



**2nd Meeting of the 2024-2025 Student Government Association Senate**  
**April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 | 7:00 PM | Livak Ballroom**

**Call to Order**

This meeting was called to order by Speaker Kennedy Connors.

**Roll Call**

Senators Washko, Lynch, and Richardson not present.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes approved unanimously.

**Public Forum**

**Provost Patricia Prelock & Director of Student Life Lina Balcom** – Discussing Planetary Health at UVM

- **Lina:** I am the Director of Student Life here with Provost Prelock to talk about Planetary Health at UVM. A couple months ago, Provost Prelock invited me to work with a committee to introduce this initiative to campus. This is an emerging field that UVM is well positioned to be leading.
- There is a fantastic opportunity for SGA to be connected and help students understand how they can be involved in this. As we progress through the school year next year I expect to be involved and continue to help answer questions.

- **Provost Prelock:** About 18 months ago I came to Public Forum here and introduced this idea. You provided a lot of great feedback and this has been a long journey talking with students, faculty, and staff to come to this point.
- This was first developed as an idea in 2015 by the Rockefeller Center. It is defined as “the understanding that human health and civilization depends on flourishing natural systems and the wise stewardship of those natural systems.” There are other definitions as well, but it comes down to how the human organism interacts with the climate in which they live.
- We got a group of people together to define what Planetary Health at UVM would look like and what would make us unique compared to other programs. There is no University going all in to look at education, research, policy, and outreach at a global, regional, and local level.
- First we have to say that human wellbeing is inextricably linked with the health of the environment. We have over 200 faculty doing research in health and probably that many in the environment too and this is interesting because of the intersection between those.
  - The UVM Planetary Health Initiative will explore these interconnections and inspire actions so the planet and people can thrive. This aligns with our brand mission which says that we are committed to a thriving future for people and planet.
- Some of the reasons this is valuable and how it might intersect:
  - I was talking to graduate students who are doing research on ticks and the relation to health and wellbeing.

- My research is around autism and these individuals have many needs and increased anxiety and stress. The use of nature, like taking walks or working in a garden, makes a big difference and can decrease their anxiety.
- In the food systems area, I found 39% of us are obese, 30% of the food we harvest is wasted, and 38% is never eaten. Yet there is a huge population of people who are food insecure. I have learned that how we manage food systems isn't working and we need to work on changing that.
- How do we grow our own gardens and maintain our health?
- It relates to me as a health professional, if I have a chronic disease which can be for many reasons. Healthcare is responsible for 8.5% of emissions, which is a lot.
- Many of you grew up hearing the globe is in trouble, but we need to reframe thinking to the possibility of making changes. Taking a walk in natural areas can be good for your health and decrease the need for medications which can harm the environment.
- We had over 40 meetings in the last 18 months. Starting with SGA and GSS and then smaller groups, in classrooms and with faculty. It was important for us to think about a thematic research agenda to set UVM apart and to make it truly interdisciplinary. This is not just STEM focused, it is a broad subject of understanding history and intersections with many different areas.
- We have many centers, institutes, and labs that are doing work in Planetary Health already so we are focused on coordinating our efforts, not creating a new institute.
- Why UVM?

- Faculty, staff, and students said they want us to have a strategy for our research to punch us up above others with a theme that is very Vermont and UVM.
- They want to see interdisciplinary work and collaboration.
- This fits with our idea of the environmental and social responsibility of Vermont and UVM.
- This will facilitate more effective use of expertise and resources.
- It also positions us well for many grants looking for interdisciplinary work.
- There are already things happening on this and people are coming to me with ideas about how to utilize this. We have 23 majors, 24 minors, and about 30 graduate programs that have a health and/or the human environment in their titles.
- This past Friday we had Dr. Tom Gillespie from Emory University, who is doing research about diseases and the environment, host a lecture.
- Yesterday we had faculty, staff, and students attend a presentation about the intersection between health and the environment along with the impact of pharmaceuticals.
  - Dr. Jon Erickson prepared us for the donut model of ecological economics and we allowed teams to look at what the social foundation is on the inner part and what are the boundaries on the outside. Economic development needs to happen but isn't always sustainable and ecologically good.
- We want to have a Planetary Health Summit with a launch in October 2024 to look at how we support this health and wellbeing here. UVM has one of 11 Osher Centers for Integrative Health which are about using yoga and other practices that give people agency to improve their health. Eliminating the use of opioids can reduce emergency room visits by 75%.

