



**9th Meeting of the 2022-2023 Student Government Association Senate**  
**October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022 | 7:00 PM | Livak Ballroom**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Speaker Purple.

**Roll Call**

Senator Langlois, Chair Robinson, and Senator Russell not present.

**Public Forum**

**Emmanuella Ponzio** - Drug Misuse Awareness & Resources

- Introduction; transfer student from California. How many of you have had the experience of going somewhere on your own? Actively tried to find a substance abuse support service, but one didn't exist on campus (closest one was in downtown Burlington).
- All resources on UVM campus fall under the Catamount Recovery Program. This resource isn't being made aware to students.
- Substance abuse deals heavily with emotional regulation and connection.
- Clean Campaign, started by Joshua Sherman is a project to create emotional regulation through artistic means (music, poetry, etc). He is interested in mentoring or sponsoring something on the UVM campus, possibly collaborating with the Catamount Recovery Program.
- Working on creating workshops providing supporting substance abuse recovery efforts, especially dealing with individual emotional regulation and community support.

- The resources available on campus need to be more accessible to students. Adding resources to places like the Prism Center would be a step towards making resources more accessible.

**Senator Hogan:** Thank you so much for coming in.

**President Henson:** Thank you for coming in. Is the Catamount Recovery Program up to date on harm reduction methods, in your opinion? Where could you see improvement in the program in addition to accessibility?

- **Emmanuella Ponzio:** They do monthly events on and off campus, but these events aren't widely known about. They do have on-campus recovery housing, there are classes, recovery groups, and game nights. The approach is more of an NA meeting right now, but Clean Campaign and Circle Security is about building resilience in yourself and in your community.

**Chair Teferra:** Do you know what department or group of people are in charge of the recovery program? Are you going to reach out to them or would you like someone in SGA to reach out?

- **Emmanuella Ponzio:** They are a part of CAPS. I have reached out to the two people in charge of the Catamount Recovery Program but I haven't heard back yet.

**Senator Carpenter:** What would be the best actions for us to take to assist you?

- **Emmanuella Ponzio:** Right now I'm talking to the CEO of the Clean Campaigning but I don't feel like the best representative of UVM, but I would love for someone to reach out to them as well. Maybe even making the website for the Catamount Recovery Program to become more accessible?

**Barbara Rachelson and Isabel Tanner-** Shared Issues: SGA and the Legislature

- Introductions; representative Barbara Rachelson and her intern Isabel Tanner. Barbara has been a representative in the state legislature for five terms. This year VT was redistricted, and she went from having part of the UVM campus and part of off campus housing to a new district that covers quite a bit of the UVM. Loves having a really great mix of constituents, and quite a bit of her district is representing college students. Isabel had the idea of reaching out to SGA to have more student interaction and dialogue. Would love to open up regular dialogue about the issues that are important to students, that they want the legislature working on in Montpelier.
- **Barabra Rachelson:** I am a social worker, I moved to VT in 1991 when my husband got a job teaching in the Philosophy department. Both of my kids are UVM graduates. For the last two years I have been teaching a class at UVM as well. I have a lot of pride in the university. Especially being a professor, I see how much stress students have, working jobs, getting groceries, and doing well in their classes.
- My background has a lot of working in the juvenile justice system. We did away with teh life in detention with proaloe for juvenile offenders. 16 years old and up can file abusive relationship orders. Made revenge pornography a crime in VT. Working on protecting vulnerable adults who were being financially exploited. Opting-in for auto renewal.
- A current project is towing– VT has bizarre towing laws. In VT if your car gets towed (which can happen very easily), you get a large bill, you can't get access to your car, and the towing company can sell your car and all its contents. I have horrible stories of people, especially minorities, who have had their lives ruined by having their car towed and not being able to get it back.

