

**Community Council Meeting  
November 29, 2010**

**Present-** Shirley Collado (Co-Chair), Raymond Queliz '11 (Co-Chair), Staff Members: Naomi Neff (Ex-Officio), Andrew Wentink, Linda Ross, Faculty Members: Quinn Mecham, Andrei Barashkov, Joyce Mao, and Student Members: James Schwerdtman '11, Addie Cunniff '13, Rachel Sider '14 (Secretary), Kevin Broussard '11 (Alternate), Ariel Smith '11, O'Rourke '12 (SGA President), Zach Hitchcock '13

**Additional People Present-** See list of attendees. Kathryn DeSutter (News Editor, The Campus),

**Absent-**Linda Schiffer (Alternate), Janet Rodrigues '12, Dan Prior '14 (Alternate)

**Minutes from November 22, 2010 were approved and will go online. The Council's next meeting is January 11, 2010.**

**Update-** Doug Adams and Dean Collado met with the Dean's Council last week. President Liebowitz would like to express that President's Staff really supports the All-Gender Housing Proposal. They will be moving forward to make this a housing option for the spring. There will be further reports of progress as the year continues.

**Gender Council Proposal-** The group of students behind the Gender Council Proposal are asking for support and a recommendation from Community Council to the President on this issue. Lots of research and work has gone into this issue by students and staff. A hard copy of the summary of the proposal was distributed to the Council. Lark Mulligan '11 and Viveka Ray-Mazumder '11 presented their proposal to the Council.

- This would be a permanent advising council that would deal with policy regarding race, class, and other types of diversity, but focus on gender.
- Efforts behind the idea for Gender Council started last November through inspiration from the Gender Studies program. There was also the recognition of the needs of students and what college is/should be providing them. Various college documents have referred to a need for greater gender policy changes in the past, but no effort have been taken towards this.
- Students looked at other Middlebury organizations and institutions for a model for creating a group that would have direct communication with faculty and administration, empower voices of people in area of Gender Studies, promote social activism in that area, and provide for long term transformative change. They looked for a model with a sustainable structure to create a Gender Council that would be grassroots and proactive (solve problems before they arise). The students used the model of the Environmental Council because it was coalition of students, staff and faculty that could make change. The proposal for the Gender Council bases its structure, ability to make policy change, and other responsibilities on the structure of the Environmental Council. It is a body with a lot of accountability, and shows that the school values the opinions of its members who study certain issues and address them through policy. The creation of a Gender Council

shows that the College can value the students that study gender and promote social justice in that area.

- The students also looked at models at peer institutions, but didn't find anything that fit exactly what they were looking for. A Council like this is relatively new, and there is interest in whether Middlebury can be a model for other colleges.
- **Why this is necessary:** Many organizations are here to support marginalized groups, but they don't have direct access to policy change at the College even though they work to promote change. The Gender Council can focus on this by changing the culture and policy of the College. It would deal with issues that are important to student and necessary for the survival of students at Middlebury.
- There are several issues that this group of students is working on so that there isn't misuse of gender and gender terms on campus. And a Council would allow them to structure policy changes towards those efforts.
- One idea is that they want to work with the Study Abroad Office, and find support networks to support gender issues for students studying off campus. As to ensure the safety and survival of students on a day-to-day basis, this Council would be permanent. It could follow through with and institute the recommendations of the College reports that already exist and mention gender issues/concerns.
- **Why a "Gender" Council?** The students are concerned that in a "Diversity" Council, the aim would or might be diffused. In a Gender Council, they would focus on the way we look at identities and how gender, race, class etc are all interconnected. The Council would work with other campus organizations. It would make sure it is focused on gender, but not exclusively addressing gender. Their goal would be to change the culture on campus and the way we talk about these issues and identity.
- The Council would be an advisory board to the President, like the Environmental Council. Is an advisory board for policymakers, and it would centralize efforts from various student organizations and College departments to coordinate efforts and ensure good communication. The Council would be committed to policy change/revision and educating the College in general. It would offer a space for students/faculty/staff to engage in social activist projects through several concrete policy changes listed on page 5 of the proposal. The Council would have a diverse membership of 15-20 members, and subcommittees could be formed based on certain issues. There would be elected co-presidents.
- The Community Council had some concern, proposed some changes with regard to the "Faculty Triggers" section of the Proposal. The language is a little forceful, could cause some issues with creating and designing courses and the preferences of faculty.
- The Community Council had some concern about the Gender Council stepping on the toes of already-existing groups and organizations. Questions about how that will work, and is it too broad or narrow when addressing gender? Because addressing diversity issues is different from a "Gender" Council.
- **Concerns from the Community Council**—How would this relate to other institutions on Campus? How would they define the roles and responsibilities of the Council? What is the process for selecting members—how do you get the representative group?
- **These questions were posed to the students proposing the Gender Council, and answers to them in the near future will be helpful. We requested further clarification in these three areas.** The Community Council is sensitive to some

elements of the proposal and would like clarification and further explanation on the above issues. It was decided that this be the first agenda item of J-Term (is scheduled for January 17).