

Senate Notes April 26, 2021

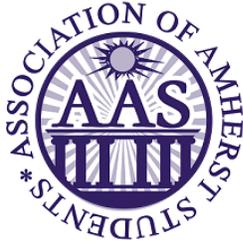
I. Attendance

II. Public Comment

Cole presented the *Values Statement*. It would be a good idea to have a *Values Statement*. It will be useful to help guide what we do here. We don't have anything like this right now, whether as a resolution nor in the constitution. We have a missions page, that's it. We distilled it into a short statement that outlines eight values that should guide us as AAS. They are fairly straightforward, and they speak to our role at an educational institution, and they're human values.

Jeremy said doing committee work that has the potential to be contentious, it might help people to have a general language to point to a statement of values of AAS. Having one in AAS might also prompt the College to at least consider doing one. We don't have one, right now. Somebody in committee meetings, when talking about policy, would say this goes against the values of the college, then we would ask what the values of the college are. Their response is just to read all the emails Bidy and the Trustees send out. This has become a way to stall really helpful work from being accomplished. It would be cool to have a document before we head into the discussion with the College.

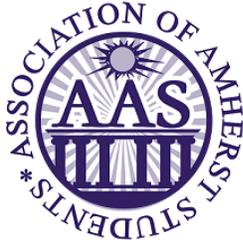
Angelina asked whether this would be a constitutional amendment. Ben said in if it is, it would be an amendment and would require a roll call vote. Cole said it could be an amendment, putting it in the Constitution makes sense. It could also be a resolution.



Andrea said she does not think it should be an amendment, just because they are all amazing points, but it should be evaluated by multiple classes over the years, maybe every two years or so. If we make it an amendment, then we would have to email the changes every time we edit, and we should be able to add values as needed.

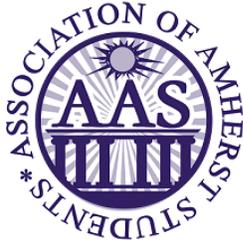
Angelina asked whether this should be a resolution or an amendment. Ben asked what a resolution is. Angelina asked Sterling if he could shed some light on this. Sterling said yes. Angelina said she is indifferent, as long as we can get a document that shows what we stand for and future senates can review. This will help us make decisions in potentially contentious discussions. Angelina asked for a quick straw poll without a vote, and Cole said we should still have a formal vote. Angelina said the destination of the *Values Statement* would be the AAS website.

Angelina opened the floor for public comment. Victoria Foley said she is a sophomore at Amherst, a LJST and Spanish double-major, and today she wanted to share some comments concerning the BC rules, policies, and precedents. She said she wants to outline a few suggestions and asked Angelina to share a document with Senate. First regarding BC precedents, and she said she's been to many meetings and she noticed precedents are not written down. They are very unclear. She said she has gone through a lot of the minutes of BC meetings, and the word "precedent" is not even written down, so it is unclear what the rules are. Also, she said the BC minutes are not written all that well. She was denied funding for certain events, and she



looked to see to reference what the wording was, and the whole conversation was not there. It was not only inaccessible for people who were not there, but it also was simply not the truth. She said suggests using a system to help record these minutes accurately.

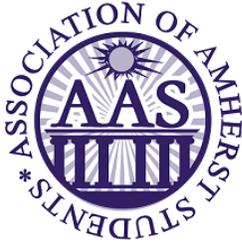
She said she wants to share some of her experiences asking for funding for a specific club. She is the co-president of 3D (Difference for the Developmentally Disabled). A volunteer club, super relax and chill, and for the first time in 20 years, we wanted to buy t-shirts. The t-shirts were a demand from the students and the adults. Over at Umass, they also have shirts. The purpose of the shirts is not just bonding, but we also had an incident in which two adults run away, and we had a hard time locating them. An awesome solution would be to have a unified shirt. When we came to BC, however, our request was denied under precedent that freebies were not allowed. Then Diego advocated for these to be known as jerseys, and we were down with this idea. The outside adults would have to purchase themselves; this was to make sure any student who has financial issues could afford them. This was also denied under precedent. But if we look at the record, the whole conversation is cut out, it talks about us asking for shirts, and it jumps immediately to “okay, that’s fine”. We eventually was able to secure financial aid from the help of another office. But then we realized a few weeks ago, there was a dance organization that asked for joggers. While we are very happy they got funding, they got 800 dollars for joggers that didn’t seem necessary. We just felt very let down that they got funding but 3D could not, despite going through all the obstacles. We only asked for 200 to 300 dollars max, trying to make it as economically feasible as possible. So, keeping all this in mind, I and a few other