- Another current project is making it a crime when your partner removes a condom without consent during sex. Working on making this charged as battery and assault. We're taking preventative actions to keep all Vermonters and especially college students safe from sexual assault.
- Housing and food insecurity is another major issue. Working on creating more affordable housing, and working on legislation that would allow students to access SNAP. In some states they have waived the work requirement for students.
- Put a bill in that protects students from bad loans. Student debt in our state is 2.9 million. Loan forgiveness if people stay in VT and work.
- What would be the best way to connect with students? Constituent hours once a month in Davis Center or Waterman? Open to doing a town meeting as well.
- Same-day voting in VT if you want to vote here. I'm not here campaigning, I'm trying to open the door.
- **Isabel Tanner:** I am also a good resource if you ever can't get in touch with Barbara.

**Chair Sorensen:** Thank you for coming in. Housing is a large issue for college students both on and off campus.

- **Barbara Rachelson:** Some of the constituents on streets such as Bradley or University Terrace have raised concerns about students living in housing that isn't zoned for it. There have been conversations about UVM providing more housing for students. Off campus housing also isn't great and is expensive as well. Working with groups like Rights for Democracy to make Burlington a great place to be a tenant.

**Chair Sorensen:** On campus housing is also not going well right now. In certain buildings there are forced quads, and lots of forced triples.

- **Barbara Rachelson:** It is important to me that UVM does a good job and does everything really well and is taking care of their students, especially as this can impact funding.

**VP Wood:** An issue that is really important to me is the unhoused community, and Burlington especially is really bad. What are you doing, what can we do?

- **Barbara Rachelson:** My job works really closely with COTS and many other great nonprofits. I keep hearing that there are labor issues and supply issues. We seem to have a plethora of commercial spaces right now as offices have gone more remote. Cathedral Square was talking about turning commercial space into housing, this is something we are looking into. It would require fewer supply chain issues. Right now housing is a major issue and the committee that handles housing also handles a bunch of other things. They are looking to create more time in the legislature to discuss housing specifically.

**VP Wood:** Do you have any power to make it illegal for shelters or temporary housing to require sobriety?

- **Barbara Rachelson:** It's a tricky issue. I've worked in the field of addiction for a while, even addiction programs are not always the place to help people. I am a major fan and advocate of having safe injection sites, and I am working on anything related to mental health and addiction not being criminalized. Shelters would need more STEM training, and I am all for that, but just mandating it without that would not be wise.

**Treasurer Wigon:** What is the relationship between the state and the University itself? What does the state look to get out of the University for funding?

- **Barbara Rachelson:** Burlington and UVM is unusual in that it is considered a public school, and so many things are mandated that UVM's hands are tied. I am a major

advocate of either funding UVM as a public university or have a board that can fundraise. I think that state colleges are also in competition with UVM. There is a backlash against Burlington and Chittenden County in the legislature, which is outrageous and unacceptable, but UVM does get more pushback because of that.

**Senator Smith:** Town hall idea to come to campus to meet students is a great idea, and I would love to help organize that. We have a couple committees that could collaborate to move that idea forward. I am interested in knowing what the biggest pushback on the bills you mentioned are?

- **Barbara Rachelson:** There is a towing lobbyist that has quite a bit of power, and is a former legislative member. The towing companies also complain that the way they operate is their business model. It is unacceptable. I think we can set rates for towers, lots of states regulate this.

**Isabel Tanner:** The paper I just passed around to the senators is a list of cars that have been towed and the titles destroyed (up until partly through 2018). Chittenden County has something like 200 cars taken away from them every year. I know the legislature had a hearing on cannabis in the Davis Center a few years ago, maybe an event like this could occur again.

**Chair Teferra:** Could you elaborate more on why my UVM isn't funded well? Is it a lack of resources?

- **Barbara Rachelson:** UVM gets money for the Medical School and there is some general money to support UVM. VT is one of a dozen states that spends more on correctional facilities than higher education. VT has not had a ton of industry and manufacturing, and there has been a lot of work on diversifying the workforce and population, and it has always been interesting to see what the state chooses to fund or not fund. UVM did

receive money for COVID-19 pandemic, but for state college funding we normally rank about 48 or 49 out of 50.