- An ongoing issue is having communication with students and supporting the educational framework while developing goals and what we want outcomes to be.
- I want to know what outcomes will be important for you? For me it would be graduating an amazing group of students to go out and make an impact from many different lenses.
  - Ultimately the impact would be to be seen by 2030 as a leader in the United States and globally to help support the health of the planet and humans.

**President Teferra:** Thank you for presenting. Something that would be important to UVM students and people our age is having support in not being pessimistic about climate change. We see a lot of things on social media and the news which ignite a passion for some people, but for many people they feel like they can't do much. Not using plastic as much doesn't feel like enough and it isn't.

- **Response:** I totally agree with you. I talked with the College of Education and Social Services about how they can fit in by reframing how you are teaching. Eco-anxiety is a real thing and we need to teach people about what they can actually do. You can grow gardens at home, you can go walking and biking more than using a car. One of my number 1 goals is decreasing anxiety and showing that you can make a difference.

**Vice President Bednarik:** Regarding the Grossman Business School, can you explain how this fits in with some of those classes and are there additional requirements?

- **Response:** All of our deans are all in. Grossman has a masters program which is sustainability focused. They are educating students to create businesses that create sustainable products and have a sustainable impact on their community. We are trying to get Grossman, Rubenstein, and Larner College of Medicine to work together so students can take courses across that to work together and learn together.

**Senator Demeo:** What kinds of opportunities, research or otherwise, can students see coming their way with this?

- **Response:** My office will be putting forward money for projects. They are research proof of concept projects, and I am making sure that students will be involved across disciplines.
  - I have colleagues in CALS who are interested in the green space outside Votey to create a pollinator garden which will change water runoff and sitting near that garden can make a big difference in mental health.
- You are the second student group I've talked to recently and I am thinking I might do some grant projects for just students rather than all for faculty. I am courting post-docs who could support that.
  - Grossman is looking to start a co-op which students would be involved in.
  - Rubenstein and CALS are doing field-based work as is the College of Nursing and Health Sciences.
  - We have a great health and wellness coaching program. I want to have one for every residence hall on campus.
- All of these steps need funding and we have foundations that are interested.

**Chair Murphy:** I agree with making Grossman more about sustainability for the earth. The courses are about how to make a business last, but we need to know about how to be better for the environment too. Possibly adding a Rubenstein requirement could be good.

- **Response:** That is brilliant and a great way to extend what Grossman is already doing. They are trying to manage sustainable businesses to contribute to the health of the environment.

**Associate Director for SGA Operations Ana Sola & Lina Balcom** – Introducing Their Roles in SGA

- **Lina:** I want to actually introduce myself because many of you are brand new here. My name is Lina Balcom, I use she/her pronouns.
  - As I said before I am the Director of Student Life, and in my job description and in your Constitution is a commitment that I am your primary advisor. I think it is important to introduce myself each time we get new Senators to talk about what being the advisor is, where you can find me, and all those things.
  - We also now have additional support and advising with Ana too.
- As your advisor, my responsibility is to support all of you as much as possible in everything you do.
  - It is not always as easy as I would like because there are many of you, but I make it a priority to give time when you reach out or when I see you struggling.
  - I have weekly meetings with the President and Vice President and would be happy to meet with any of you to provide help on anything so don't hesitate to ask for help. I'm also the Director of Student Life so I can help beyond SGA too and might interact with you in other ways.
- You can find me most often in my office in the suite across from the SGA Galaxy. I will also send a link that is specifically for you to put yourself on my calendar. You can use that without telling me if you need to. I will also send you my cell phone number, you don't need to be formal, so reach out in any way.

- **Ana:** My name is Ana Sola, I use she/her pronouns. I am the new, the first, the inaugural Associate Director for SGA Operations.
- **Lina:** We created this position, which has been in the works for 2 years, because folks in the President and Vice President roles said SGA and clubs needed more support.
  - There is a lot of availability you have with Ana because she is in the SGA Galaxy Space.
  - We know clubs and organizations have a lot of need for support and we haven't been able to give them enough. Club Affairs does a lot, but they can't do everything so Ana is helping with that a lot this year.
  - She is also supporting the chairs in their work. You can also come to her or me for anything else.
  - I am still the primary advisor, she is here to be supporting and providing more resources. Bethany, Meg, and Jshauna are there as well to support you.
  - If you know Jerome, many of the things he did are transferring to Ana. He moved across the hall, will still be around and can help support you too.
- **Ana:** Some helpful context for you is that I am also coming out of being Assistant Director for Club Sports so I have some context for how SGA operates and how the procedures work. I have lots of thoughts and ideas for how to make it easier to navigate for everyone and make it as accessible as possible.
- Lina touched on advising. I work closely with Club Affairs, but I have an open door for anyone to come in and chat. I make an intentional distinction between supervising and advising. My role falls in advising and is to support you all in what you want to accomplish and I want you to know that off the bat.