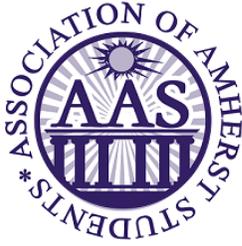
people have created an amendment to establish an Appeals Court. This was created based on the Constitution of AAS. She said she would like to create an Appeals Court of members of the senate, who are not members of BC. Once we write out all the precedents and laws, then we would have 5 senators not affiliated with BC who would look at the laws and the budgetary requests that were denied, and they would reevaluate whether the requests would be eligible. This way people have a second chance. For 3D, she said she went to BC twice, once in the spring semester, and once in the fall semester. She said she wished there was a system like this back when 3D requested funding. She said she believes this is essential. As a research assistant in the Latinx studies department, she has interviewed many alumni who have graduated since the early 2000s, and they have shared that they were also denied for La Causa and others. It is super important to write down these laws, which is institutional memory. If this is not written down, it makes it so easy to manipulate.

Jae Yun said as a member of the BC, he wants to thank Victoria for bring this to our attention. Regarding the minutes, he said he apologizes for the minutes not being accurate as they should be. The meeting moves very fast, and it definitely seems like an oversight on our part. Getting a program that uses subtitles seems like a good idea, like Otter AI. He said he just wants to defend our minute taker; it can get very hard. He said he apologizes and wants to show his support for a live transcript program.

Brooke said just to respond as Treasurer, she totally hears you, and that the minutes should be accurate, and she will check in with the minute taker. In regards to AAS funding, the precedent



that you are referring to is actually not a precedent, but a written-out policy that is on the website. The way that she remembers the conversation, obviously it is a long time ago, but she said she doesn't remember it being framed that way. Also, in terms of the appeals question, we do our absolute best, and she does her absolute best, to be a steward of funds, and unfortunately sometimes we cannot approve some requests because either they are unsustainable for AAS or they break policy, but she and the BC do their best to find people other funding sources to make our reasoning very clear, and she hopes other members of the BC agree. Maybe it would have been better if we had been able to speak about this individually before the meeting so that this could have been more productive, because she did not have time to prepare for it. She said being Treasurer on student government on such a small campus, these are all very personal dynamics at play, and it's very important that she remains impartial and remains a resource for funding, and she is very sorry if 3D did not feel that way with the interaction regarding the t-shirts, and many clubs request similar items, and generally these conversations look very similar. She would really encourage senators who maybe don't have as clear of an idea of the way BC functions to ask her about it and carefully consider this appeals question, because in her opinion, it does seem a little bit unnecessary considering how many of the requests that we receive are approved. In constant talks with Paul to get every idea that comes her way funded. During her time as Treasurer, we've funded almost everything. Again, she said she is very sorry if you were unhappy with the budgetary process, it is obviously not what we want, and it is not the standard we want to uphold for our committee members.



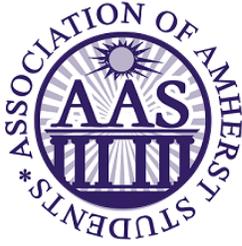
Cole said he has a clarifying question for Brooke. Every week the BC gives recommendations to Senate. Is Senate bound to the same precedents and BC policy? In the past, we have ruled out BC recommendations, just wondering.

Brooke said it is a very interesting constitutional question. She said she would say, in her personal opinion and in her interpretation of the Constitution, those policies do extend as guidance for the full Senate as well.

Cole asked whether people know when they are denied, so that they can come to Senate and ask for funding still. Brooke said public comment is always available, and if something is very contentious, she makes it very clear.

Andrea asked Victoria why she sees a need for an Appeals Court when the BC Recs can come to the full senate. We are actually reaching more senators with the current procedure. Also, she was on BC years ago, but she remembers clubs return with the same request many times after being denied the first time. She said she doesn't see why that cannot be the case going forward. If you don't agree with the reasoning, then they can always come back.