**President Henson:** Could you explain a bit more about the new Vermont state college system and how that relates to UVM and how that ties into funding?

- **Barbara Rachelson:** That is a tricky question. There have been difficulties with enrollments at the state colleges, and the legislature has continued to say “here's money, we're going to help you fix this.” It is hard to say if UVM would have received this funding otherwise.

**President Henson:** Are there any talks at the state level about raising minimum wage? What does that process look like?

- **Barbara Rachelson:** A few years ago we did pass a bill raising minimum wage, but we haven't been able to keep up. There is a lot of work in this area that is still happening, especially about economic financial help.

**Senator Bourgault:** I know you talked about the effort to get professors on the board of trustees. Could you give a quick update about what is going on with that this year?

- **Barbara Rachelson:** This passed in the senate, but didn't get taken up in the house. Part of this is advocacy efforts, and not just efforts from professors. If students think this is a good idea, they are an important voice. There is no harm in having faculty representation, so I encourage you to raise this issue.

**Senator Bourgault:** We might try to get a referendum of students who support this measure.

- **Barbara Rachelson:** Many years ago students made a petition about not taxing fraternity houses. Whatever your view is on Greek life, we don't tax dorms, and the argument was

that we shouldn't be making students pay extra for this. This petition received thousands of signatures. It didn't end up going anywhere but it definitely made a difference.

**Senator Jones:** You mentioned looking into student loan forgiveness and increasing the higher education fund, what is being done to increase or uplift lower income Vermonters with supplemental funding going into UVM so that they don't fall to predatory loan programs from the beginning?

- **Barbara Rachelson:** The loan bill is to make sure that any loans given in Vermont do not use predatory loan behaviors. The other thing I tried to do was that in VT there is a program where if a student has a grant they can take it out of state to another school. A lot of states don't allow that or they only do it with schools that reciprocate. Working on allowing VT students to afford to go to school in state without money being sent out of state. In terms of helping poor Vermonters we also just burned the income tax credit where families with young children are going to get a couple thousand, and we are revamping early childhood education. We're doing a lot of economic development and free training programs for Vermonters. If Vermonters go into a career that Vermont is in need of, there are incentives for Vermonters to stay here. It is a fair point that we are not just trying to get out-of-state people to move here but also to retain Vermonters.

**Senator Jones:** Thank you, I wanted to address that because a lot of my classmates from highschool ended up going out of state because even with in-state tuition, they couldn't afford to continue on with higher education in Vermont and had to look elsewhere.

**Senator Charles:** Can the legislature affect or regulate admissions at all? Why do we always (at least in recent years) over admit?

- **Barbara Rachelson:** I don't think we can regulate admissions at all. There are more people from Massachusetts here than there are from VT. There is a great statistic for how many VT students come here free or highly discounted, and UVM shares that data a lot. In terms of over enrollment, there is a mathematical formula that they use to predict enrollment rates and the financial outcomes. There is pressure on the university to do well financially.

**Senator Charles:** The reason I asked was that I am in a forced triple right now, and I am not sure if it was because you are a member of the legislature or a parent that changed your daughter's housing situation, but if everyone could do that there would be pressure on the administration to enact change.

#### **Aliheydar Aliyev - Break Housing**

- Introduction; Aliheydar (he/him), Sophomore from Azerbaijan. Came to speak to SGA on behalf of the International Students Club about housing, which affects everyone on campus including international students.
- Studying abroad is a hard enough decision to make, and after coming here in August 2020 I had very little support or idea about what to do or expect. I pushed the UVM emergency blue button when I first arrived and the police helped me get to my dorm. I came to my dorm on WDW, and the first time I entered my room it looked like a prison cell. I am a political activist in Azerbaijan and some of my friends have been to prison, and it actually looked just like a prison cell.
- As I adapted to student life the first big problem I noticed is the lack of diversity on the UVM campus. There is a general lack of awareness at UVM about international

perspectives, so I started to engage with the International club and other identity clubs on campus. When it came to Thanksgiving break, I had no idea that I had to pay.

