



7th Meeting of the 2022-2023 Student Government Association Senate
October 11th, 2022 | 7:00 PM | Livak Ballroom

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Speaker Purple.

Roll Call

Public Forum

Maeve Forbes - Rally Cat's Cupboard

- Introduction to Rally Cat's Cupboard, a student led organization at UVM operating as a food resource for on and off campus students. A data collection done in 2017 found 1 in 5 students at UVM are food insecure, and students of color, first generation students, and LGBTQIA+ students are more likely to be food insecure. Rally Cat's Cupboard was opened in response to this. In 2018 the initiative started to open other cupboards on campus in identity spaces, currently the Mosaic Center and the Prism Center are the best stocked centers. Food recovery network is also in operation that repurposes leftover food from the dining halls.
- Initial funding from Sedexo and SGA allowed Rally Cat's Cupboard to open in the Hills in February of 2020 and was visited 1,300 times in the first year alone.
- Donation page is open for further resources, especially needed is another fridge, as well as a freezer and racks for foods.

- Roof collapsed in the Hills spaces in the summer of 2021. Led to the pop-up market model in the Davis Center.
- Rally Cat's Cupboard moved into the new space in the Davis Center this fall. Autonomy over the cupboard space is really exciting for the organization, and it has been visited over 900 times in the last month, 446 pounds of food donated from Hannafords alone.
- Highlighting the importance of stakeholders in a project and help at an institutional level. Take advantage of your time here at SGA while you have these connections with the administration.
- Shout out to Speaker Purple and Chair Sorensen for volunteering last week.

Chair Sorensen: You are doing amazing work, and before volunteering I didn't realize the scope of what you are doing and how impactful it is. Any senators thinking of volunteering should know that it is an amazing experience and a great way to be involved.

Treasurer Wigon: Is it mostly utilized by on campus or off campus students? Do you collect that data when students come in to collect food.?

- **Response:** We used to collect that data but stopped after the roof collapsed over the summer. Now, from my general impression (not statistics) I would say it is by far mostly off campus students.

Senator Jones: Echoing Chair Sorensen, this is amazing work. Is there anything right now that the student government could do to help right now?

- **Response:** As of right now, you are all more involved than you know. There is a collaboration effort ongoing for the Week of Kindness.

VP Wood: Would it be possible for you to send us a volunteer schedule that people could sign up for when they can, would that be helpful?

- **Response:** In a confusing way, it is more difficult to have too many volunteers who can sometimes work instead of a couple who can work all the time. But I can send you the volunteer schedule.

Senator Langois: Are there any types of food you cannot accept?

- **Response:** The only thing I cannot accept is food that has been opened already, that's a food safety thing.

Senator Jones: Do you have a partnership with Intervale right now?

- **Response:** The Vermont food bank is our main partner right now, we are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, through the UVM foundation but not through UVM alone. We are also partners with other local food banks, and part of the Intervale food share.

Senator Jones: Do you have any special event coming up for Thanksgiving that we could help promote?

- **Response:** We don't have anything in the works right now, but I would be open to collaborating and dedicating resources to making that happen.

Senator Carpenter: How long have you been promised the space in the Davis Center?

- **Response:** It is complicated, but there is no worry of us losing the space suddenly in the near future. I am planning on moving Rally Cat's Cupboard out of SGA and into a Food Systems graduate's program. We currently don't receive money from SGA and only store donations here. I am looking for an undergraduate to take over my role and make it into a paid position so it is more equitable and open to anyone.

Old Business

Bill Altering Language of the Diversity Enhancement Fund – Sponsored by Chair Sorensen

- Changing some of the language of the policies to make funding more accessible to those who want it.
- Annual fund available for UVM to fund events on campus that promote diversity.
- Started in 2010, but since 2020 there are only 7 approved requests.
- Hope is to maximize its language to make it cover a broader scope to reach people.

VP Wood: Do you know how many were not approved and why?

- **Response:** There have been 84 total requests since 2010, 61 approved and 22 denied. There have been only 7 approved requests since 2020.

VP Wood: Do you know why 22 were denied?

- **Response:** There are lots of reasons why a request could be denied.

Treasurer Wigon: There are a lot of mercy groups that already run events...

BILL: PASSED unanimously, Chair Sorensen abstained

Bill Altering Language of the Wellness and Engagement Fund – Sponsored by Chair Sorensen

- Barely used as well, there have been 7 submissions.
- Create on campus events that promote a healthy lifestyle during high risk weeks for alcohol or drug use. There has only been 1 submission in the past 3 years.

Senator Johnson: What happens to the money if it's not used each year?

Treasurer Wignon: It's all supplemental funding, so we can move it around at the end of the year if it's not utilized.

BILL: PASSED unanimously, Chair Sorensen abstained

Bill Recognizing Jump Rope Club – Sponsored by Senator Poland

- Competitive jump roping, competitions happen regionally, nationally, and internationally.
- Would love to share my love of the sport and teach others how to jump rope.

Senator : Will this be a club sport?

