



**10th Meeting of the 2022-2023 Student Government Association Senate**  
**November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 | 7:00 PM | Livak Ballroom**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Speaker Purple.

**Roll Call**

All present.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes approved unanimously.

**Public Forum**

**Caro Fett - New England Joint Board / UVM Sodexo Unionizing**

- Introduction, Organizer of New England Joint Board. Represents textile, hospitality, nonprofit, etc. Represents 7,000 Sodexo workers across the country, and has been for a couple decades. Spent a year organizing alongside Clark University.
- At UVM, dining workers are understaffed, overworked, and underpaid. UVM dining workers are unionizing to force Sodexo to create better terms and conditions for their work. This is a national campaign, working alongside Sodexo workers across the country. Sodexo is one of the fifth largest corporations in the world. Their profits are huge, and we need a huge amount of people to enact change. That's where student support comes in – when students publicly show support for dining hall works that's when change occurs.

Corporations often union bust when dining hall workers unionize. In order to move past the fear of union busting, dining hall workers need to see support from the student body.

- One initiative is stickers for every student that walks into the dining hall. Stickers will work as a visual demonstration of support across campus.
- Also planning on a large rally, date TBD.
- Tom (of the New England Joint Board): I've been talking to workers since last spring, and I actually had someone who worked in the dining hall who was planning on coming to speak until they found out that it was recorded and put on the internet, and this completely put them off. An example of the attitude and atmosphere of the work environment. Staffing, long hours, little pay. I talked to a couple women who were pregnant and had to work and wanted to do other tasks, or workers who had injuries and wanted to have modifications to their job, but management did not accommodate them. A lot of workers are immigrants, speak English as their second language, and don't have a lot of options. Workers don't have a voice in this job. Organizing committee meetings is ongoing, getting people involved in a fair process. That allows workers to decide for themselves if they want to organize a union. One thing that workers say they love about the job is the interaction with students, taking care of students to the extent that they can. They said that the visual support of students stickering up in support

**Chair McHarrie:** How much power does UVM have over Sodexo workers's conditions while working here? Can the administration fix things, who are the higher ups that we can pressure?

- **Caro Fett:** UVM can mandate Sodexo to provide better conditions, UVM employs Sodexo to provide a service, and so they have a large amount of power. The power

holders in this situation that have the ability to make change are the UVM administration and Sodexo management.

**Senator Jones:** Is there any indication or any feedback from UVM about how they have reacted to this so far?

- **President Henson:** We brought this up to the President last Monday and he said he wasn't knowledgeable about any of this and that UVM wouldn't do anything

**Senator Smith:** Are you limiting your stickers to dining hall entries or will you distribute them in other common spaces?

- **Caro Fett:** November 9th is when we'll be sticking up. We want as many people as possible outside giving out stickers and information. Any student who has an idea about how to show dining hall workers that students are behind them, please show up. Tomorrow we are tabling outside the Davis Center, and Thursday too we will be making posters, talking to students about how to get involved, at this point it's in y'all's hands.

**Treasurer Wigon:** Can Sodexo retract their services from UVM or do they have to uphold their contract if a union was formed?

- **Caro Fett:** If the dining hall workers unionize the union will exist independently of whoever operates the dining hall.

**Chair Sorensen:** What are you asking for in the contract?

- **Caro Fett:** Workers are the ones who decide what goes into the contract, we're just helping them achieve a fair process. At the end of the day it will be up to the UVM dining hall workers.
- **Tom:** It should be noted that the dining hall workers are the only ones on campus who don't have a union.

**Senator Batyrshina:** If dining hall workers show up to the rally can the company get mad at them and fire them?

- **Tom:** That would be against the law. You have the right to form or join a union or organize.
- **Caro Fett:** Workers are definitely excited about the rally and are helping us organize it. But as Tom said about the worker who was going to come tonight, there is an atmosphere of fear. Organizing is scary, and for full time workers challenging the status quo where workers and management are on the same footing is challenging. This is why we need as much student support as possible.

