

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Council Agenda for January 26, 2014

Time: 7:00pm

Location: College Center 223

“I believe in ordinary acts of bravery, in the courage that drives one person to stand up for another.”

-Victoria Roth, *Divergent*

- 1 Call to Order
- 2 AttendanceOperations
Say something you did over break in less than three words.
- 3 Consent Agenda
 - a. Democracy Matters - Conference (\$800/\$800)
 - b. VARC – Discretionary (\$0/\$125.25)
 - c. South Commons - Discretionary..... (\$160.15/\$160.15)
 - d. Minutes from 12/8/13All consent
- 4 Executive Board Reports
 - a. Activities(7 min)
Activities – spring leadership conference next Saturday at 11am. All orgs would like for you to send your d – this is a refresher event. I’m sending the itinerary out later. It’s taking place 15th 11-2 in the Villard room. All student orgs are invited to attend. This is a chance for [pre] orgs to table. At that point we’ll have the newer orgs. The Vassar event management system is up and running. If you have questions, talk to myself. We are working on the storage space project. The theme for founder’s day is dinosaurs. The committees are listed in the packet. Jan. 28 pre-org applications due. That Tuesday they will be reviewed. Myself and members of [committee] including some people in this room, senior class president, finance, some people from activities [etc], have been working on an unofficial committee where we’ve been looking at the large campus events Halloween, serenading, founders days, and a couple of other small or large campus events. The goal of this committee is to try and have a place for those larger events. Nothing is completely concrete right now. Basically, we’re trying to figure out where to go with this committee and try and see if we can find a person who can oversee this committee. As of right now that would be activities, but there’s a question as to if it should be someone else. If you’re interested in taking a part in it, please let me know.
Main – can you repeat the specific goal in terms of these traditions?
Activities- it takes a lot to put these events
2014- remember at serenading where the senior class was planning it and certain things became a mess, this committee will hopefully solve the problem and make a more collaborative process.
Ac- ideally there would be a chair, supervisor, and these committees would be the different types of events. There are questions as to whether it’s a lot of responsibility

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2017- What’s the name for it?

Academics- Traditions committee is the unofficial name, [but] Halloween isn’t necessarily a tradition.

President- that’s something [the seven sisters] had. That might not fit so well. If you want to help with the committee, they could probably use a cool name. Before moving on to finance [going over the at large people].

b. Finance.....(7 min)

Fin. - In the minutes, there’s a print out of all the fund levels. They haven’t really changed much over the winter break we are a little ahead in speakers, but that is fine. I also included a blurb that I sent them to treasures. We’re moving the fund app to 5 at Sundays. Then we review them in the following Wednesday. It’s a little confusing, but fund apps need to be submitted 14 days before the finance committee during which they will be reviewed. The moral of this story- please submit your fund apps as soon as you know. Final note, to be aware of it, it will affect houses lot, student employment has changed some of their rules. The process by which it’s done won’t really benefit them (people you are paying). It’s harder to pay somebody than it used to be. Vcash is a great alternative. We have 3 new vcash thanks to activities committees, wireless. However we need to update our blackboard server. They will not be wirelessly available until spring break or the summer. They do not have printers.

TAs - can you remind us in terms of the fund levels what there out of

Fin. - Disc- 50k, cap 40k, conf 15k, coll 12k, commu, 12/15k, soc. Consc. 10k

Ops - do we have any place for planning printers?

Fin. - there are no plans right now. Printers cost 1500 a piece. If there’s a complaint for that we can explore that option.

Ops - once people run vcash, they run them like credit cards, the vendors have a sign for the receipts, but it’s ok.

F - if you hear from people that do tasty Tuesday asking for receipts [that’d be good to hear]

5 Re-Orientation Recap Student Life (10 min)

SL- renamed to spring orientation because there were some problems. It was rather successful. It happened Monday and Tuesday, with brief training session involved [for student leaders]. But it consisted of two main speakers and a lot of discussions on identities. More personal intimate workshops, representatives from counseling services, etc. There were larger forums. There was a screening of the movie Persepolis followed by a student run conversation about the issues of

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identity portrayed in the film and there were a couple of performances. There was a good turnout from freshmen. It was a strong enough pilot program to grow.

Ray - are there any plans to make it mandatory?

SL -I believe the intention is to do so. They wanted to see how it would be run [for one year].

