senator Demeo:** As a full time student asking for this level of commitment from one person significantly limits the pool of potential candidates for Chair. This is already limited because of the specific institutional knowledge needing a previous Club Affairs Senator to fill the role.
 - UVM has a unique system with clubs operating under SGA, most comparable universities do not do this.
- **Chair Halvorson:** The committee and especially the Chair operates under a disproportionate amount of busywork. The student body often sees SGA as Finance and Clubs because of the outward facing role so any shortcomings in those areas results in negative publicity. The closest committee in terms of work and responsibilities to Club Affairs is Finance, but they have the Treasurer as well as the Chair.
- **Senator Demeo:** We are proposing the creation of a co-Chair system. Each will be equally responsible for all tasks required of the current Club Affairs Committee Chair. They will jointly represent the committee but each has an individual vote in all meetings. They will alternate giving the committee report and the Speaker would break a tie for any disagreements.

- **Chair Halvorson:** In addition, this amendment specified and elaborated on responsibilities that are currently being fulfilled by Club Affairs.
- **Senator Demeo:** Some other options we explored were adding a Club Operator position to expand the Big 4 to a Big 5 similar to the role of Treasurer relating to the Finance Committee. This would be a big change requiring this person to build this role from the ground up.
 - Another option was adding more committee members but that would create more work and wouldn't address many of the current problems. Maintaining the status quo is not a feasible option.
- **Chair Halvorson:** Many other SGAs at other universities don't have this club process go through them. We don't want that to happen because it is a big responsibility and privilege that we have control over it.
- We have done great work with RSO oversight and received positive feedback from office staff about the way we operated. The amount of work required to make this happen has been unsustainable. Voting yes on this amendment would set SGA and this committee up for success. This is a big change, but a necessary one. Inaction on this issue will only compound it.
- **Senator Demeo:** We don't expect the level of club involvement from students to be reduced any time soon. We believe this solution will ensure the sustainability of what we do to offer this opportunity to more students in the future.
- **Chair Halvorson:** The focus of this discussion is the co-Chairs, if you have questions or comments on grammar or other parts of the amendment I would appreciate you bringing those up afterwards.

Chair Garcia: I think you did really wonderful work on this and I hope it will increase the productivity of SGA. Could you speak to how this would affect equality in representation or would it give Club Affairs a greater say?

- **Response (Chair Halvorson):** I don't see it that way, Finance already has two members on Exec, though the Treasurer doesn't have a vote in the general body. There is a reason for that and I don't believe that it leads to an overrepresentation.

Chair Modun: Thank you for the robust presentation, I am in full support of this amendment.

Senator Paquette: I am in full support of this amendment. If you are wondering how Chair Halvorson has been able to do this, it is because she is one in a million. I have never seen someone as passionate and hard-working as her, the amount of work that she does is unreasonable to expect of anyone.

- **Response (Chair Halvorson):** Thank you.

Senator Marchant: I was wondering if you are viewing the co-Chair system as a stepping stone to establishing a Club Operator position or if this is seen as a permanent change?

- **Response (Senator Demeo):** The Constitution is a living document and future bodies could move to amend the constitution in that way. We currently see the co-Chairs as a necessary step and are not ruling out the possibility of a new position in the future.

Senator Esbin: Going into this year with the Senate Body only two senators were returning to Club Affairs. How would it work to select co-Chairs if there weren't two or even one returning senators, given the institutional knowledge required for understanding what Club Affairs does?

- **Response (Chair Halvorson):** That is difficult to answer. Ana Sola would be a great option for helping that to happen and getting new Chairs up to speed. Hopefully at least one person stays the same from year to year and can get others trained.

- **Response (Senator Demeo):** We receive new senators regularly and the whole committee comes together to make sure they are trained well and know what to do.

Senator York: Are you planning to keep the same number of committee members?

- **Response (Chair Halvorson):** It is not in my power to choose how many members we have, that is the decision of the President and Vice President. I think we would be able to operate with the current number of people.

Treasurer Sorensen: The way it is written, there are not specific guidelines for the responsibilities of each co-Chair. Are you worried that figuring out how to split the work themselves might run into issues?

- **Response (Senator Demeo):** We wanted to keep it vague because the specific type of work varies at times and needs to be delegated in a fluid and thoughtful way.
- **Response (Chair Halvorson):** We had private conversations about this including . My idea was that the responsibility of knowing which co-Chair has which strengths for specific duties should not be placed with the President and Vice President.

Treasurer Sorensen: Assuming this is a paid position, did you talk to Bethany about it?

- **Response (Chair Halvorson):** She has been out but we are meeting tomorrow. Ultimately this is our decision and it is not about the money.

Chair Knopp: Thank you to each member of Club Affairs specifically: Chair Halvorson, Senator Demeo, Senator Torres, Senator Paquette, Senator Alarafi, Senator Grace, and Speaker Connors. You all deserve the recognition of the people in this room for what you do.