- My office is in the SGA Galaxy Space, 311E.

**Treasurer Sorensen:** Shoutout to Finance Committee also for what they do for Clubs.

- **Response (Lina):** Thank you, yes I agree.

**Chair Halvorson:** Thank you for coming in. If you haven't met them yet, go do it. They are awesome!

**Vice President Bednarik:** Going off of that, if you haven't met them it's probably because you haven't had an office tour so please sign up for that. Also could you two share a fun fact about yourself?

- **Response (Ana):** Both a fun fact and core to who I am is that my whole family is from Argentina and that is a huge part of my upbringing. I just had the office painted so nothing is up yet, but I have a Messi poster.
  - Being a First Gen American college student at University of Minnesota was also a big thing, that's where I grew up. Something else to know about me is I went to graduate school at University of Kansas, the first thing they taught us was the "wave the wheat". I did a Nike swoosh of the United States ending here.
  - That is my brief history of where I lived. I love to play music, guitar and sing. I snowboard, I'm an ex skater kid.
- **Response (Lina):** That's a hard act to follow. I have been at UVM for 13 years. For the first 10 years I ran the building so I am the Davis Center Lady/Mom.
  - I went to Bryant College for undergrad and Sacred Heart for graduate school, studying business both times.
  - I grew up in Connecticut and have lived in every New England state except Maine. I also lived in Florida, but it was far too hot for me.

- I don't have any kids, I sometimes will treat you like I'm your mom but I can back off if you don't like that.
- I like to read, watch movies, and be crafty.
- I will get to the point though, the people who know me want me to share that I am a hot air balloon pilot. I fly them, I own two, and I built one of them. One of them is named Flutter, the other is named As You Wish. I usually sail till the sun goes down. Yes you can be on the list, but it's a long list.

**Senator Purple:** SGA is in a great place now, especially under the tutelage of our previous leadership. I would love to hear some of the goals you are hoping to accomplish with us.

- **Response (Lina):** I work hard not to set goals for you because this is your organization, not mine. One of the things I see as an important opportunity is to advance the understanding and investment in shared governance.
  - SGA has done a great job at building up projects and advancing student voice, but the shared governance aspect eroded during the pandemic.
  - One of my hopes with adding capacity in supporting SGA is that you all will have a more successful and quicker route to being as productive as possible. With less support it can take longer, but now with more support hopefully projects can go smoother.
- **Response (Ana):** Yes, to have the support you want is a main goal. Leaning heavily on advising, I'm here to advance your goals. I am here to be a partner in brainstorming and coming up with ideas.
  - I also think people have a decent understanding of what SGA does and there is still capacity to elevate the work that you do because you do really cool stuff.

- I came during 2020 and worked in Residence Life and didn't know much about what SGA did. You did a great job of building that foundation and showing up for the community. I am excited to share what you are doing.

**Senator Purple:** You are both serving in advisory roles, can you give a situation where someone should come to one or the other of you?

- **Response (Lina):** We have on paper what Ana's job is, but when we live it we will learn what it actually is. We are trying to preserve enough time of her capacity this year for clubs and organizations because they have deeper needs than Senate currently.
  - I am still the primary advisor, and Ana is there to turn to next when I don't have enough time. If you are a chair and need to know how to lead your committee or anything else she is there too.
  - Most of you will be in the Galaxy Space on a daily and weekly basis so it's easy to interact with her, and I get disconnected. We don't really want to change how my role has been, just add more capacity and support beyond that.
- **Response (Ana):** The headline is that there is no wrong answer. There's no right or wrong person to talk to. I can also follow up with her if need be on something.

### **Old Business**

Bill Recognizing Non-Traditional Students Club, sponsored by Chair Modun

- For those who didn't know, I used to be on club affairs so this bill is finishing that work for me.
- This is meant as a support group for older students, though it is open to anyone.