**President Henson:** Could you explain why this is important now and what a neutrality agreement is?

- **Caro Fett:** Right now, Sodexo is feeling the pressure from workers all across the country. While in a big sense they are on top of workers in a lot of cases, they are also scared. They know they need to cave in and give workers something, and now is the opportunity for workers to benefit from this. Neutrality agreements basically means that Sodexo or any corporation is neutral on the issue of a union. It leaves no room for union busting. Neutrality agreements are the most efficient way for a union to move forward. That's what we mean by a fair process, a neutrality agreement. Workers vote yes for a union by a card, and these are collected over a year after a neutrality agreement and are authorized by a third party independent of Sodexo.
- **Tom:** Union busting is a multibillion dollar industry, and what corporations will do is fly in lawyers and they'll say they'll remain neutral for dues. They'll say they don't want a

third party coming into the mix. If you ask workers, they'll say they didn't feel the lawyer was being neutral.

**Senator Boudreau:** Is there an instagram or facebook where students can hear about these events coming up?

- **Caro Fett:** Yes, there is an instagram that just went up. There is also a google form for students whether you want to support actively or if you want to just show up to the rally, it gives you more options to get involved. Student workers are the most important part of this campaign because they see what happens in the dining halls, can talk to workers, etc.

**Senator Smith:** You mentioned your experiences working with Sodexo, can talk about the process of getting neutrality agreements?

- **Caro Fett:** The first round of neutrality agreements have just happened this spring. Neutrality agreements are pretty rare in the grand scheme of things, especially if the pendulum swings back in the other direction and the National Labor Board isn't so friendly to it I think we will see it becomes a lot more difficult. That's why union busting and anti-union lawyers work so hard to keep labor organizations out of the picture.
- **Tom:** That's one of the reasons why this campaign is coordinated and is different geolocations and shops organizing at the same time, this creates a large amount of leverage that evens out the power.

**Treasurer Wigon:** I was wondering about federal and state involvement? Due to UVM's standing as a public university and receiving funding, does this impact union efforts?

- **Caro Fett:** It does have an impact. I do believe that in the state of Vermont it is not illegal for public tax dollars to be used for union busting.

**Chair Teferra:** With your experience with Sodexo workers and other workers at other schools, have there been instances where the union wasn't formed or didn't work as well as it should have, are there any tips you have for UVM workers to prevent that from happening?

- **Tom:** It's many workers, getting together and doing things at the same time. Getting that collective action and working together is the most important thing.
- **Caro Fett:** It's power in numbers, when there's enough people putting pressure in corporations that's when things work.

### **Clare Wool & Saja Almogalli - Burlington School District Upcoming High School Vote**

- Introduction: Clare Wool, Chairperson of the Burlington School Board, served as PTO leader at Edmunds Elementary and Middle Schools.
- Introduction: Saja Almogalli, senior at UVM, first generation US citizen.
- How many of you know why Burlington highschool is closed? Monsanto created PCBs, a toxic contaminant that was found in our school. Two years ago a bond was passed to renovate it. Our school was never ADA accessible, and when we went to go ahead with the renovation and make it more ADA accessible we had to pass two different environmental tests. Highest PCB levels of contamination were found and we were shut down. We were the only school in that state that underwent this process. The students are currently in school in Macy's, and we will be there for five years. If the bond passes we will be opening back in our school by 2025. We are here because we need the UVM student vote.
- Video showing the design for the new school. The school will be built where the current parking lot is. In the past we could not have theater productions or basketball games at

our school because we were not ADA accessible, so we could never host those events or rent out the space. These issues will be fixed with the new design.

- We originally had a \$70 million bond when we started revocation, and we had to give back \$66 million of that borrowing capacity. It will take \$190 million to build this school, we are asking taxpayers to go for a bond up to \$165 million (the rest from covid funding). Once you find a contaminant in your property, your home or school, you legally have to remove the contaminants. It will take \$22 million to tear down the six buildings that are contaminated, having them transported and contained. There will be an offset of taxes, a tax break will be given to Burlington residents. We are also suing Monsanto who created the toxins.
- We have 1,000 students, another 150 faculty and staff. Due to the lack of a school people who have middle school and high school kids are not choosing to live in Burlington, and we are losing these people. We don't have a large tax base, but we are relying on taxpayers.
- Bond vote is Nov. 8th, demolition would begin in January, construction would begin in June.
- The lease for Macy's will expire in 2025, so we don't know where students will go. Online school is an option. Lots of students are leaving Burlington to go to another school. Staying in the mall is not an option. The space also has no light, no windows. Athletes and clubs are limited because there are travel complications. This new school would have students for probably another 30 or 40 years. We've probably started something now where we will see other schools being tested for contaminants so it's important to show support now.