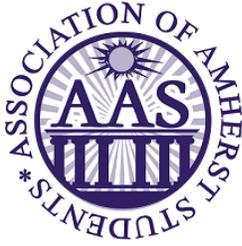
Victoria said she has spoken to a few of her peers, and they say the culture of BC can be very intimidating. Before you go to a meeting, you have to submit a description: quotes, etc. It can feel very repetitive when someone continues to ask, in front of a whole bunch of people, what is it that you need, over and over. Also, the jargon used in meetings can be very intimidating as



well. So, she would say that for the people who are repeatedly denied, she would recommend the Appeals Court. In talking with Maira and a friend of hers, we were speaking about how pertinent it is that we have someone who is out of BC to look at the denied requests. She wanted to add that she has never heard of and did not know we could come to Senate to present their case.

Brooke said she just wants to jump in quickly. Just to get to the point of the form; a Google Form is due Wednesday so she can compile a list of requests and circulate them to the committee before the meeting on Monday, and allows us to pre-approve a lot of requests to save a lot of time. If we didn't have this process, it would be logistically impossible to get this done. That's just the reality of doing this over Zoom during COVID. Also, she wants to say that she is a bit uncomfortable with how this is being framed, because she is just trying to be a good steward of the Student Activities Fund, and it is important that we know people reviewing the requests have a good understanding of the policies. We try to amend the policies to make them clearer, and she made it a BC expectation that we explain our policies as best we can. In addition, there is only so much she can do in terms of conducting meetings. There have been times over Zoom there has been a lot of silence, and that can make some clubs uncomfortable, but she is the facilitator, and sometimes it can be difficult to jump into a conversation over Zoom. We all need to be more understanding of how difficult the facilitation can be sometimes.

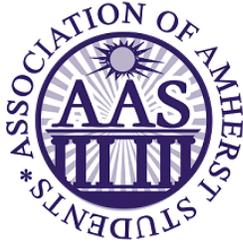
Victoria said she comes here today with all the respect for all that you've done. She loves Amherst and she only comes here to make it easier for all these precedents and laws to be written down. As someone who has gone through the Constitution already, she has found that she still



cannot understand whether she will receive funding or not. She comes here today giving forth her suggestions and recommendations to alleviate some of the work for people to be able to pass it out, give a second look at requests.

Lucas said he has a quick question whether your group would be open to have JC look at appeals for denied requests rather than creating a new body. Victoria said she would love to establish a way for clubs to be more transparent on these policies and have a chance to advocate for themselves.

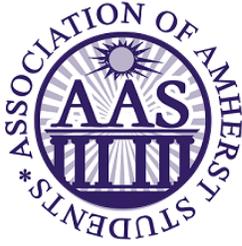
Brooke said she will do her best to make this clearer in going forward, but as Andrea mentioned, we often see clubs return with the same request multiple times in the semester. She has been in contact with a number of clubs who have not gotten approvals, so we can work out a workaround. She does her best to find other funding sources, and it is usually an ongoing conversation. There are some things that BC has never funded and will likely never fund. She thinks apart from that, it is an ongoing conversation, and an Appeals Court would be unnecessary considering how much of our process is an ongoing dialogue with clubs. Senators are elected to BC, and we have a good mix in the committee. She knows that sometimes in the beginning of meetings, it can get a bit tedious explaining the details, but she does that so that people understand what we discussed beforehand. She wants to reiterate it is an ongoing dialogue, and she gets a lot of emails from clubs about different questions and requests.



Bella said Brooke kind of said the things that she wanted to bring up. She said it doesn't really make sense why there would be a separate Appeals Court. Also, we should try to stay away from legal language. We're talking about policies for student government. There are no "courts" here. Some sort of "Appeals Process", maybe, but she said she doesn't know why that would need to exist outside of BC because clubs do have the opportunity to come back to us, and the committee is made of people who have been on BC and people who have not been on BC before, and there is a lot of variety there. You can also come to Senate meetings to present here, as well. She personally doesn't see the necessity, but she appreciates sharing her concerns and she thinks that more transparency around what the options are is good. She wants to commend Brooke—she does a really good job to help students find other sources of funding. She is sorry that was not her experience.

Witter said he gets the impulse, and his requests have been denied before, but he feels an appeals process already kind of exists with Paul. If you ask him, you usually can get the funding. He doesn't see the need for an Appeals Court with senators on it.

Victoria said she was unaware that students could come directly to senate and ask again. Today, she wanted to propose something, not so much that this specific thing had to be passed, but something that would at least get the conversation going, and most certainly add to how they can appeal or ask for something again. In her experience, Paul Gallegos in the Student Activities Office has been wonderful, but sometimes she feels that the BC has a lot of money, and she sees a discrepancy that some clubs get funding while others do not. She does not want to call anyone



out in the slightest bit, and in her own experience and talking to alumni, it just seems like there are some clubs that get more priority versus others.