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

## Resolution Calling UVM to Hire a Food Justice Advocate

- **Senator Jones:** Motion to table.
  - Motion **passed**.

## Emergency Business

Bill Allocating Funds to Women's Club Lacrosse, sponsored by Chair Murphy

- For the new Senators, if we are allocating more than \$10,000 we need to bring the bill to a vote. Allocating \$17,690 for their Nationals event.

**Treasurer Sorensen:** Similar to the club bills, we are voting to approve that they followed the correct process rather than whether you agree with the allocation.

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

## New Business

Bill Recognizing Mixed Ultimate Frisbee

Bill Recognizing Run On Climate

Resolution Establishing SGA's Commitment to MARCH! A Celebration of Leaders in Gender Equity in Partnership with the WAGE Center

## Senatorial Forum

**Senator Isenhour & Emeritus Senator Siegel** – Discussing Together Vermont

- **Emeritus Senator Siegel:** It's nice to see you all again. For those who I haven't met, I am Evan Siegel and I'm currently a senior who was on SGA for the past 4 years.

- Together Vermont addresses two pillars:
  - Recreating and building community in Burlington, Chittenden County, and Vermont in general. We recognize students feeling disconnected with the community and vice versa. We are in a special place and it is important to have those connections.
  - The second pillar is that we are here because of the beauty of Vermont and Burlington as well. So we want to value this community and the environment where we are.
- We are working with 15 organizations and you can see some of the projects on our flier.
  - For example we are working with the Lake Monsters to clean up their field and then play a baseball game afterwards.
- It will be Sunday April 28<sup>th</sup>, all events start at 11am and have only about a 1.5 hour commitment.
- The reason I am here tonight is because we have four bigger projects we need help for. We have groups assigned to these projects, but we need more and I am looking to you folks for help.
  - COTS is a non-profit food shelter in Burlington. They need help putting up posters around Burlington to advertise them. We will also be cooking with them so if you are interested in helping with food service this is a good option.
  - We are helping Fletcher Free Library with a community garden and stocking their bookshelves. Getting it ready for the summer inside and out.

- CVOEO, or Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, is another one I have worked with in the past. They have a homeless shelter called the Champlain Inn and a rehab center. We will be helping with a community garden there.
- Lastly is Old Spokes Home which is a bike organization working with underrepresented communities. They need to build bikes and you will support them in doing that.
- Thank you for being supportive and sharing this project. I know you will be instrumental in making this amazing just like Week of Kindness and SVAM.
- **Senator Isenhour:** If you are interested in representing us there you aren't the only one. We have many people for these things already as well but we want people from SGA to help represent us and show up.
- The initial view was to spread this to all of Vermont. Other universities have similar things and even a day off in some places. Evan is graduating but I plan to make this my focus next year to continue to grow it.

**Chair Garcia:** To participate in all of these, where would we show up?

- **Response (Siegel):** You would go straight to that location.
- **Response (Isenhour):** With the flier we have a link to a form that shows all the opportunities and where to go.

**Chair Knopp:** Being able to see Emeritus Senator Siegel and Senator Isenhour develop this was one of the coolest parts of coming into SGA for me. I highly encourage everyone to get involved. Can you talk about how everyone can get involved and see updates?

- **Response (Siegel):** One of the best ways to get into this is through word of mouth. We also have an Instagram and have reached out to clubs with Treasurer Sorensen.

- **Response (Isenhour):** We know there are always options to volunteer, but this is a vision that could be super cool and possibly become a day off or free Fall or Spring Fest ticket in the future if there is a lot of interest.
- **Response (Siegel):** Feedback from community members has been very positive already. There is the concept of “town vs gown” and this is hoping to bridge that gap.
  - At the end of the day in the Sugar Maple Ballroom from 6-7:30 there will be a Community Mixer with a fiddle band playing. Free food and fun with local community members joining us.

**Treasurer Sorensen:** Can you share this form with Speaker Connors so she has it written down for everyone?

**President Teferra:** This is a great opportunity to go out and do a day of service and also a great way to meet community members to potentially work with in the future. It shows that SGA and UVM students want to be involved with their work too.

**Vice President Bednarik:** If you are planning on volunteering, President Teferra and I want to offer a small breakfast as an incentive to come and then walk together in groups to volunteer sites. We will provide more details about that.