**Treasurer Wigon:** Is there a strong opposition to this? Is this a close race?

- **Clare Wool:** There was not an opposition until two weeks ago, until red signs showed up around Burlington saying Enough is Enough, Vote NO on BH\$. The signs were posted by David Kird, former Burlington school commissioner who was asked to resign after a series of racist and misogynistic facebook posts. Vermont has \$32 million saved for PCB cleanup, and we are looking for \$22 million of that. My dream is to get total costs down to \$140 million to reduce costs to taxpayers.

**Treasurer Wigon:** Will that be subsidized by the Monsanto trial?

- **Clare Wool:** Yes, but that is not immediate. The trial is years in the making so that is a long term financial goal. Two teachers who suffered from miscarriages and health complications are also filing lawsuits against Monsanto.

**Senator Jones:** I went to Colchester, so I heard firsthand about students impacted by the highschool closing. I want to work with other senators to pass a resolution and inform the UVM community about this issue.

**Senator Bednarik:** A lot of students who go to UVM are out of state students. What are your plans to register out of state students for voting in VT?

- **Clare Wool:** Has there been on-campus presence about registering to vote? Out of state students can register to vote online, it takes five minutes to authenticate it. Please vote here! We are working around campus to give out postcards with that information about how to register.
- **Saja Almogalli:** I recently became a US citizen, and it really does only take five minutes. Besides that, if you can't vote, encourage your friends. Fletcher Free Library downtown is also a place you can register.

**Senator Carpenter:** Is two years enough time for the construction? How firm is the lease in Macy's?

- **Clare Wool:** There could be some flexibility in the lease, but the city is in dire need of housing and they really want the pit and the Macy's to be developed. The owner of the Macy's lease could be willing to extend, however the current plan is to have it and the pit turned into housing soon. We do have confidence in our construction company, who recently completed the UVM Medical Center on time within two years. Ultimately it depends on our cleanup timeline.

**Senator Carpenter:** How do you plan to impact the taxes?

- **Clare Wool:** This is strictly property taxes. Your property taxes and landlord taxes will go up. Your \$370,000 home will go up to \$800. It is income sensitive, so if you are under \$50,000 the ask will be \$146. A house that is \$700,000 will be \$12,000 a year. It is a big ask from taxpayers, but we are looking to reduce this cost through the \$32 million dedicated to PCB cleanup. UVM has done \$240 million of renovation on your campus, and alumni are donating money in record numbers. I even asked if we could take out an advertisement in the alumni magazine. We are in a really difficult situation and I don't think that it is fair for Burlington taxpayers to pay for this, so it's our job to find that money elsewhere. Burlington has so much that it contributes to the community, the Burlington Technical Institute and our aviation program is working with Beta Technology at the Burlington International Airport, and I believe this will put Burlington on the map. We are even reaching out to Bernie Sanders to find federal funding, reminding him that this is his hometown high school.

**Senator Hogan:** I was wondering how the school board is supporting the students right now and how you can continue to support them until 2025? Are there extra resources being allocated right now?

- **Clare Wool:** We are working to support students through various community partners: the YMCA for gym class, the student dances take place at Edmunds Middle School. ECHO downtown has served as an alternative schooling location. Mental health and wellness, we recognize it and see it. We are using the outside with tented areas, trying to foster class relationships. We changed the start time to 9am so that students can interact in the morning when the buses arrive. Ultimately it has been very challenging but we are working to make it better.

### **Old Business**

Resolution Supporting the People of Iran and Iranian Students in their Protests Against the Death of Mahsa Amini

- In September the Iranian government arrested a woman, Masha Amini, for violation of Hijab Law, and shortly after her release she was murder by the Guidance Patrol or the “Morality Police.” This sparked protests in Iran to which the government has only reacted with violence. They’ve shut down the internet, closed institutions of higher education, beaten and killed protesters.
- At UVM we have a community of Iranian students who are impacted by these events, and who can’t contact their family members and friends in Iran.