Senator Ranallo: For the monthly newsletter, is that not more of a PR responsibility?

- **Response (Chair Halvorson):** I see where you are coming from, but it doesn't make sense for them to write it when they have less knowledge about the specific operations of what is coming up.
- **Response (Senator Demeo):** This brings up a broader point of why we don't reduce the responsibilities of the Chair and streamline operations to reduce their workload. The answer is that we did that over the course of this year and have gotten to an incredibly efficient process but we can't get more streamlined without compromising the experience for students.

Senator Grace: The reason this was seen as a big year for Club Affairs is that we put a lot of effort into streamlining our processes and making sure we are fulfilling our responsibilities. The reason we need co-Chairs going forward is so we can keep doing that.

- **Response (Chair Halvorson):** My big goal was to provide more documents to make sure we don't have to start over from scratch every semester.
- **Response (Senator Demeo):** We did a lot of research on other universities and found that many other SGAs are pursuing similar reforms, so we are not alone in this process.

Executive Reports

Speaker Connors

- Thank you everyone for getting through our huge list of bills. I appreciate the work of Judicial and Clubs on all of these bills.
 - Many of the changes we are making are updating responsibilities to reflect reality.
 - We will be closing the Constitution next week if there are no further amendments.

- Members of Exec met with the presidential candidate Dr Tromp and found her to be an impressive candidate. I encourage you all to go to the open forum tomorrow.
- Only two more meetings in this session, if you are interested in the role of Speaker please reach out to me.

Senator Powell: When you talk about closing the Constitution, what does that mean?

- **Response:** That is a procedural thing, we are required to open and close the Constitution before making amendments and after finishing.

Vice President Bednarik

- Nothing to report.

President Teferra

- Treasurer Sorensen reading for President Teferra:
 - Happy Tuesday!
 - Hope everyone had a restful break, I am still traveling back and returning tomorrow. Feel free to reach out if you need anything.

Treasurer Sorensen

- We had the most successful LUVMyClub in our history raising over \$250,000 with over 1,000 unique donors.
- I was impressed with the presidential finalist, I think she is a great fit for UVM.
- If you have questions about the budget vote next week, come talk to me, Chair Rice, or other members of the Finance Committee.
- Check out the Instagram story for elections information.
- The Clubbies are less than a month away, April 14th.

Committee Reports

Public Relations Committee

- I went to the interview session with Dr Tromp and would encourage everyone to go to the open forum tomorrow.
- Fun Fact of the Week: Koalas have fingerprints similar to humans.

Committee on the Environment

- Busy with Earth Week planning.
- Clothing swap before break went well, we surveyed students about what they would pay for items which was promising when thinking about transitioning to a paid thrift store.
- My Sustainable Campus Fund application for drinking fountains in dorms was submitted, requesting \$75,000 to upgrade the drinking fountains in all dorms.
- Planning a Pub Quiz for Earth Week.
- We got approval for the TEDx event, we're looking to do it in the fall so it isn't rushed.

Senator Grace: Could you give more information on the TEDx event?

- **Response:** TEDx is an offshoot of TED Talks. Our idea is to have students speak primarily around environmental topics. We will have students submit talks and select a few from those. We can ticket the event up to 100 people and it will be recorded as well.

Committee on Our Common Ground Values

- Senator Theroux and I are meeting with WAGE tomorrow. Most of the details are lined out for MARCH! A sign up sheet will be in the Teams.

Committee on Legislative and Community Affairs

- Community Coalition next week, March 28th at 12 Colchester Ave from 3-4:30pm.

Committee on Student Action and Well-Being

- Before break we met with Blake Reilly as a group which went well.
- I joined Chair Halvorson in a conversation about the Plan B/Wellness Vending Machine.
- Artist of the Week: Wallows, Scrawny and Are You Bored Yet? are good songs.

Club Affairs Committee

- Thank you for listening to Senator Demeo and me presenting on Senatorial Forum and approving our club recognition bills. More to come next week.

Academic Affairs Committee

- Shout out Senator Carroll-Millins for sponsoring the amendment relating to AA.
- Dani Comey came in to talk with us about partnering with the Center for Student Success.
- We met with two freshman students who are working on implementing policy change on the faculty side, making grading policies in syllabi more standardized and accessible to students.

Finance Committee

- We had some long hours of budget appeal hearings before break. Tomorrow is the Exec appeal hearings. After that we vote and budgeting will be done.

Senatorial Comments/Announcements

Chair Arnone: A capella concert this Saturday at 6:30pm in Southwick Recital Hall.

Chair Halvorson: Shoutout Senator Alarafi for her first two clubs!

Chair Garcia: Wednesday-Friday 12-2, Theta is having a farmers market in the Davis Center.

Senator Tracy: Saturday at 6:45pm, UVM Glow Contra in Mann Hall.

Adjournment