Senate Minutes: October 30, 2012

A. 7:00 Call to order
B. 7:02 Roll Call
   Quorum Met
   Absent:
C. 7:04 Announcement from Liz Rich of the Smith College Democrats
   1. Going to New Hampshire Friday - Sunday or Friday - Tuesday (if people can stay)
      a. More events going on in the Western Mass area for Elizabeth Warren (our potential senator)
      b. Interested in canvassing (going door-to-door) in MA or NH, get in touch with Liz Rich (erich@smith.edu)
      c. Staying in supporter housing
      d. Leaving from Chapin House or in front of John M. Green Hall
D. 7.10 Motion Passed to postpone passage of minutes until next meeting
E. Committee Updates / Announcements
   1. Elections and Appointments Committee
      a. 8.30am to 6pm, vans should be running every 30 minutes
      b. November 6 is Election day- SGA and Smith Dems working to get van rides for students to cast votes
      c. Encouraging students who are van certified to help drive students to voting polls
      d. If you are van certified or want to donate your time or car, please contact Greta Stacy
         (gstacy@smith.edu)
      e. From 8am until 6pm, they will hopefully be running continuously
      g. Drive is about five minutes to voting polls
      h. Ensure houses that vans will be provided for all students, regardless of who they are voting for
      i. Information on where to vote can be provided by Elections and Appointments Committee
   2. Rules Committee
      a. Need to get the charter edited
      b. Senators in the Rules Committee encouraged to edit the charter as soon as possible
      c. Remember, chartering is the fun stuff that Senate does!
   3. Dining Committee
      a. All senators on the committee need to respond to the doodle poll in order to confirm a meeting time
   4. Archives Committee
      a. What have they done in the past?
         i. Put up presentations about past events at Smith
         ii. Smith secret societies!
      b. Pitch your ideas to the Archives Committee so they can put together more presentations
F. 7.18 Committee Appointments
1. Many senators have left and since been replaced
2. Senators who are not currently on a committee are eligible to run for a position
3. Elections and Appointments
   a. Person elected tonight will share the secretary position with Becky
   b. Will assist with tasks involved in Smith elections
   c. Also involved in appointments
   d. Will help with van rides to the poles in a week
   e. In the spring, all of the class cabinet positions will be elected, and E&A will run this process
   f. Looking for one senator
   g. Elected senator: Leslie Hillsamer
4. Dining Committee
   a. Elected senator: Mariana Rivera
5. Archives Committee
   a. Elected senators: Kaitlyn Marasi, Karla Saenz, Susan Lukacs, Sarah Greenberg
6. Social Justice Committee:
   a. Meet with rest of diversity committee
   b. Elected senators: Ellen Kim, Afiya Johnson-Thorton, Julia Leitermann
7. Disability Committee
   a. Elected chair: Calais Harding
8. Global Engagement Committee
   a. Elected senator: Lindsey Osburnsen
9. Sustainability Committee
   a. Elected senator: Camila Rich, Jessie Fromularo
G. Wilder House: Paper Towels Discussion
1. There are many complaints about the lack of paper towels in the bathrooms, especially during the cold seasons
   a. People are drying their hands on other people’s towels
2. Proposal: push for paper towel increase in houses through Senate
   a. Want opinions from Senate and other houses
3. Thoughts:
   a. Senators would decide how to go about this once students decide if this is something to push for
   b. Paper towels used to be provided up until a few years ago, money would probably be taken from facilities
   c. Paper towels would be provided all year round
   d. Some council members thought it went against Smith’s eco-friendly initiative
      i. Smithies should be responsible for using their own towels
   e. Issue with guests at Smith not having towels
   f. What about having spare clean towels available for guests?
      i. Who will wash them?
      ii. Is this healthier?
   g. What about getting blow dryers in the houses
i. Eco-friendly
   ii. Anyone can use them hygienically
   iii. More cost-efficient
   iv. Items that require electricity are not completely eco-friendly either
   v. Must weigh pros and cons of every option

h. We want to streamline the entire process with one cohesive use over the entire campus
i. Guests should be able to use their host’s towel
j. Having a healthy community is as important as having a green community
k. Not all house guest bathrooms have disposable towels
l. Senators to bring proposal back to their houses
m. Are there any records left from the decision to remove paper towels a few years ago? Can these be accessed so that Senate can go over the reasons for and against removing paper towels
n. If we form a working committee for this, we will ask facilities and maintenance for those records