- International students along with other communities at UVM started a petition that got 2,000 signatures in the first 5 days. The response from the administration was that it was cheaper than a hotel. I ended up finding a way to pay for the fee but it was such a sad moment because that dorm was my only home in the United States. I was able to go back to my home during winter break, and during spring break I was planning on going somewhere. My family was living in Ukraine at the time where the war broke out. I was able to receive emergency funding from the Mosaic center, but this is a problem for other international students who don't feel comfortable identifying as a BIPOC student. There are a lot of international students who have different experiences.
- I am an RA this year and I'm on the residential advisory board, and when I raised this issue I got positive feedback.
- I am reaching out on behalf of the internal student club to let the administration know that there are internal students who are having problems. Maybe SGA

**Senator Carpenter:** Thank you so much for coming. Would you mind talking about your specific visa situation and how it affects you being able to leave the country?

- **Aliheydar Aliyev:** Getting a visa depends on your country's relationship to the United States, my country gave me a one year visa. I have status to stay in UVM until 2025 but if I go back my visa expires and I can't return to the US.

**Senator Carpenter:** Break housing isn't the most expensive, but before you were a student did you know that you were going to have to pay for break housing? It's not a lot of money but it is a small inconvenience for a lot of students. This is also a problem for non-international students,

but it gets really messy giving additional funds to US students because it counts as income and student financial services gets tricky.

**Treasurer Wigon:** Could you say the prices again?

**Senator Carpenter:** \$50 for a day extension, \$161 for a week, and \$535 for the entire winter break.

**Aliheydar Aliyev:** I would like to add that as distance increases, getting a flight by the exact date is really hard. It's already a lot of work with the paperwork, and the fee is an added problem.

**Senator Jones:** Besides emergency funding what could SGA do, potentially passing a resolution to pressuring the administration?

**President Henson:** We did pass a resolution on this last year, because this was an issue last year as well.

**Aliheydar Aliyev:** We want to acknowledge that there are a lot of different communities on UVM that are not safe or able to go back home, and this issue affects a lot of communities.

**Senator Bratyshine:** I am from Kazakhstan on an international student visa. I wanted to clarify, you brought the petition to administration and they said they could do anything about it?

- **Aliheydar Aliyev:** We got an email from residential life saying yeah, it's cheaper than hotels.

**President Henson:** Does the office of International Education help with your visa or any of that?

- **Aliheydar Aliyev:** Yes, they are a good resource for international students. But the visa issue is mostly about a country's relationship with the US.

**President Henson:** You said reslife reacted positively to this when you brought it up?

- **Aliheydar Aliyev:** Yes, the residential advising board said they didn't want housing to be a problem for any student. This was last week.

**Chair Sorensen:** Do you know how many people need housing for the week of thanksgiving, or did last year?

- **Aliheydar Aliyev:** The international population at UVM is small, maybe 10 - 15 exchange students.

**Chair Teferra:** If anyone knows how student financial services work, if SGA or any other body were to give reslife money for x amount of people, would that interfere with student financial services?

**Senator Carpenter:** Student financial services are really lacking. If they give you money it counts as income, but this only applies for students who receive funding from the university. For international students, you can't get federal money, so functionally you could give international students money without backlash from student financial services.

**VP Wood:** When is the housing fee due?

**Senator Carpenter:** Break housing for thanksgiving hasn't opened yet, I believe it opens this thursday. It's due the Friday before break.