**Treasurer Sorensen & Senator Jones – Discussing UVM’s Commencement Speaker**

- **Treasurer Sorensen:** Last Friday Linda Thomas-Greenfield was announced as the Commencement speaker and we want to have a conversation about that. We will introduce her background, why she is relevant, our concerns, and what we can do.

- She is the current US Ambassador to the United Nations since 2021. Most recently she has been in the news for vetoing resolutions relating to Palestinian and Israeli conflict.
- First on October 18<sup>th</sup>, a resolution calling for a humanitarian pause in fighting. Next on Dec 8<sup>th</sup>, calling for an immediate ceasefire. On February 20<sup>th</sup>, again vetoing a resolution calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. And most recently last week, the day before UVM's announcement, vetoed a resolution which would grant Palestine statehood in the UN.
- We have concerns about how widespread and outspoken she has been on this issue.
  - It is our opinion and belief that having her on campus will inherently make us less safe on campus and during Commencement.
  - Safety was cited to cancel a lecture in the fall with Mohammed El-Kurd in a single lecture hall with a lot less people. The safety concerns for this are 10 times as high with it being on a lawn with open roads on all 4 sides.
- **Senator Jones:** Connecting to that and the overview of this of how it is problematic. For Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim students her being here would be very insensitive and disrespectful.
  - We passed a resolution about the continued disrespect from administration on this issue specifically in response to the Mohammed El-Kurd cancellation. There were safety concerns for that which was a small lecture with around 50 people in attendance. But now there are thousands of students, faculty, staff, as well as their families.



- **Treasurer Sorensen:** This screenshot of a google search shows that the second and third top articles are UVM articles about commencement that say the exact time and location.
  - We looked at google analytics and because of the action vetoing resolutions at the UN, the number of people searching her name has been way higher. This adds to safety concerns.
- **Senator Jones:** It is clear to see that this is not a sensible choice right now as she could be a target with a lot of eyes on her. We don't want commencement to be a safety issue with a shooting or bomb threat, which are not unfamiliar ideas unfortunately. Nobody should be thinking about being unsafe or disrespected when trying to celebrate their achievement.
- We talk about how our actions bridge the gap between admin and students and making sure that everyone is acting in accordance with the values of Our Common Ground. Me, Treasurer Sorensen, and others who have come to us with concerns feel this would violate these values.
  - Integrity: Service to the University being honest and ethical in all responsibilities, including direct responsibility to the students.
  - Even though this speaker was likely booked in advance, things have changed since October and this is not in accordance with our values and safety anymore.
  - Justice: We say we will unite against all forms of injustice. Giving an honorary degree to someone who is seen as a figurehead of blocking justice and upholding genocide does not align with that.
- **Treasurer Sorensen:** We are advocating for the cancellation of this speech and finding another speaker. We want to open up the floor and hear what people have to say.

- **Senator Jones:** I would like to say that an important thing is that we are not here to talk about our own activism but to represent our constituents and this is concerning for a lot of students so we need to take this seriously.

**President Teferra:** I want to emphasize what Senator Jones said. You aren't taking a political stance, this is coming from students who want us to address it and are feeling unsafe. We have to take those concerns seriously. I have friends who are Palestinian and graduating and that saddens me to think they will have to deal with this at their celebration.

**Senator Purple:** Thank you for presenting in a thoughtful and respectful way. This is not an attack on what she would say, but more what she has done and her actions. There is a precedent for canceling Commencement speakers, USC canceled their Valedictorian's speech citing safety concerns. She is a Palestinian student majoring in Genocide Studies which is interesting.

- **Response (Jones):** I would like to reemphasize again that this concerns student wellbeing and safety. We can appreciate her accomplishments prior to October but it is negligent to ignore what has happened since then.

**Senator Laychak:** When did they decide to pick her?

**President Teferra:** Over a year ago, before October.

- **Response (Sorensen):** A lot of times it is in advance, that means there has been time to consider this and see that she is not a safe speaker to host.
- **Response (Jones):** There is precedent for canceling Commencement speakers on much shorter notice than what we are looking for. That is what we are unequivocally pushing for.

**Chair Halvorson:** Thank you for bringing this up, it was very easy to understand.

Commencement is a place and time to celebrate graduating and accomplishment. To have someone making people feel unsafe is not what we want to promote.

**Vice President Bednarik:** We talk about students graduating, but we should think about current students as well. This message might hinder the trust that has already been eroding over the past year. We have represented students and had hard conversations over the past year. The bridge between people and admin has not been as strong as it should be. We need to think about how admin can promote healing and this action is interpreted as a kick rather than bridging the gap.