**Senator Orr:** I have been emailing with Annie Valentine about resources that we can extend to Iranian students.

Resolution **Passed** unanimously, Senator Orr abstained.

### **Emergency Business**

None.

### **New Business**

Bill recognizing Yoga and Meditation Club.

Bill recognizing Agriculture Club.

Bill recognizing Foosball Club.

### **Senatorial Forum**

#### **Treasurer Wigon – Budgeting Presentation**

- Going over the new budgeting system put in the palace this year. Budgeting workshop November 8th.
- Old budgeting system doesn't help clubs prepare budgets. Clubs would just copy and paste budgets every year. The new system will help clubs utilize funds better and know how to utilize funds. We now identify clubs that have growing communities, and make sure money is distributed appropriately. Discuss off-campus vs on-campus involvement. Fundraising plans, goals for the next year. How are you planning on growing or sustaining your club? Succession plan for club signers. Putting in coaches details and wages, benefits, so we can budget for that going forward. Travel is more structured (days away, vans, hotel rooms needed). Registration fees, conferences, leadership development, etc. Overall we are budgeting for each club more consistently.

**Chair McHarrie:** Can we be sent this?

**Treasurer Wigon:** Yes.

**Senator Smith:** Back to your events page, how do you scale if you have more than four events and will this be communicated to club signers?

**Treasurer Wigon:** Yes, this will be in the budgeting workshop. We meet with every club that requests more than \$20,000, and usually that goes into events.

## **Executive Reports**

### **Speaker Purple**

- Update on placards, we are getting new ones on new cardstock paper.
- You all should be really proud of all the work you are doing. We don't have too much time left before the end of the semester.

**Senator Smith:** Can we get the SGA logo on the new placards?

**Speaker Purple:** Yes, those are the two major changes, the logo is going on them and the chairs will be indicated on them as well.

### **Vice President Wood**

- I am out this week with COVID.
- Working on the affinity space.
- Please be on the lookout for a calendar invite for a time management and journaling event.
- Fun Fact: Cabot Creamery of VT makes the largest grilled cheese sandwich in the world.

**Senator Batyrshina:** Is the journaling event mandatory?

**President Henson:** We are working on developing professional skills, so we have different events coming up regarding those and this is one of those events but it is not mandatory

### **President Henson**

- A quick note about the ad hoc from last week, the executive will choose the members, chair, and the final pillars of the committee. First ad hoc meetings will be crucial to the development of the committee. Shout out to Senator Siegel and VP Wood for working on that.
- Sodexo: I will send a link about the sticker campaign. Tomorrow and Thursday is the poster making.
- Student Advisory Board: VP wood and I are working on the student advisory board. If you want to help work on a framework that is adaptable to each college to send out to the deans please reach out.
- Board of Trustees: First official university land acknowledgement was passed. Native American Heritage Month started today. Speaking with Senator Bourgault about getting a faculty member on the Board of Trustees, the main argument against it is that it is a conflict of interest, but the President also votes on the Board.
- GSS and Housing: Looking to collaborate on an off-campus housing committee to work with the administration on off-campus housing.
- King Street Center: We ended up with 150 cards, but I wanted more so I am passing around 3 cards to everyone so that I can drop them off on Thursday.
- It was great to see many of you at Diwali, please come out to more events like that.
- Fun Fact: This might be the final fall back, spring time change.

**Senator Siegel:** Did the board of trustees say anything about the athletic facilities?

**President Henson:** We are about \$65 million in \$90 million of the budget, but the board is happy with the progress presented to them.

### **Treasurer Wigon**

- Budget workshop is Nov. 8th from 5:00-8:30 pm.
- Any questions or comments about the new budgeting system please reach out.
- Sent an email to Reslife and student financial services directors about break housing and how SGA funding could play into that.
- Discussed vans and getting momentum towards them.
- I want to have more in-depth conversations about utilizing funds. How do we use the fund we have to grow our influence as SGA?
- Highlighting Speaker Purple for giving me pneumonia from making me come to senate.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Public Relations Committee**

- Hoping to get the next newsletter out next Tuesday, send anything you want included by Thursday.
- TV is in the SGA office, Jshauna is installing a player for us soon so we can get our slideshow up.
- UVM Salsa is having an event this weekend.
- Putting finishing touches on the minutes archive, will be available on the SGA website soon.