**Treasurer Wigon:** We can exchange information to be in touch about funding.

### **Old Business**

Bill Recognizing Bass Fishing Club

- Sponsored by Chair O'Hagan and Senator Khan
- **BILL: Passed** unanimously, Chair O'Hagan and Senator Khan abstained

## Bill Finalizing SGA Financial Policies

- Sponsored by Chair Sorensen
  - **Senator Smith:** Can we upload the policy of this document for court record purposes?
  - **Response:** Yes.
- **President Henson:** I hope everyone read the document and got an idea on what SGA's financial policy is.
- **Treasure Wigon:** There are 400 club signers that I can yell at for not reading this document, but you should all read it too and have an understanding of what the policy is if club signers ask. It does control millions of dollars.
- **BILL: Passed** unanimously, Chair Sorensen abstained

## Emergency Business

Swearing in of **Senator Rosegard**

## New Business

**Senator Orr Jr.** – Resolution of supporting the people of Iran and Iranian students in their protests against the death of Mahsa Amini.

## Senatorial Forum

**VP Wood** - When you should ask a question.

- Being conscious of when you're asking questions so that meetings can run more efficiently.

- Why;
  - Redundancy, especially in the question “What can SGA do?” How can you phrase this to be specific?
  - Specificity
  - Tone, especially when we have admin come into Public Forum. Be kind when we have certain administrators come in, be respectful, and work on building relationships.
  - Efficiency
- Ask a question when it hasn’t already been asked, when it provides useful information for the whole group. Be mindful, ask questions with purpose and make them concise. No need to be on the offense or inflammatory.
- Use titles, not first names.
- Us vs. the issue, not us vs. each other.

**Chair MacHarrie:** We have been talking about how to ask questions to club signers when they come in.

**VP Wood:** If there are club signers coming in, you should only ask questions that involve the whole student body. Cap fun questions at 2 or 3.

### **Executive Reports**

#### **Speaker Purple**

- Everyone killed it with the costumes!
- New placards this week. If there's any information that needs to be changed let me know.
- Please don’t talk or use phones during senate.

## **Vice President Wood**

- I know these meetings feel long, but they actually haven't been compared to meetings in the past.
- Civility advocacy project, a couple updates: There is an instagram page that has been started. There are a couple students who were trying to get a club started so hopefully we can make this a student led initiative.
- President Henson and I met with President Garimella yesterday.
- There are enough seats open to do midterm elections for the senate, so that process will begin soon.
  - Elections chair cannot return to the senate.
- Fun Fact about VT: If former President Bush or Dick Cheney visit the Vermont towns of Brattleboro and Marlboro they can be subject to arrest.
  - Senator Carpenter: Is it if you are an election chair you cannot run, or cannot be appointed?
  - VP Wood: I believe cannot be appointed.

## **President Henson**

- President Garimella meeting: I wake up everyday more confused.
  - We wanted to talk about on campus housing and SODEXO wanting to unionize.
  - He said they were working on expanding housing in the future. He didn't know about common rooms being turned into quads, nobody ever told him. He said housing is housing and it gets the job done.
  - He didn't know about SODEXO unionizing.

- It's very upsetting to see these responses. Worried about our efficiency towards working with President Garimella.
- Meeting with Provost Prelock.
  - The Provost and her team are making good headway on a website with resources for Jewish students at UVM.
- Week of Kindness was a great success!
  - Great work by Chair Dietrich and her committee.
  - We would love more lettings for the King Street Center.
- This week is the board of trustees meeting, on Tuesday. President Garimella has recommended not increasing tuition. The first ever official land acknowledgment from the administration is coming up.
- Two students are on the board of trustees every year, and we are starting the process of searching for the new student trustee.
- Note: A referendum is a vote sent out to the entire student body.
- Brightspace: We've talked to the president of the faculty senate about how we want professors to use the new platforms.
- Coming up is a talk on SGA involvement in student death on campus. Is there a way for SGA to hold space for student death after it occurs?
- Tomorrow is the Halloween party, 6:00 to 8:00pm!
- Fun Fact: it is more dangerous to smoke cigarettes than to do cocaine during pregnancy.
  - **Senator Segiel:** Could you make note about what the president says about anti-semitism during the board meeting?