4. Motion passed to form a working group 42 - 7 - 1
   a. Senators to be elected to work on working group for this issue
   b. Working group will get together to investigate options for finding solutions for drying hands in house bathrooms
   c. Senators elected: Erinn Summers, Kaitlyn Stumpf, Abby Fulton

H. 7.53 Open Floor Discussion
1. Interest in getting bike shelters for houses to protect bikes from rain, or hurricanes
2. Senators interested in discussing this issue
   a. Last year Senate investigated getting a bike shed for outside of John M. Green hall
   b. Should check with Facilities Management first to see if there is already a plan to implement this before forming a working a group

3. Proposal to have all flags hung in the ITT building
   a. Senators to decide on whether or not Senate should deal with this issue
   b. How are current flags selected?
      i. Started out by representing students from every country that Smith goes to, and then something in this process slipped
   c. Issue can be brought up with one of the existing committees (Social Justice Committee)

I. 8.00 Social Justice in the Curriculum Discussion: with Chair Liz Rich (erich@smith.edu)
   1. Here to discuss the possibility of a social justice requirement at Smith
   2. In the spring, after the horrible events, in the demands that were put forward by the students, one of the demands was for a social justice graduation requirement
   3. Events of last year:
      a. Student at Smith that received some very upsetting homophobic and racist notes delivered on two different occasions
      b. This spurred many discussions and an all-campus meeting
c. Chair of Diversity Committee this and last year, Mac Hamilton, put together a list of demands from all students at Smith
d. These demands covered a wide range of ideas, including the creation a focus group for students of color, a demand to accept transwomen to Smith (still in the process of happening) and a social justice requirement in the curriculum
e. Curriculum Committee is discussing ways to incorporate this into the curriculum

4. Some of the keys things about this process:
a. Committee on Academic Priorities - a committee that sets all curricular changes
b. Chaired by Provost Schuster
c. How students can change the curriculum at Smith
d. Bring a proposed change to CAP
e. If CAP agrees, proposal must go to the full faculty for a vote

5. Three different models for a social justice requirement
   a. Graduation requirement
      i. Students would have to take a class from a long list of classes that contain social justice theories
   b. Latin Honors distribution
      i. Would require that one of the distributional classes students take to graduate with Latin Honors must also be from the list of classes containing social justice-related content
      ii. One class could count for two distributions - a subject area and a class distribution
   c. A requirement within majors
      i. Within a major, students would be required to take a social justice class within their required major requirements
      ii. This could be a very long-term project, might not be the most efficient

6. Open Floor: Thoughts, Concerns, Questions

7. Social justice is very broad, and many Smith classes already contain elements of Social Justice classes

8. If we make it a requirement, people will no longer enjoy it as much as they would if they could take it freely

9. CAP is creating an inventory of existing Smith classes that already contain social justice content

10. Curriculum Committee has come up with a working definition on how to determine which classes already contain an element of social justice material (email erich@smith.edu for exact definition)

11. Not a good idea for the school to have a SJ requirement
   a. Many students come here for the open curriculum that Smith College offers, and adding a SJ requirement would open a gateway for other requirements to begin to be added
   b. Would be daunting to many applicants - students wouldn’t know what to expect
   c. One concern is that the open curriculum serves a very important role at Smith - adding a SJ requirement might create a misguided attempt to make social justice a large priority at Smith
When President Christ worked at UC Berkeley, they also added a similar requirement, and now it is one of the hallmarks of the college.

There will always be a period of adjustment, but it can benefit the college and change can be positive for the institution.

This is not something completely new, it has been done by other colleges.

Disagree that it will be a gateway for Smith to create other requirements.

Any future requirement must have to go through the same long process that a social justice requirement, and most students will not be willing to go through the process of getting more requirements that we deem unnecessary.

Like the idea of the requirement, but want to be careful with implementing it, because if the courses were not designed specifically for social justice, then students would not leave feeling as though they have learned for social justice.

The other option is to not have any requirement.

Purpose of Liz Rich coming to Senate tonight is to get further student input so that the Curriculum Committee can decide what to propose to CAP.

How they can best represent the students to the administration.

A Latin Honors requirement would be optional for students.

60-65% of graduating class completes all seven Latin Honor requirements while at Smith.

Latin Honors would be the best route to approach this requirement with - many students want to fulfil these distributional requirements and Smith has creative ways to allow students to fulfil these requirements.