- **Response (Jones):** Another piece of context that we didn't highlight is that there was a very public hate crime in our community against 3 Palestinian young men months ago. How will it look after we urged administration to stand by students and then they are inviting a person who is at the forefront of antagonizing that issue. It breaks everything we are working to fix and bolster with students.

**Senator Demeo:** Considering the current wave of student protests at institutions such as Columbia and Yale, is there a risk that declining to address this could lead to similar events here?

- **Response (Jones):** There is a harmful rhetoric that SJP and pro-Palestinian advocates are violent or terrorists. I would like to stop that and say the danger is not people rightly protesting a harmful event. More the harm to the community that is presented, and particularly the emotions and effect of having her in the community.
  - There is a great possibility for student protests in response to this. Ultimately our goal is to have the speaker canceled and beyond that if that fails then we would support students in their actions whether that is not going to Commencement or demonstrating and advocating there.

**Senator Isenhour:** Pardon my ignorance, could you elaborate on the precedence of vetoing resolutions. Is that a radical vote relative to other countries or are there other factors?

**President Teferra:** Without getting into the weeds, the US is an ally to Israel so this isn't surprising and this isn't her own decision. She is the representative of the US and her personal views don't matter. The impact is seen as anti-Palestinian.

- **Response (Sorensen):** Any sitting member of the UN Security Council can veto resolutions and the US was the only one to do this. She isn't the problem specifically, she represents the US and the harm.
- **Response (Jones):** Considering the symbolism of the US being the only vetoing member of that vote, she can be seen as a figurehead for that movement to prevent aid.

**Chair Knopp:** The debate team has been looking into this. The US is part of the UN Security Council which is 13 countries and is a very exclusive subdivision of the UN. On top of that, only 5 countries on that Council have veto power. This power has been under scrutiny because some countries have this ultimate power over others and block their consensus.

**Senator Laychak:** Thank you for coming up and speaking, this is a difficult topic. My biggest worry is us going to admin and them just saying no which has happened with many things we have done. This is not our job as a Senate, but maybe if we came up with an alternative speaker they would be more receptive.

- **Response (Sorensen):** I am a lot more optimistic about working with administration. My first thought as an alternative was Senator Leahy. I am optimistic about having a conversation and explaining the student perspective.

- **Response (Jones):** I am hopeful that by going to them with compassion and generosity that they may not have realized the harm of this, they would listen to us and hear what we are saying and make the logical choice to cancel this speaker.

**Senator Gottfurcht:** I am not familiar with the process of choosing a speaker. Is there a backup already in mind?

- **Response (Jones):** They go through a lengthy debate process I'm sure. Looking for backups we would have to work with them, and Senator Patrick Leahy would be a great option. Perhaps talking to an esteemed faculty member or someone from Faculty Senate. I don't think it would be hard to find a qualified, worthy speaker to truly inspire students.

**Senator Steele:** Thank you for the information, this was really helpful.

- **Response (Sorensen):** I will add, the only announcement to my knowledge was an Instagram story at 4pm last Friday.
- **Response (Jones):** It was in one of the community emails at 4 or 4:30 on Friday, which is generally regarded as the time you put things out that you don't want people to pay attention to.
- About Senator Laychak's question for what we do if the administration says no, that is when we would go to our secondary and third priorities which is making sure we show up and stand up for students. Putting out a resolution denouncing this and supporting students at Commencement and in the community however they choose to protest.

**Chair Halvorson:** This is less about having a next speaker and more about the potential harm from this speaker. This speaker is harmful and will hurt people.

- **Response (Jones):** It is the admin's job to find the right fit, this is not it so hopefully they will go back to the drawing board.

**Senator Peterson:** What does security at Commencement look like?

- **Response (Jones):** I would like to emphasize that it is held outside on the Waterman Green with several thousand people, surrounded by roads on four sides.
- **Response (Sorensen):** I don't know the exact numbers, but there are UVM police and Burlington police.
- **Response (Jones):** Having the streets swarmed with police also doesn't help people to feel safe.