- **President Henson:** There is an official statement from the president for the board of trustees coming out.
- **Senator Lista:** Do you know if President Garimella has ever visited any of the residential halls on campus? Because I know the Provost Prelock visited Trinity Campus for the first time last year.
- **Senator Smith:** He helps with moving in each year, so he probably has visited a few dorms.
- **President Henson:** We would love for him to come in to senatorial forum.
- **Senator Lista:** If there is any way we could get him to come to reslife meetings so that he could be involved?
- **President Henson:** I bet he would say it would not fall under his jurisdiction and he would pass it off to the Vice Provost Caloiero.
- **Senator Carpenter:** Could clarify what you mean by wrapping up Sodexo?
- **President Henson:** UVM admision is knowledgeable of the situation and wants it to be settled before students get involved and it becomes a conflict.
- **VP Wood:** Has Vice Provost Caloiero ever been to a residential life meeting?
- **Senator Lista:** They have been going to RA walks, but it was a very last minute notification and they didn't go to the entire walk, and Vice Provost Caloiero brought her children.

### **Treasurer Wigon**

- Budget Workshop, Nov. 8th 5:00 - 7:30 pm
- Finalizing new budget.

- Meeting with club signers tomorrow to get approval on the new budget.
- Definitely going to take a look at break housing.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Public Relations Committee**

- Working on Fall Community listening town hall.
- SGA tik tok is going well.
- Minutes page is being created.

### **Committee on the Environment**

- Moving forward with various projects.

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

- Senator Rai met with a representative for Burlington Public Schools
- Senator Daniels will be attending a meeting this Thursday about the new affinity space on campus.
- Also continuing on with our ongoing projects.

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

- Clothing drive went really well, and we got about 100 pounds of clothes. Great work Senator Rooney.
- The Community Coalition meeting went really well.
- Living Well has a lot of harm reduction initiatives going on.
- Halloween Bike Ride coming up! More info in Teams.
- Fun Fact: This day in 1881, Pablo Picasso was born.

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

- Senator Batyrshina reaching out to the Wellness Environment about collaborating with yoga and fitness opportunities.
- Senator Stanford doing great things with the Instagram, also met with Annie Valentine recently.
- Senator Orr dining survey options and Linktree for the Instagram.
- Senator Jones met with VP Wood about the student accessibility identity center.
- Week of Kindness debriefing upcoming.
- Getting in touch with Linsey Forman, the UVM Mindfulness coordinator about an upcoming event for Senators.

#### **Club Affairs Committee**

- Congratulations to Senator Rosegard.
- Congrats to Senator Khan on her first club signing.
- We're working on hosting a club signer meeting in the Spring.
- More clubs are upcoming in the next few weeks.
  - **Chair Sorensen:** New financial policy says that clubs not in good standing means that you cannot receive SGA funding. Part of this would mean that clubs who do not attend meetings and trainings are no longer considered in good standing.

#### **Academic Affairs Committee**

- Met with the head of the tutoring center about ideas for raising awareness about resources.
- Plans to meet with the head of the writing center, I have heard that they are very underfunded and they have a lot on their plate, moving forward with ideas with them.
- Senator DeGroot and Senator Siegel met with the LINKS program coordinator.

- Senator Bednarik and Senator Le have a meeting next Wednesday to discuss BIPOC faculty performance reports.
- Fun Fact: Vodka was not actually invented in Russia, but Poland.

### **Finance Committee**

- Financial policies moving forward .
- Budgeting preparations.
  - When we finalize our budget for next fiscal year that is something we're going to vote on, so that is upcoming.
- Moving forward with the break housing issue now that it has been raised.
- Might have a resolution about funding SGA's events next week.

### **Senatorial Comments/Announcements**

Senator Rooney: Community Coalition let us know about an upcoming cooking class focusing on meals you can make with food from Rally Cat's Cupboard. Link in Teams to sign up.

President Henson: Diwali is on the 30th, please come out to that.

### **Adjournment**