### **Committee on the Environment**

- Senator Boudreau is working with an employee from the bookstore and looking into replacing plastic bottles in the vending machines with cans.
- Senator Johnson is working on how to fund the campus compost, which is taking a long time as the head of the sustainability office is on leave.
- Working on posters.
- Happy Birthday to Senator Collins!

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

- Senator Daniels went to the affinity space meeting.
- Senator Rai is meeting with the Superintendent of Burlington Schools.
- Senator Ward has a meeting with the IDEA committee.
- Senator Anis met with the Interfaith Center about prayer spaces in the Davis Center and is also meeting with a student about religious accessibility on campus.

**President Henson:** Is the prayer space in the Davis Center a continued effort from the push for prayer spaces started a few years ago?

**Senator Anis:** Since the Interfaith center is more accessible to Athletic and Redstone students they are trying to expand prayer places to other locations on campus, and they are even looking to extend to Trinity.

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

- Community Cleanup will be Sunday, Nov. 13th.
- Senator Rooney and I are getting clothes from the clothing drive folded and sorted tomorrow.
- Senator Bourdeau working on getting faculty representation on the Board of Trustees.

- This day in 1993 the EU was established.

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

- Senator Sanford doing good work on the Instragram, working with Annie Valentine about getting Plan-B and Pregnancy tests in Living Well.
- Senator Orr working on the dining survey and also created a linktree for Instagram.
- Senator Batyrshina is working with Wellness Environment on yoga and fitness opportunities.
- Senator Jones met with student leaders who started the disabled students union, and worked on the affinity space project.
- Spoke on a civic engagement event panel about mobilizing change in our community, which was a really rewarding experience.
- Ad hoc debrief on Week of Kindness tomorrow.
- Look for form coming out about mindfulness event.
- Happy world vegan day!

### **Club Affairs Committee**

- Three clubs being confirmed next week, decided to limit it to three a week.
- Chair Sorensen coming into committee meeting to talk about the new budget.

### **Academic Affairs Committee**

- Echo President Henson about Native American Heritage Month and the Land Acknowledgement, great things to see.
- Reaching out to the faculty senate to pitch my idea for extra credit for visiting on campus resources.

- Senator Bednarik and Senator Le put together a 3-step plan on how students can be more involved in the process of hiring bipoc faculty and the impact on performance reviews on bipoc and women faculty members. Future meetings planned.
- Fun Fact: Despite Russia's indigenous population only making up 0.2% of the total population, they inhabit 2/3rds of Russia's territory (4.4 million square miles, with a population density of 17 people per square mile).

### **Finance Committee**

- Congrats to Senator Orr Junior on passing his first resolution.
- Working on break housing, possibly a bill upcoming next week.
- Budgeting workshop Nov. 8th.

### **Senatorial Comments/Announcements**

Senator Segil: Tomorrow the Grossman School of Business is doing their annual professional business attire event. It's from 9:00am to 4:00pm and there are so many nice clothes that have been donated and are being sold for \$10.

Senator Orr Junior: It is Senator Orr Senior's birthday this Thursday.

Chair Teferra: It's just heartbreaking to hear about the conditions in the dining hall, and it's terrible to think about how badly they are treated by their employers and there's also such a culture of just walking past the dining hall workers. Make sure you're being extra mindful of the dining hall workers going through a hard time, make sure you give them an extra smile and say thank you. I know we all go to the grundle and complain about the food but it's not their fault, they're trying their best so be kind to them and tell your friends too.

President Henson: Clean up after yourself and push in your chairs. I gave Caro a bunch of the kindness cards, and they're doing a gratitude card thing so if you want to do a gratitude card please do.

Treasurer Wigon: Is it cash only at the Grossman business attire event?

Senator Siegel: It is complicated, you have to buy a UVM event ticket. Also, keep your calendars open for next Thursday, Friday, or maybe Saturday because the Advocats want to do something fun.

Senator Charles: Event coming up, Noche de Cultura. More info next week.

**Adjournment**