But I think it's strong enough to push it to be mandatory

Main - do we know anything about how our orientations compare [with others]?

SL - I don't know that off the top of my head.

Strong - I heard that it was really tiring and that a lot of people didn't go because they got tired.

Cushing- a lot of my freshmen were tired of things being repeated. I guess it should be more of an evolution not repetition

SL - I think with one of the main problems of it not being mandatory is that, a lot of people are on the same page. I noticed a lot of redundancy.

President- Ben Lotto was selected to be the new dean of studies next year. We received a lot of emails and things and I know some people have had issues with the process of it. As a reminder, one of the fun things about this committee and others is that they're strictly confidential, so we're not going to be using names. But we did want to have a conversation.

6 Dean of Studies Search Committee RecapAcademics & Student Life (15 min)

Aca. - It consisted of 4 faculty members and 3-student reps. (the search committee). We started the process by meeting and deciding a timeline, finish it by the end of last semester. We started off by sending an email that went to the faculty, for nominations. A few people declined their nominations, ended with 3 applicants. Then it was an interview process. [Personal interview] and we evaluated them. It was essentially vote based and we gave a recommendation to Cappy and dean of college and it was their call.

SL - the consistency was 4 faculty and 3 students. The recommendation was passed on for three.

2015 -I was wondering if there was a discrepancy between the committee and the college.

Ac - they took the committee's recommendation.

2016 - I was interested to hear whether or not they felt they were being listened to or if the faculty had the majority.

SL - I think that the faculty was very receptive to our feedback. There were a lot of conversations where they taught us a lot and we were able to give them a of incite from the student percept. Ultimately, I think the breakdown of 4-3 was deliberate. But I don't think the faculty wasn't listening to us.

Main - can you tell us a little bit in terms of the feedback?

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Pres- there were some people concerned because only 3 student voices were present. There was general inquiry into whether this decision was fair or decided before the committee even convened. This is a person who is a rep to the faculty and one students go to if they have problems. I understand why it makes sense from that perspective why it makes sense to have more of a faculty voice. We're on that committee for a reason and we want our voices to be heard, and if students are concerned, that's a discussion that should be had.

2015 - it would be worth nothing a lot of response I got from people is that I haven't heard process related concerns but more so, a number of students have strong feelings against that person. I guess it's worth noting that I don't know.

Aca. - one aspect is that class advisor and dean of studies position is different. There's not as much student interaction. There's also the assistant dean of studies position. Even if you're a senior [and you have a question], you talk to her. Its worth noting, it's not that there wont be student contact, it's just not as high as previous positions.

2015- in terms of voting, I was wondering if you could go into a bit of break down just because I'm kind of interested.

SL - there were 4 faculty members and 3 students. The break down is that there were four votes in favor and 3 votes not in favor of the recommendation. I would say that if any of you would like to speak to us in our committees or outside of council, I'd be more willing to open up.

There was a lot of student feedback and it was voided very passionately. I have very strong feelings. But we passed them on to Cappy.

Joss - So, it's a recommendation, so is he or not the dean? (General answer: He is.) If there is so much concern about it, I don't know, I'm feeling almost like he's it, so not much can be done. I don't know how this works.

SL - there was an opportunity that we also had, Cappy is aware of it, to go to an external search if the internal search did not bring viable candidates. She chose not to. In terms of what we can do now, he will be the dean of studies.

Ac- There's a suggestion to meet with the dean of studies and give them the feedback, for example your concerns or 2015's. I don't think there's nothing we can do. He is the dean of studies, but we can give suggestions.

SL - We should also add, the renewal wasn't chosen [by previous dean than Lotto] (5 year increments) so this appointment has the potential to remain for 10 years.

TAs - my only problem is that the person who was replacing the current, had to come from a department where there could be a bit of a drain. Maybe if in the future, that can be looked at?

Pres - It privileges some departments over others?

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Ops – that would be a great suggestion. We did start the conversation talking about the process and not the person. The person is set in stone, but the process can be better. To me, the decision not to go to an external search as made when that was an option I don't know, [we can look] at what decision are being made.

Aca – the reasoning was that if a person from outside of Vassar came, they'd have to start that process by making a lot of changes to current structures. It would be a big adjustment for someone who is not used to it. That was the rationale that existed.