Diego said the idea of having all precedents written down, he is in favor for. It will make things more accessible.

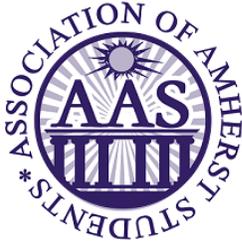
Ben asked what some of the precedents that people are concerned about. He checked the website, and it says “under no circumstance will giveaways be funded”. He’s curious what the point of contention is, because it seems these points of contention are spelled out on the BC website.

Brooke said she thinks when we reference precedent, it’s generally very slight nuance for certain things. If we are not funding something, it is generally due to policy. Every semester we have policy discussions. Sometimes a senator would propose something as a reaction to a club’s request, and then we incorporate new language into our policy, and all of this gets codified.

There’s nothing we do that we started doing now that we haven’t done in the past that isn’t in policy. It’s not like a new precedent, so let me write it down. It’s not like a Supreme Court case, where a precedent becomes the law of the land. When we reference precedent, we’re reflecting very minute details. The bigger rules are in policy. She is very happy to talk about that.

Jeremy said he just wants to try and parse out what a proposal moving forward would look like.

The idea about writing down precedents would be helpful so people can have a record of what they need to do. Every does their best to handle situations, but specifically as it pertains to BC, if people are putting their effort into proposals that end up getting denied, it can be difficult. He



said he thinks maybe on the BC spreadsheet, we can have a quick note why something was not approved, and what paths they should take from here. Another thing we can do is making all of this clearer on the website immediately. It just might be more helpful to list all the alternatives for funding. Make the process as independent and transparent as possible Brooke has done a great job as Treasurer, and to the Appeals Court question, he feels we don't necessarily need such a thing, but the way that things happens over Zoom, can be unclear. Maybe we should make it clear by adding a quick blurb on why something was denied. Specify what exactly the relationship of AAS is with BC, and can we override BC? Coming back to Senate and asking again was something that he was completely unaware of. That might be a helpful way in moving forward.

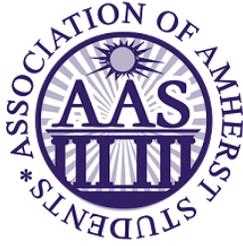
Victoria said she is totally open in helping establish precedents. It is the first thing she would like to do. She is happy to work on something that might be a substitute for the Appeals Court. She comes here today on the advice of a few friends and senators here. She is more than happy to discuss in more depth in moving forward.

Angelina closed Public Comment.

III. BC Recs

Big Brothers Big Sisters requested funding for fun run.

Video Games Club requested funding for food.



Green Room requested funding for printing for performance programs

La Fe requested funding for stationary/postage and food.

Christian Fellowship requested funding for easter egg hunt materials.

Sailing requested funding for food.

Asian Students Association requested funding for boba and painting kits.

Sunrise requested funding for art materials and tabling supplies.

Rotaract Club requested funding for candy/envelopes.

Bioethics Society requested funding for boba.

Thrift Store requested funding for publicity.

WAMH requested funding for LVA GRL, MIA GLADSTONE, MICHELLE, student bands, and publicity.

MENAA and NISA requested funding for scrapbooking materials and food.

SEASA requested funding for food for Thai New Years and prizes.

Club Volleyball requested funding for shirts, fabric markers, prizes, costumes, and boba.

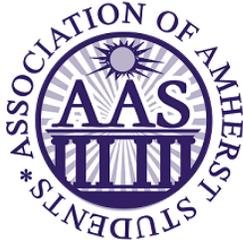
MSA requested funding for catering.

Film Society requested funding for film, alum speaker (Jason Kliot), candy/popcorn, red carpet/gold background, and film #2.

Student activity offsite with professor requested funding for food.

Artists on campus requested funding for instructor fee and supplies.

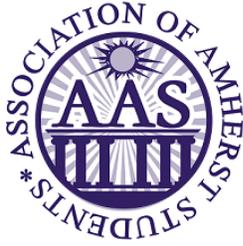
LiNK + KSA requested funding for food for screening and drinks.



