

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Council Agenda for October 20, 2013

Time: 7:00pm

Location: College Center 223

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”

-Alice Walker

- 1 Call to Order
- 2 Attendance.....Operations
- Which government agency are you most excited about being open now?
- 3 Consent Agenda
 - a. Minutes from 10/6/13
- 4 Forum with Julian Williams, Director of Equal Opportunity & Affirmative Action..... (30 min)
-Julian Williams is the director of the office of equal opp. & affirmative action and he is also a title nine officer. He has been here for over a year, is from state of Michigan, and went to the university of Michigan, attorney in the state. Role – to investigate issues concerning harassment and discrimination. He supervises the process around investigations of misconduct etc. He is a resource for recruitment of diverse admin or faculty search professors. Regarding sexual assault – “We have a large amount of resources in various reporting levels, which I think helps. These are confidential and private resources, person can use these resources without triggering an investigation. Do a great job in providing support. Next piece- when responding to someone in need. We encourage the person to reach out to law enforcement. My opinion, not enough people reach out to law enforcement. Not only in the integral steps, I would love it if more people utilized local law enforcement. I understand why people don’t. The next piece involves the investigation of the matter, and then from there, there would most likely be a hearing on the issue. Depending on the finding or the hearing, for the most part, the consequences rise to the level of expulsion. Sometimes we have to expel students around these issues. We have a duty to protect all of our students and we have a duty to follow up legally. We are ahead of the curve maybe from some other institutions. I think we have a [process] where a lot of people are dedicated. One of the other things that sometimes happens is the issues of students who may be harassed by maybe a faculty member or professor. Going to go with pretty much the same process. If it’s a faculty member or administrators, most of the time students are afraid. I encourage the reporting, these are serious issues... the college takes these matters very seriously. One of the things that I could really use all your help on is encouraging your friend to come talk to me, to have a conversation. I can give them some advice. I want to make sure persons know about my area and my office as a resource.
Pres. – reminds at large audience they may ask questions
Main – last week, (regarding Chris from last week) told that filling a complaint was the best option. Wondering if there are ways of investigating that issue
J- there would be a follow up from my area. If it’s a worker, that may lead to other things.
There’s the investigative side then there’s the other piece that touches on issues of training and

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sensitivity. You can have your formal response but you also need to make sure you follow up in other ways.

Stephanie- talked a bit about the general anxiety- what kind of support does your office have for students going through it... demystifying the process?

J- Trying to be approachable that really helps. The other part is publicizing, by having resources available whether it’s online. If you can find it approachable, that’s one piece. There are multiple resources on campus. Met café 1st floor, office. What I want to be able to do is to make sure that they can come talk to me, but also that the first responders know who I am and that they can come talk to me.

Op- everyone is encouraged to follow up with law enforcement. I was kind of wondering 1. How common is it for people to follow up 2? How are students regularly treated?

J: Not very common, maybe because it can be cold. It can be very intimidating. Our standard of evidence, what our policies are, what were looking at in terms of a resolution, is going to be a lot different unfortunately, than what a local law enforcement looks at. They’re looking at can this go to a jury, can this go to a criminal judge. In the legal standards, it’s very high. Our standard is more likely 50% of factual evidence [compared to law maybe 75%]. We’re continually talking with our counterparts in the town of Poughkeepsie with. I think we can do better with.

Op - Has the town done any outreach to make their resources different.

J: They walked us through their processes; we had conversations with them... From what I see, there’s only so much that they can do. I think the investigators are great, but overall the experience is not like it is here. To answer your question, they have done more outreach and I think we have to continue to do more. In my opinion, not enough of the students going through this follow up

Finance- isn’t the Supreme Court going to hear a case about this?

J: what they said is that the college can use race as one of many factors in admissions in order to create a diverse community. Essentially, they didn’t change at all the previous ruling. When the Supreme Court ruled 2004 could continue to use race, a lot of states created ballot investigate and the voters said no. The outcome there will be very state specific. They will uphold that ballot initiative. If you ask me, taking a lot of power away from our courts. I think the eventual outcome won’t have an effect on our admissions policies. We have a commitment to a diverse student body. Were looking at the totality of the student. We think of what this person could possibly bring to our campus. There are many things that go into it. I’m a huge legal nerd, so if you ever have questions about this, I’d be more than willing to talking about it.

Pres.- what exactly does the term investigate means?

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A: talking to both parties, talking to witnesses persons who may know the parties or seen something. Looking at emails, text messages, documents etc pretty much anything that can help me as an investigator. Use the term investigate loosely. Depending on the severity, it can take a long or short time. What we shoot for is sixty day – investigation and then hearing. It’s in everybody’s interest to rap this up quickly. Those are sort of the targets and deadlines
TAs what are your other goals of the year and how will you achieve them?

A: continually looking at our process and looking for ways to make it better. I think that we are ahead because of the people that we have, but we don’t have it perfect. We can make it more user-friendly. WE all sit down (title nine investigators) and talk about this. In terms of goals, to continue to try to make our campus in general more equitable, more inclusive in general for everybody. We hear issues of students where they feel like they don’t belong. I think it has to do with the failure of community members who don’t uphold things.