Pres- for instance I'm sitting on a search committee for another position, so the kind of feedback or voices or anything is important moving forward. One of the things we talked about is that this is an office that students have trouble with; students aren't always comfortable and these are direct recommendations we can make. I'm looking at this as an opportunity to make some improvements. It's not going to be a report, but if you get feedback about experiences that were good or weren't great, send them to me and I'll try to consolidate them. We'll also do an admin. forum with him some time this semester.

7 Open Discussion

2014- over break, I bought a soda stream machine, [I can drink] 2 liters of seltzer water a day. If I did [this everyday, I would've] drank 236 liters of seltzer before we graduate- 118 days till graduation. 100 nights is on Feb 15th, wine, cheese, dance afterwards. Seniors keep a look out. Main – can you tell us about the audit?

Ops – it's a little bit in flux. We're going to talk about this in committee, we're going to have a joint ops meeting early in the semester to talk about the audit. It's going to be something we're going to have to put a lot of the structure into place for. We want to do student gathered data, and also have an expert come in to gather it. It's a time consuming process. I think it's more important to do it right rather than quickly even though it's important to do it quickly.

2016- I got a lot of emails about textbooks lists, which is something we talked about in CCP committee. We talked about it, and talked about the possibility of syllabi being posted which was shut down. I thought it was frustrating. There are only 2 students and 8 faculty members. It's frustrating, I feel like we virtually have no voice. I was more irritated when someone sent me a list online to a course catalogue of another school where they have the syllabi posted online and also ratings and [other information]. All we get about the class is the paragraph. We don't have information sometimes until the day before the classes. I feel like you should know what you're teaching two weeks before classes. I think that's something I'm going to work on. I don't think these requests are unreasonable.

2015 – I noticed the card of office has changed their policies. Print cards are 25 dollars regardless of [whether it's a mechanical issue or not]. I'm not sure if that is the policy change,

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but I think there are a number of policy changes [that started] on Jan 1. I figured it'd be nice if they were advertised or told to somebody maybe.

Pres - that's something we're going to bring up. We'll ask acting dean Dunbar if a list could be sent out because that's a concern.

Activ.- this week mod fest is still happening, this Friday, 7 in the rose parlor [cabaret themed].

On Saturday there's an ensemble at skinner.

Pres- I sent this out in an email- we're trying to plan admin. forms for the rest of the semester. If there's someone you want to come in, let me know. We want to make sure you're all getting things from the forums. I've been working with Terry. As you all know we started late night in the Deece. The plan was to get food there. We're still negotiating with the people who do our dining services and they're pretty into it, so we're hoping to have a trial period. It's going to be more like food to order. It would be a couple days a week like Thursday through Saturday [until 2am]. We're hoping to get that started. We need some sort of task force, ideally from council who is interested in having the conversation with TQ and others. We'd probably get together next week. If you're interested, come find me after council. I'm really excited for this. We cant move some things from the UpC. The finding is that most students who go to UPC aren't staying there. We're hoping people would still use the space downstairs.

Jewett - what time does it open now?

Pres- 10, always opens at that time, but since the retreat is open till 11, hopefully [it will work out].

Pre- [we will have a] timeline as soon as we have convened. I do think they want to do the whole trial before spring break, so ideally within he next weeks.

2016 - has someone talked to the food committee about this? What does the food committee do? We never talk about them and I feel like we have no oversight?

Ops - the food committee as you know the chair is an elected student at spring elections. They meet every week with Maurine, review all of the comment cards, they look for trends, and they also talk about larger trends they're hearing form people. They should have a sign for whoever the student representative is - Sarah _____. Then they make those suggestions to Maurine who tries to implement them. You know how we have coffee and tea in the jugs? That's one thing that has come of it.

Joss- when does this task force meet?

Pres- like once.

Strong - I was on the food committee, and I was going to talk about it, but you got it.

Royal - I don't know much about late night at the Deece but I was wondering what it does [differently compared to the UpC and the Retreat].

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Pres- it offers another space to be in, where it's more quiet to study, pretty much anything.

Theoretically the retreat is similar, but it doesn't have the [same large] tables or side rooms. The whole idea is to eventually have food there. Last year we wanted the retreat to be it, but they don't have enough space for the [amount of] food in the back. At the Deece they do have enough space.

Ops - why can't we order more times then?