- **Response:** There is a collegiate jump rope association, but I'm not sure I'm ready to get into that this year, but possibly in the future.

BILL: PASSED unanimously, Senator Poland abstained

Emergency Business

Allocating funds to Women's Club Soccer

- Women's Club Soccer qualified for nationals this week and is requesting \$11,050 in additional funding to cover travel costs.
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Senator Smith: Given that the difference between the requested amount and the allocated amount is roughly \$8,000 and they need a deposit by the end of the week can we confirm that they have enough fundraised funds or that there is a small enough margin that their teammates can pay a reasonable amount of money?

- **Response:** We make sure it's a reasonable request, due to certain amounts for the reservation fee, flight fee, and hotel fee, we make sure all of this is covered. We can send out an email breaking this down.

Treasurer Wigon: Most of their request is 'we think it's gonna be this much', so we broke it down based on policy and we gave them about 75% of their estimate. We made sure they could pay the reservation fee so they are good to go.

BILL: PASSED unanimously, Chair Sorensen abstained

New Business

Bill Finalizing SGA Financial Policies

Senatorial Forum

Senator Lista: I was in the Brightspace transition meeting and brought up that some professors don't use Blackboard. With Brightspace there are going to be multiple trainings, some short and some long, to appeal to different types of professors. The worry is that professors won't take advantage of these, especially those who don't currently use Blackboard. Idea to create a video convincing Professors to go to these trainings and learn how to use Brightspace.

Senator Jones: Lots of professors have issues with Blackboard currently and make issues for students especially accessibility wise, and with a transition to a whole new platform there will be an increase in these issues. I think we should make at least one training mandatory for professors.

Senator Lista: They aren't contractually obligated to go to these trainings, so we can't force them.

Chair Teferra: Are professors currently required to have and use Blackboard?

- **Response:** No.

VP Wood: My philosophy professor actually makes students use his own website.

Senator Smith: Some professors also use completely different learning platforms like Canvas.

President Henson: Be strict with professors who claim to 'not be good with technology.' We can't be using a bunch of other platforms as it is an accessibility and ADA issue. Reevaluate policies, obviously we can't change everyone's contracts but we can put pressure on deans to pressure professors into using the designated platform. .

Senator Lista: The idea of the video was that this plea for using Brightspace would come from students instead of Deans.

VP Wood: I think a video would be fun, but maybe this could be something that AA could do, almost like Grossman School Badges, where in the professor and course descriptions it says that the professor has completed these training sessions. I personally would be far more likely to take a class where the professor has completed staff training.

Senator Rooney: I don't think it should be the student's responsibility to get professors to use Blackboard, students in class do that everyday. Professors create accessibility issues by not using the designated platforms. A video is passing the responsibility from the deans to the students.

Senator Jones: I agree, I think that whatever roadblock that is preventing professors from adopting a platform should be removed, and we should encourage the deans to say something. I would be interested in looking into policy some more because this can come back strongly to an accessibility issue.

Senator Langois: I do like the idea of encouraging faculty to get on board because it is very frustrating for students but I'm not sure a video is the way to go about this because it could come off as a begging. Maybe a letter to the various deans would be a more formal and better approach.

Chair Meunier: Expanding on VP Wood's point; professors that don't use the platform or use their own should be listed in their course descriptions.

VP Wood: This could also be an ADA compliance issue, because in Blackboard you have the feature where the page can be read to you, and I know my professor's personal website does not have that feature.

Chair MacHarrie: I don't like the idea of begging, but maybe the video could come from other professors, so that it could be peer to peer coming from a colleague not a student.

Senator Lista: I was the only student in this meeting, and all the faculty are into Brightspace and they said that they've been telling the professors they need to use Blackboard but certain professors don't listen. They thought that it would be more effective coming from students.

Senator Smith: Maybe in the video use a mix of students and professors, and maybe there could be meetings with the various deans to create incentives for professors to adopt online platforms.

Senator Lista: Faculty said they didn't have any incentives right now but it is a good idea to work with the deans.

President Henson: The fact that we are being asked to do this is ridiculous. This should be contractually obligated, it is an ADA issue and an accessibility issue. I understand they've tried the peer to peer approach in the past and it hasn't worked, and a video is a nice idea for the moment but it fixes the symptom and not the issue. We could also examine the contract under which professors and lectures are hired, because this should not be our responsibility.

Treasurer Wigon: I think the only way to do this is to push it into policy. Begging is going to do nothing.

Senator Orr Jr: Student data privacy could be violated by not being on Blackboard and visiting third party websites. Student assignments can be analyzed and utilized by third party websites. Blackboard is owned by UVM and kept within UVM.

Senator Carpenter: Can we put legitimate pressure on the deans to include this in future contracts? To put a stipulation in that professors have to use these learning platforms? Can we use ADA violations as threats to encourage professors to use these?

President Henson: If we wanted to start looking at modifying contracts the next contract cycle is coming in May for 10 month contracts, so we would have to start working on that now.

Senator Batyrshina: Do they have faculty wide meetings in which faculty could be watching those videos?