Pres; you mentioned that we can encourage our fellow students to come talk to you, what else can we do?

A: really gendered response, but when we looks at issues specifically sexual issues, most of the victims are women and most perpetrators are men. We should do our best to preventatively talk to men. We don’t spend enough time engaging our men in the issues of power, self respect, how we interact with one another, social situations. It doesn’t need to be cut along the lines of gender, but it needs to be talked about. It’s really broad, but as much input as you guys can give, will really help. That doesn’t mean there is no sexual assault happening just because you “get it”. Even the guys who get it could still struggle around these issues. I think, as a man, it’s one of the things we have to own.

Pres – thanks for coming.

5 Executive Board Reports

a. President.....(7 min)

1. Before break, the trustees were on campus. Most of it was not controversial, just kind of a celebration of finishing the campaign and all the nice things. Still talking about student space as an issue. Juliet space will be used for something else. Bookstore will not move. Working on seven sisters conference- in two weeks. About 60 people coming. People coming on Friday night, activities Saturday, Sunday brunch and they depart. Asks for others to be a part of that. Going to be sending out an email looking for hosts. November 1st 2nd and 3rd. Really excited about it... this is a great opportunity to talk about the values that we all have in common and to really act on these things. Please contact me, also working with Steph and Benedict.
Jewett- do the people who were there before, do they have an interest in moving back?

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A – they moved down the street.

2015, is there a long term issue they’re focused on... how much do they know and how much do they talk about?

A ; student affairs committee. Opportunities where they ask about what’s going on campus. One trustee asked about the climate and we gave examples. They are so receptive about it and they are interested in helping us. Most of their long term goals come from us or administration on campus. Hopefully we can work more with them this year. In the past, we just meet with them 3 times a year. This year they seemed more receptive. The other committees, most of them are not invited to them. But there is communication that happens.

TAs, what conversations are we looking to have with the 7 sisters?

A; focus, collaboration as human beings 1. Intercollegiate collab. Forcing organizations to collaboration 2. Colleges paired with each other and find obscure thing in common 3. 7 sisters collab as a whole, more generally as small liberal colleges then breaking up into small work groups. 4 talking about different ways to talk to the rest of the community, to people who are generally left out. There are also t-shirts.

Joss – asks about the dates once again.

A: it’s almost all games, it’s more interactive. Reaching out to board leaders to see if anyone else wants to participate. Historically, it’s more for student leaders, but it’s applicable to anyone and if you find this interesting, please come.

b. Operations.....(7 min)

Op- open positions, Jewett vp, Davison vp, Jewett secretary, founder’s day co-chairs.

Applications closed today at noon. Many applicants. Important change in terms of how op committee does appointments. Can’t reasonably make decisions with four or five people only. Have to be enough people talking about it to give a fair opportunity.

Looking for quorum, only for appointments, like finance. Idea- to have 7 people. Right now we have 5 members of council on ops committee and I was hoping that two more people would volunteer just to be there for appointment processes. It would be really helpful for as many people to apply, ideally 3 would be great. Whose idea was it, after this meeting, give me your placard. Next meeting I’m going to place your placard

somewhere else and you will meet new people. Anyway, we’re all going to make new friends. Final update, v stark is moving forward not just an ops project, genesis/student life has agreed to make this a joint process. Will be more productive as a team

J – when are the ops meetings? Will you discuss appointments?

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Ops - 5pm on Mondays but we interview people at different times, they vary depending on when the person is available. We will brainstorm about the appointments. We will meet with them later on in the week.

Main when does VSARC meet? And he volunteers for ops thing.

Ops – Thursdays at nine pm in retreat corner. But we can change the time.

Socos is VSARC open to whole student body?

A; will send blurbs, maybe misc. can send something about.

2015 do members at large, are they counted in your quorum.

Ops – no, numerous people approach me about who should and shouldn’t be voting etc.

Strong – supposing council member who is interested in helping but cannot attend, can they still attend.

Pres – I’m going to give Strong an award for most enthusiastic member.

6 Amendment.....South Commons (10 min)
[about using Vassar as a preliminary org.]

Ops, some changes, we changed in section 1 instead of saying shall read, it now says shall include. The enactment clause was changed slightly. Thanks socos and ben for writing amendment

Socos – motion to adopt amendment – Passed with all in favor.

7 Open Discussion

2014, reminds how many days are left. Next Saturday is the Halloween dance. Tickets will be on sale at the college center. Vcash available. Can be sold at the door for an additional two dollars. Normally 6 dollars.

Ops, - are the tickets for upperclassmen or underclassmen the same price?

Academics- peer advising on the 5th of November 5:30-7pm. TBA location Brewer cup points, encourage your freshmen to come. Free food.

Pres- next pre council dinner next week, it’s going to be (but strong will not be here!). It’s going to be a potluck. At 5pm.

Socos – three picnic tables in the socos, so people should check it out.

Main, Halloween is this weekend, so don’t be too belligerent.

Pres – set a good example, remind your constituents, make good decisions.

Operations – Motion to adjourn. Passed with all in favor.