Students think it is possible to balance academic freedom while still educating students about social justice.

It is vital that Smith educates students about social justice to help them be better members of the community.

Many misconceptions about what social justice is.

It would not be rigidly defined by students or the college.

Would be important to make social justice a requirement within the first year of being at Smith.

There should be multiple discipline that approach it rather than a standardized class.

Best way to implement social justice would be by actually doing it and figuring it out for themselves through a junior year abroad program - putting social justice in practice.

There is now a Community Collaboration and Social Change Concentration.

Take between 15 - 20 students per class year.

Concentration includes both practice and academics.

Curriculum Committee also presented three new concentrations to CAP last year that contain elements of social justice.

Some first years do not believe they could fit in another requirement on top of what they are already taking.

Writing requirement is vital to a successful college career, but social justice does not have the same value.

Could make a social justice class for those who are particularly interested in it.
a. Would be better than forcing other students to take a class, when they are probably already getting exposure to social justice through other classes

29. Some students believe that last semester’s event was an isolated one, and future students should not be forced to take a class about social justice from now on because of it
   a. There were actually four incidents last semester - not an isolated event
   b. Members of the Diversity Committee have been working with the Curriculum Committee to research the history of Smith student demands - many events have spurred demands for anti-racist requirements
   c. This is an ongoing demand

30. Implementing social justice requirement could be viewed as a preemptive strike
   a. Just because students are not fully exposed to social justice does not make them anti-social justice - some students are just not aware

31. Many students believe the campus feels reactive - students do not care about an issue until there is an event to cause them to do so
   a. Smith College should be proactive to ensure that future incidents do not happen

32. Considered integrating social justice into the existing first year seminars
   a. Two thirds of the first year class take these seminars
   b. Proposal that all first-year students should include an element of social justice

33. One of main reasons one student applied to Smith was because she was interested in learning about social justice

34. Considering the events that happened, it would be really irresponsible for Smith not to respond to these events

35. Question to senators: Does the Latin Honors proposal solve the concerns that have been raised?
   a. Smith as an institution has a duty to give the best education possible to the students, and that when students graduate they can write in a clear style, and have other capacities to be functional citizens
   b. It would be a shame to not include social justice in as many ways as possible

36. Many entering students have a very weak understanding of different important terms and understanding fully all of the realms of social justice, and it is important to have classes offered to get students on an even level to have students able to explore other areas of this field

37. When would this be implemented?
   a. Whenever there is some kind of requirement change, it is always starting with at least the next entering class - no current first years would be affected
   b. It is entirely up to CAP and the faculty when this is implemented
   c. Most likely a very long-term goal
   d. Writing intensive requirement went through a series of different studies before being implemented into the curriculum
      i. Took 3-4 years

38. Important to take these past events seriously and work towards making our campus more just and equitable

39. We have to give all students the opportunity to understand social justice
40. One of the worst situations is to have students take a class on a subject that they are really interested in and make them take it with students who do not care - alters the attitude

41. More of the first years have been more positive towards a requirement than upperclassmen

42. Many first years were not happy with the forced orientation social justice day - worried the same attitude will follow with a graduation requirement
   a. Social justice training needs a lot of tweaking
   b. Not all first years went to the orientation day - not able to ensure that all students get the proper exposure
   c. Cannot make it mandatory

43. Better to have optional events, or other incentives to take a workshop in this field
   a. Learn so much more about social justice outside of the classroom than within coursework
   b. Could it be another type of requirement - not a course requirement?
      i. Something like a club, organization, orientation group or workshop?

44. Could we have education on diversity instead of a social justice requirement?
   a. Might make students less biased

45. Curriculum Committee or Diversity Committee could create a small glossary of social justice terms for all entering students to receive

46. Smith isn’t perfect
   a. Rae Ann disagrees!
   b. Smith is already very good at informing students about social issues

47. Students should care about social justice as an academic endeavor

48. We could have something similar to the alcohol awareness program for entering students

49. Social justice is a lifelong process

50. For more thoughts/opinions, email Mac Hamilton or Liz Rich (mhamilto@smith.edu and erich@smith.edu)

J. Announcements

1. Otelia Cromwell Day
   a. November 8, 2012
   b. Keynote speaking at 1pm in Sage Hall
   c. Filled with workshops

K. 9.05 Adjournment