**Chair Halvorson** – Discussing Voting on Club Affairs Legislation

- I want to explain how the Club Affairs process works and your role in that.
  - We have meetings with club signers and we are recognizing them with these bills.
  - A sponsor for the bill is the person who comes up to speak about a bill and introduces it. Bills are introduced one week in New Business and the next week go to Old Business.
  - To underscore your role, it is not voting on whether you like or don't like that club but whether we went through the process correctly.
- This is different from resolutions which are more opinion based and you can make your decision based on what you believe rather than process.

**Chair Modun:** Does anyone know if there has been an audit for other Senators to see if Club Affairs is following the proper procedures?

- **Response:** I don't know of that. In the transition there is a trust thing with passing it on. Ana Sola is also involved in ensuring that. It is happening, you can also reach out to me or hop into our meetings if you want transparency.

**Vice President Bednarik:** This might be worth looking back to see past legislation with resolutions listing why clubs are not in good standing. Clubs have been derecognized.

- **Response:** The derecognition process is no longer something we do, instead we set them as inactive. We have that power still, but haven't been doing this as a practice previous Chairs decided. This means Club Affairs makes this decision without bringing a bill and taking up everyone's time in Senate.

## **Executive Reports**

### **Speaker Connors**

- Thank you all for a productive meeting. I am also so thankful for the kindness and patience you are showing me as I learn this role.
- I met with Emeritus Speaker Clark to go over the transition report and additional documents.
- I spoke to the Digital Collections Department about getting our past and current legislation added to that so we can search by keyword and make it more accessible.
- I helped set up the What Were You Wearing installation in the Spruce Room.

### **Vice President Bednarik**

- Thank you for your compassion and respect in these conversations, it is very important especially when student concerns are brought up
- Elections Chair applications are due tomorrow at noon.
- Treasurer interviews start this week and Bethany Wolfe will join in on that. We will have a new Treasurer at the next meeting, we want to hear your input as well to prepare questions for candidates.

- I am on the hiring committee for the Executive Director for Health and Wellbeing and working on constructing a student panel. We have a great group, but I am still looking for more people to join and fill gaps that SGA doesn't interact with as much.
- Our first Exec meeting was last week, we had a great time. Chairs are on their way starting work and I was proud to see that. I will keep updating the Senate body on those meetings as we have more important conversations.
- Lastly, if you have not signed up for an SGA office tour I will find you and annoy you. It is very quick, 15 minutes max. The office is a great environment to see, pro staff is there and it's a good space to do homework and other work too.
- As the semester is coming to an end it can be stressful, come by the office and talk to me if you need and be kind to yourself.

#### **President Teferra**

- Happy Tuesday! And happy Earth Week, I want to read a land acknowledgement as part of that.
  - Our own meeting space sits on land that is a site of meeting and exchange for Indigenous peoples since time immemorial. Ongoing generations of Indigenous people, namely the Western Abenaki, have stewarded this land. The Western Abenaki are the caretakers of this land which they call Ndakinna, or "homeland." We recognize the trauma that violence and forced displacement by the hands of colonizing peoples has caused these communities. We are guests on this land and will respect and uplift Indigenous histories, cultures, and peoples. We give thanks for the opportunity to share the joys of this beautiful land and in turn are committed to protecting it.



- I know it is a busy time, but it is important to remember why we celebrate Earth Week and that there is a dark history behind climate justice as well.
- Pickup and Pickup went well this past Sunday, thanks to Emeritus Senator Moody-A'ness. It was fun to watch the community come together.
- Corey Berman has asked for help sorting move-out donations. Food and transportation will be provided to the warehouse in Williston.
- This past Monday I attended the State Sustainable Leadership Committee as one of two student representatives that will meet every semester to review the goals outlined in the Comprehensive Sustainability Plan. That is UVM's commitment to sustainability and goal setting. A major goal is to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- Vice President Bednarik and I had a meeting with Vice Provost Caloiero last week, including a productive conversation about tiered housing.
- We are meeting with President Garimella on Friday as well. We will be talking about the Commencement speaker issue and the transition as well. If there is anything you would like us to address, let us know by Thursday night.
- We are scheduled to host MCSC breakfast on February 7<sup>th</sup> of next year. I will remind you again in January. They fill up quickly, so I wanted to make sure we got on the list.