Brooke said there was the question of SEASA and prizes. The BC had a policy discussion before this meeting, and we discussed the giveaway/prize policy. Her sense of the meeting was that the BC stands by the no-giveaway policy, but was for reconsidering and rethinking the prize policy in terms of raffles/competitions that clubs have. Basically, people were pretty on board with funding prizes, still unsure how exactly to codify that, but the sense of the meeting was the BC supported funding prizes for some events. We didn't vote on a new policy, but with that conversation in mind, when SEASA requested funding for prizes for the Thai New Years event, the BC voted to approve that request with the forthcoming policy that will be codified. Also, Club Volleyball is requesting funding for their tournament. We tabled this, because this unlike the Thai New Years event was not time-sensitive. We asked them to return next week when the policy has been codified. They said they were okay with waiting.

Sirus said he wanted to make a request for his senate project of free hygiene supplies. He wants to request funding for laundry detergent and toothpaste tablets. He has been comparing different companies, and Generation Conscious had the lowest price per load, and it was the second-most efficient in terms of CO₂ emissions during transportation.

Brooke asked if we could bring this up with BC next week, since it is a larger request and it warrants a BC request. Sirus said the longer we delay, students will have less amount of time with free hygiene supplies. Brooke said she thinks there needs to be a longer conversation. Sirus asked whether Senate could make a decision rather than BC, since it is a senate project. Brooke said the way we've been doing senate projects is funds have been coming from the Discretionary



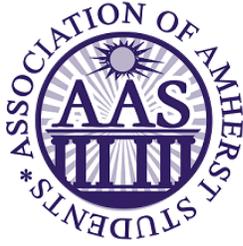
because we don't have the Senate Fund. She said it's important that for a program of this caliber that BC has time to look at the specifics. Angelina said she has to back Brooke on this one. Brooke has the best judgement on this.

Cole said Line Item 18. That's a group of students and a professor getting food off-campus. Don't we normally fund requests that are open to all students. He does feel uncomfortable with funding that, which looks like a TYPO request.

Brooke said she agrees. Thinking about how disjointed activities are on campus, it's hard for events like this to be super open to everyone, and she wouldn't have voted for it if she was on BC. She said her impression was that this seems like a TYPO-like event, and it is a very valid concern. She would love to hear other thoughts from people on the committee.

Jae Yun said now that we mention this, and just for context, this was after 8:30pm, and the reason he voted for this was the way he saw this was Student Activities was helping to organize this, but if this is just a TYPO-like event, he would urge people to vote against it. He voted for it because it was rushed and he thought it was an event that was open to all, but now that he looks at it, it seems like it will be in violation of BC's most important policy.

Brooke said as Senate, you can vote to zero something on BC's recommendations. Tomajin asked if this could be made public. Bella said she does not see how this can be made public, considering the limits in how many people can go on excursions. She is confused because we



approved this because we normally do fund TYPOs in some capacity, and since we're not really funding TYPOs this year, it would be okay. That was her reasoning and why she was okay with it. Basma said she voted in favor because off-campus activities with professors are being allowed now. It would be okay to fund if we make it clear students can have access to funding for activities like this. Brooke said obviously this amount of funding is not a big deal, but can it really be open to students with all these limitations? We do usually fund TYPOs, but it can seem like we're funding a closed event.

Jae Yun said before Val used to give free lunch bags, and something like that can be funded. He said he voted for it because he thought it was open to the public. He is not inclined to support it knowing that it isn't public.

Cole motioned to approve BC Recs with the exception of Line 18a.

Motion to approve BC Recs with the exception of Line 18a.

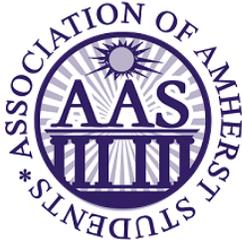
Result: Passes

Cole motioned to zero Line 18a.

Motion to zero Line 18a.

Result: Passes

Sirus said he wanted to motion to approve his request for his senate project. Brooke said at the end of the day, she's totally behind that. She just wanted to reiterate her concern about the



vendor selection process and that we abide by our best business practice, and BC has an honest discussion about how we choose a vendor for a pilot program. The Senate can always vote to do whatever it wants, but that is why she, as Treasurer, wants to have another conversation. Sirius said it's not like he's taking up a random company, and it's not like anyone is profiting off this system. It is by someone who went to Amherst, and it is a company people have experienced in Val. Brooke said she did not mean for it to come off that way. It's just that in terms of AAS vendor selection processes, we have to go with the best vendor, totally separate from anyone's relationships and affiliations with a certain company. It is really important that whenever we have a vendor selection process, we've just gone through the right steps.