Pres- [not sure]

SL - committee meets 7pm tomorrow at the LGBTQ center. [I went to the] ASAVP committee, last semester, and there are a bunch of sub-committees. The student sub-committee kind of died but we're trying to do something with it this semester. This is a call to mostly the house presidents, but really anyone with an interest, to be part of the committee, if you can ask your house team if anyone is interested. We're thinking the committee could as a body, define what it's going to do. There is a certain amount of faculty and administration that sit in [certain committees]. It would give students the opportunity to discuss interpersonal violence with others. CARES also does this. It would give students a perspective. We get a report, about the semester before, statistics, used resources. This would be a space to discuss whether releasing that information would be a breach of confidentiality or if it would help lower the incidents. It's still in the early stages, we don't have a lot of information on what it's going to be, but if you're interested, email me and I'll send a list of names to Elizabeth S.

Davis. - so this is a call to students to structure?

SL - yes

Ray. - what is the overarching committee doing?

SL - it plans and reviews the events that happen, for ex. Know your title nine. They're planning more events; they also go over strategies on how to educate everyone better. That would also be a subcommittee thing. There are representatives from health and wellness. They work on accurately reporting what happens on campus because we have to send a list to the government every year.

Joss - you said this could be sent out to house team?

SL - it can be anybody, anybody is welcome and who is really passionate about it should be there. Meeting [times] would be up for negotiating.

Acad.- part of the textbooks problems is that CCVP thinks that 95% professors released lists; I don't think that's true. It's improved but it's still choppy. The way to go would be to universally implement a policy to release the syllabuses. It's a big problem. On to happier things, starting tomorrow, we're going to have a NY Times subscription. Physical copies- one by the mug in the

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retreat, not in the mug, and the other one by the kiosk. Deb will send an email about it. There's also digital access to it. I'm telling you because we'll have a quiz next week on current events.

Ops - I know schools require professors to have information out 2 weeks before classes.

Aca.- all the obvious things have been discussed, if you have an ingenious solution, that would be great- if you have an ingenious solution, come at me!

Pres- some professors don't have their syllabuses two weeks early. It's really hard to get constituencies to do something. Imagine twenty times more sass, trying to get the faculty to do something. Its something we should be pushing for. The work done last semester was a great start. If we can show the irregularities, there were some classes where I didn't get the syllabuses until the first day, [that would be great]. Continuing to have these conversations is good.

Socos - Something I don't want to be left out of the discussion is that sometimes professors will put books [on their lists] and then say, never mind we don't need that book.

2017 = going back to the audit, for some reason I thought that already started

Ops - it has started. It's something that's been discussed continually with Ops, SL, students at large, admin.. It's just it's something that's more complicated than originally [thought to be].

We've been in negotiation with people who are coming.

2017- all college day is coming up, we have 4 sessions, but we're trying to get 10.

Pres - Ed P. will be coming in right before all college day. So hopefully that will let us to spread the word.

At large, Alessandra, speaking as Pres. of v___ coalition, Friday 7 - 9 pm at ferry house there will be a vegan [get together with food].

Cushing - I'm sensing a general theme in terms of what happened last semester and, that we feel like we are voicing our opinions but they're not being heard. I would like our council to fix that. One idea that was proposed would be to formulate a Students Bill of Rights, something that is [also answerable to by the administration].

Ops - we talked about that in ops.

Cushing - I would love for it to be something that VSA does as a whole, not just a committee.

Pres. - not to put it off our radar, but it'd be good to have a group start to talk about it, maybe a few people who are interested can get together.

2016- I was going to suggest maybe during out pre-council dinner. I think it's important to everyone, not just those who are interested in doing it. It doesn't need to be formal.

Raymond - do we have a dinner on the horizon?

Pres - we can.

Raymond - does exec board have their office hours up?

Pres - working on it, as soon as those are finalized, those will go out.

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SL - it's been a while since we talked about gender-neutral bathrooms- that is very much in the works. There's going to be a staff forum and it's going to be an educational opportunity for faculty and administration, or really anyone, to come. It'll be an explanation of why we're moving in the direction, it's not going to be a debate. We're moving in this direction and they need to know why. Feb 19th, either in the CCMPR or the Villiard room from 5:30- 6:30 and it'll be run by Judy, Willow ,myself as far as I know. [Having] representatives from VSA would be great to show our support. We're going more into detail tomorrow in the SL committee about it. There'll be updates soon.

Joss- joss is having battle of the bands Feb 7th in the Shiva, come and rock on.

Ops - motion to adjourn

End - 8:05