#### **Treasurer Sorensen**

- Chair Murphy reading for Treasurer Sorensen:
- Shoutout to Chair Murphy for passing her first bill as Chair.
- Treasurer Sorensen, Chair Murphy, and Chair Halvorson are planning the club signer training for next Monday from 4:30-6.
- Board of Trustees meeting for the Committee on Budget, Finance, and Investment.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Public Relations Committee**

- PR Committee is organizing and getting ready for next year. To all new and old Senators, please follow all of our social media accounts.
- There are a lot of events going on right now and you should try to go to them if you can.
- Fun Fact of the Week: If you were to stack all the pieces of bacteria in the world on top of each other, that line would be 10 billion light years long which is enough to stretch around the milky way 20,000 times.

**Senator Jones:** Did anyone fact check that? I want the math.

- **Response:** It was on a website somewhere.

### **Committee on the Environment**

- Nothing to report, happy Earth Week!

### **Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity**

- Tomorrow is Denim Day, so please show your support by wearing denim. There are free group fitness classes starting at 5pm including Blacklight Zumba from 8-9.
  - We need also help setting up and breaking down for that.
- Take Back the Night is Thursday at 5pm, marching from the Theater to City Hall.
- The What Were You Wearing display is up in the Spruce Room from April 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Blank of the Week: This one is a quote. For backstory a lot of museums have taken religious and spiritual objects and bones from Indigenous people to display.

- “We can speak of tradition, then, not as a collection of objects on museum shelves, but as the spirit of people who seek to animate these objects in the present.”

### **Committee on Legislative and Community Affairs**

- Senator Jones has a meeting with Provost Prelock to discuss the Commencement speaker. She is also working on the Food Justice Advocate Resolution.
- Senator Laychak is following up on asbestos in the dorms and how to not have asbestos in the dorms.
- This past Friday we had a community coalition meeting. It is exciting to see two women of color in places of power.
- Song of the Week: So High School by Taylor Swift from the Tortured Poets Department.

### **Student Action and Well-Being Committee**

- Happy Earth Week, I hope you are going to the events. I appreciated our conversations today during Senatorial Forum as well.
- We had our first committee meeting, got to know each other and discuss what we are working on.
- Chair Espejo and I met with Peter VonDoepp about election things and SGA's and Civic Engagement's role in collaboration.
  - We have a project we want to do about myth busting which is in its early stages.
- Senator Keppel is continuing to work with Senator Ambrose on welcome goodie bags including drink covers, Narcan, condoms, and more. Those are planned to be ready next year. She is also participating in the panel that Vice President Bednarik is hosting.

- I encourage you all to address the stress you are feeling and don't be afraid to take breaks as we lead up to finals.
- What I'm Watching this Week: Worst Cooks of America on the Food Network. Highly recommend it, especially if you like the timed, competitive style of shows.

### **Club Affairs Committee**

- Thank you for being attentive during my discussion on Senatorial Forum.
- Congrats to Senators Grace and Demeo for introducing their first bills and jumping right in.
- I have been working with Chair Murphy and Treasurer Sorensen on next week's club signer training. We just met with Ana and Bethany yesterday to get on the same page.
- If you follow UVM Clubs on Instagram, please repost the post we posted today. If you don't follow, follow and then repost.
  - Cannabis Science Club wants help passing down leadership roles.
- Club Plug: Catamount Dance Crew.

### **Academic Affairs Committee**

- If you are free, get involved with Together Vermont on April 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Get in contact with the SGA pro staff by doing an office tour with Vice President Bednarik. I did one today and she did a great job.
- This part of the year is challenging, please take care of yourself, I am always free to chat. I do feel bad about not knowing what 2/3 of 29 is, if you want help in math I promise I can help.

### **Finance Committee**

- Thank you for passing the bill earlier.

- I am working on the club signer training.
- Finance is winding down as the year ends.

### **Senatorial Comments/Announcements**

**Senator Purple:** This is a question first and then a comment, is this the last meeting?

**Speaker Connors:** We have another meeting next week.

**Senator Purple:** One of the great things coming up next semester is having the opportunity to receive a credit for your time on SGA. You don't need to if you have a limitation with credits, but you can if that is something you want to do. Reach out to Lina about it.

**Senator Jones:** Thank you all for being attentive and engaged with Senatorial Forum. Echoing Chair Espejo and anyone talking about SVAM programming, Thursday is the Take Back the Night protest. Afterwards there will be an hour of chill, calm down time hosted by myself and Senator Keppel because that can be traumatic and we want a space to decompress in the SGA office with cookies, puzzles, games, and movies.

**Senator Reeder:** With finals and everything, I extend an invitation to anyone who wants to visit 5 week old ducklings or chickens.

### **Adjournment**