Senator Charles: I wanted to stress the point of how many people wanted to make videos, maybe we write a letter and list professors deemed expert in Brightspace

Senator Lista: There are already creating a lot of opportunities for professors, it's just a worry that professors won't take these opportunities.

Senator Johnson: Over the last couple weeks in our committee reports we've been mentioning working on a composting project, so here is an update. This project is focused on managing compost after it goes into the trash and after it is collected. Currently all our compost is going to Green Mountain Compost, and we send it to them. There is new technology being developed, used largely in casinos, and uses entirely heat. There are no chemicals you have to put in, and the overall energy investment is very low. With this technology we could shift composting entirely to UVM and have everything in-house and have the soil at the end of it. It's an ongoing project.

Senator Jones: Wondering if we could make an ad hoc on transitioning to Brightspace because it seems like a larger issue.

President Henson: I could authorize an ad hoc for this.

Senator Jones: Update on the project that VP Wood and GSA President are working on.

Working on an affinity space for disability, autoimmune, and neurodivergence in the Davis Center. There is an event at Living Well coming up where we will gauge interest.

Senator Langois: Rather than an ad hoc committee would it be more beneficial to have more senators sit in the meetings with faculty and Senator Lista.

President Henson: When they first approached me they only wanted one but I am more than happy to put on more senators.

Senator Lista: They meet the first wednesday of every month and if you want to join go for it

VP Wood: There used to be a lot of students not on SGA, I don't know what happened to that.

Senator Lista: They're more focused on training the faculty rather than listening to students.

Executive Reports

Speaker Purple

- Working with PR to get the public forum link and the minutes on the website.
- Clarifying attendance policy.
- Two spots open in the fantasy football league.

Vice President Wood

- If you were not at the retreat I sent you an email about the makeup retreat, if you didn't get that reach out.
- Working with the co directors of student legal services on campus on publicity to increase awareness about student legal services.
- Note for AA: Administration wants to hire diverse faculty but they are looking to hire senior professors over junior professors.

- If you are studying abroad next semester please let me know ASAP, I'm getting started on next-semester's elections early.
- Be an educated voter!

President Henson

- Meeting with Senator Carpenter about tabling in the dorms. We want to hit 8 spots a month to connect to on campus students. Reach out to get involved.
- There is a form in the TEAMS drive with everyone's email, we also want to get phone numbers and Colleges so that we can liaison with the deans of each college.
- Indigenous people's day was yesterday, Native American Heritage month is November.

Treasurer Wigon

- Finalizing budget processes, coming up Nov. 8th is our training on club budgeting.
- Finalizing hedge policies.
- Raising fundraising goals for next year.
- Looking to open a fundraising fund for SGA.
- Buying new vans or replacing vans for SGA.
 - **Senator Jones:** Emergency funds are having to accommodate buses, is there any movement towards two coach buses for clubs to reserve.
 - **Response:** Focusing on expanding the van fleet.
 - **Senator Charles:** Will the vans be sustainable or gas efficient?
 - **Senator Carpenter:** From an accessibility standpoint, it's just easier to get gas vans.

Committee Reports

Public Relations Committee

- Newsletter is coming out on thursday
- Updating language for funding
- Week of Kindness stuff upcoming

Committee on the Environment

- Senator Johnson meeting with sustainability director about composting project

Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity

- Follow the Rally Cat's Cupboard's Instagram
- Chair Macharrie working on restorative yoga session for Week of Kindness
- Instagram revived!

Committee on Legislative and Community Affairs

- Oct. 19 Off-Campus Resource Event at the Alumni house, volunteers needed.
- Clothing drive for Women's Correctional facility
- Next Community Coalition meeting is next Friday at 3pm on zoom.

Student Action and Well-Being Committee

- Making progressing on various projects
- Revitalizing instagram
- Next week is Week of Kindness, the next ad hoc meeting is tomorrow to hash out final details. Schedule is being sent out soon! Look out for massages, gym passes, baking, flowers, and a baby cow.
- Sign-up sheet is also being sent out, volunteers are needed.
- Working with Lidnsney Forman on a meditation workshop for senate as an optional activity.

Club Affairs Committee

- Congratulations to Senator Poland for recognizing her first club

Academic Affairs Committee

- Meeting with J. Dickinson to share our three goals for the year and receive feedback
- Insane Russian Fact: Beer was not classified as an alcoholic beverage there until 2011.

Finance Committee

- Reviewing policies
- New budgeting system with club signers, more info for when finalized
- Shoutout for Soul Food Social

Senatorial Comments/Announcements

Senator Carpenter: Thank you for everyone who came to Soul Food Social. Importance of showing up to community events and being involved in a diverse array of experiences representing students.

President Henson: Go to events, and mingle with students. Be respectful, go to everything you can.

Senator Rooney: Emphasis on warmer clothes and winter jackets, ask your parents, friends, roommates, please donate if you can.

Senator Poland: Happy National Coming Out day.

President Henson: Be careful and be safe on the long weekend.

Chair Teferra: VP Wood's Birthday is Thursday, Happy birthday!

Adjournment