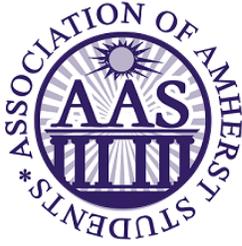
Sirius motioned to approve his senate project.

Motion to approve Sirius's senate project.

Result: Passes

Sterling said speaking of Senate projects, please submit a form if you plan on running again. All we need today is a vote on the changes on the constitution last week. We will push off JC's conversation to the next E-Board.

Jae Yun said he wanted to clarify what the \$2,700 will look like. Sirius said \$2.10 for 10 sheets of laundry detergent, \$3.25 for 60 tea tablets and a reusable container. That times 400 is 2,100-something, and there's packaging for info cards for the detergent, so that's 200 dollars. Tissues



are 50 dollars. Shipping is \$150 and there's tax from New York, which is \$190. Jae Yun said it's important we get a breakdown before we just fund something.

Lucas asked when the terms for the next senators and JC at-larges start. Sterling said the terms begin when they are sworn in. Lucas asked whether there is a schedule for when that will be.

Noah said a new E-Board will be sworn in at our next meeting. Senate elections happen on April 29th, and the new senators will be sworn in on May 3rd. That will be the last day of our current Senate. Lucas asked whether the at-larges of JC keep their seats. Sterling said JC elections will be happening with the Senate elections.

IV. JC Council Constitution Changes

Jae Yun motioned to approve the changes to the constitution.

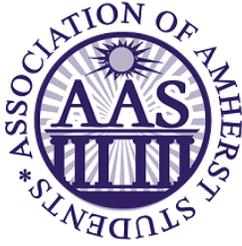
Motion to approve the changes to the constitution.

Result: Passes

V. Divestment Solution

Angelina said she wants to revisit the statement of support for divestment. It is just a very simple statement showing our support to the demands they listed.

Jae Yun motioned to affirm our support for the demands of the Sunrise Movement and divestment from private prisons.



Motion to affirm our support for the demands of the Sunrise

Movement and divestment from private prisons.

Result: Passes

VI. On-Campus/Off-Campus Check-ins

VII. New Business

A. Senate Projects/Committee Updates

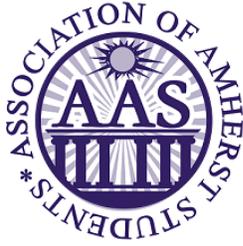
Jae Yun said this is a quick senate project update. We will be having an event on the 29th regarding tax help. Help with filling out tax forms, especially getting back money for the scholarship taxes. Working with Dean Holt in getting HEERF III funded to students as soon as possible. It's important to get the money to students soon.

Ben asked whether anyone on Dining Committee could ask Joe of the possibility for seniors to go to Val one last time before they graduate.

Yvette said she wants to send an email out to the student body regarding the TYPO program.

Lucas asked about the PVTAs situation from last week. How that would work for the summer?

People have access to PVTAs over the summer? Brooke said she does not have any updates. She said she imagines students can still use it over the summer, but she hasn't been in Amherst over summer.



Cole motioned to send the TYPO-R email.

Motion to send TYPO-R email.

Result: Passes

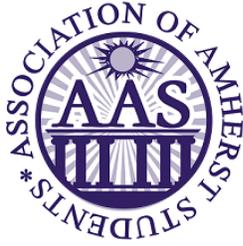
Sofia gave a quick update on the RSO calendar. The calendar is now up, and we were hoping to get an email out soon, but we'll send it in the GroupMe soon, and this email will go out to E-Board members of RSOs, not the whole student body. There will be a form which E-Board members can fill out.

Alexi said her senate project is connecting pre-frosh to Amherst first-years through seniors that will be graduating 22E. They can have an on-campus buddy whom they can talk to. If you can encourage your friends to be a buddy once that email goes out, that would be great.

Andrea said she has an update from the Powerhouse Committee. There will be an event on Wednesday evening in the Powerhouse. Chipotle Burritos and a student DJ from WAMH. The signup links will be in the Daily Mammoth tomorrow and is coming in the group chat.

B. Officer Reports

Noah said today was our last full meeting as an E-Board, and on behalf of the E-Board, he wants to thank you for all your hard work. He said you all have been amazing in what has been a tough



Association of Amherst Students

Senate 2020 - 2021

and strange year, to say the least. He wished everyone good luck with the rest of the semester and said to keep up the great work. He thanked everyone for everything.

VIII. Adjournment

Minute Taker: Noah Kim, AAS Secretary

Length of Meeting: 1 hour and 32 minutes