

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Council Agenda for October 5, 2014

Time: 7:00pm

Location: College Center 223

“In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on.”-Robert Frost

1 Call to Order

Start: 7:03

2 AttendanceOperations

Proxies: THs

Absent: Operations

3 Consensus Agenda

- a. Miscellany News (Capital)..... \$48/\$1197
- b. ViCE (Capital) \$2165.03/\$2165.03
- c. Council of Black Seniors (Discretionary)..... \$0/\$1000
- d. VPI (Speakers)..... \$300/\$1200
- e. VARC (Capital) \$0/\$272.19
- f. On Tap (Capital)..... \$100/\$100
- g. On Tap (Discretionary)..... \$225/\$225
- h. Minutes From 9/28/14

Finance: We decided I'm going to give short description of each of the fund apps so you have an idea of what we are spending money on. We gave the Misc \$50 to buy mice, and we postponed decision on new computer to see if the CIS could fix it first. Vice was to purchase screens for film screenings, apparently with the cost of renting equipment this will be paid for after 2 film screenings. For CBS, it was for the cost of dresses for violets. That was postponed, they have more violets than last year so they needed more money. For VPI, they are bringing a speaker, a Columbia professor who sounded really cool. VARC is also being postponed pending review of whether or not the purchase... they already bought the film so we couldn't reimburse it. On Tap was for speakers for their practice space and the second one was a supplemental budget because they have 1/3 more people this year, so it was for shoes and costumes. The details are included in minutes if you want to know the rational behind any decision.

President: Does anyone one oppose? Okay we will assume it is approved.

4 Forum with Cappy's Assistants..... Cappy's Assistants (20 min)

Cappy's Assistants: Hi I'm a senior, religion major, poli-sci correlate, I live in the THs, I was a student fellow in Cushing and an HSA in Jewett. And I'm a senior I also live in the THs, I'm a history major with a public policy and math correlate, involved in a bunch of orgs. Our primary duties.. One of our main jobs is to facilitate office hours between students and Cappy. We have one this week, the second one of the year. We will have them on almost a biweekly basis. Also in the very beginning process of planning programming through the President's office. Cappy is concerned with the campus climate, and there is a fund to apply for as an individual or an org, it is a 2 page application. They want things

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to facilitate dialogue regarding campus climate. One common criticism is that administration tries to facilitate dialogue when students are more knowledgeable, so they're trying to open it up to students. It is basically free money to talk about what you want. No one has applied yet, so much free money! So I encourage you to spread the word. We got an email about it at the beginning of the school year and info is also on the website. It can range from lectures, dialogues, art series, debates. Possibly we were thinking there would be an email out to all org presidents to get students involved. We are also considering that we might hold office ours as well, because we do meet with Cappy on a biweekly basis. If anyone has ideas or problems we can relay those messages back to her.

2016: You didn't mention what the fund is called?

Cappy's Assistants: Oh right. It is called "Dialogue and Engagement Across Differences".

2016: What website?

Cappy's Assistants: It was emailed to us in July and the beginning of this year as well, we can send it out again. We will send it to Carolina.

2017: Thanks for being here and acquainting us with what you do. Regarding Cappy's office hours, one concern I've heard a lot is that you have to send email with a brief description of what you want to talk about. It's a worry that some of that would be screened if it's an unpopular topic... I guess I was wondering if you could talk about what you do with the brief descriptions and how that will effect a person's experience dealing with you and Cappy and also if you think that dissuades people from coming to office hours.

Cappy's Assistants: It is not a screening process. What we will do is put people together if they have similar topics. If it is too full we might say you can talk to Horowitz or Roelke, depending on the issue. And it is on a first-come first-serve basis, generally because we can't fit everyone replying to the m in time period. I didn't think that was a concern, but we will think about it and bring it up and brainstorm to make it better. If you think it would be more effective to not include that, let us know.

Main: In regards to Cappy's concerns with campus climate, in what ways has she tuned in other than office hours? Does she follow Misc tweets or council minutes?

Cappy's Assistants: Honestly, we've only been in this position for a month. Part of our job is to work on things to make us more accessible, so office hours come with our job, and I'm really interested in setting up events or dialogues. One thing she's doing this semester, she's having 33 meetings with the sophomore class, with around 20 students in each one. There are going to be 17 meetings this semester alone, so that is one good way to communicate with the student body.

Student Life: More to speak to Main's question, the VSA Exec board also meets with Cappy each month so we can communicate student concerns. Our first was last week.

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President: Yes we do meet once a month with Cappy as well. I have a few questions. It seems usually that office hours are like once every semester, now it seems more often. Is that up to you? Is it going to be more regular?

Cappy's Assistants: Yes, it will be almost biweekly. It gets messed up with October break, Thanksgiving, and finals of course, but we have 4 more sets over the semester. We are trying to increase the frequency. And if it is something urgent we can figure out a time that works for you. It is not super common but if you have a pressing concern you can get an appointment with Cappy if office hours don't work with your schedule.

President: You mentioned more events, are those more to let students talk or to make her seem more approachable? What is your general mindset on those?

Cappy's Assistants: There seems to be a dichotomy between students and administration, and a lot of administrators seem to have a thick barrier set up. Honestly we aren't sure how to do this, we've been in this for a month, but just like the VSA is striving for more accessibility and openness, I really do think Cappy and other administrators are looking to do that too. We are not sure how to do that, we are brainstorming. When we entered Vassar Cappy was traveling a lot, but now Cappy is much more grounded at Vassar, she is here almost all the time, and has increased accessibility on campus.

Student Life: This is going to sound like a silly question, but it is important information for student body, what does Cappy do on a day to day basis?

Cappy's Assistants: We've been here for a month, and she's very busy. We don't have access to her full schedule but it is booked solid. She's in a lot of meetings, she also has a PhD in Economics so she's interested in research and publishing articles. She recently had one in the NY Times. She also has conferences with the Seven Sisters, Board of Trustees happenings, a lot of alumni relations... Basically what does the President of the U.S. do? Definitely a lot of stuff, I couldn't tell you a lot of it, but you just know they do a lot. She is a figurehead, everyone knows who she is and where she lives.

BOEA: How long have you been in this position and how does that process work?

Cappy's Assistants: All of the Class of 2015 got an email last spring, there was an application that they sent out, then we had interviews, then we got emails a few weeks later. This is our campus job.

President: Are they always seniors?

Cappy's Assistants: Yes. It is pretty cool, I encourage you to do it.

President: I guess we will wrap it up. thanks for coming in, it was great.

Cappy's Assistants: If you have any feedback or ideas certainly reach out to us. And one of us will be at every council meeting and will take notes to show Cappy, so you can come up to us afterwards, or send us an email, Facebook.

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President: Also, a reminder that if you agree with something you don't have to raise your placard, you can just knock.

5 Executive Board Reports

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

President: Okay, so this was supposed to be Operations but he is not here so that will be next week. We are very busy with exec board meetings. We met with almost all senior level administrators, but we are waiting on Chris Roelke. We meet with all senior level administrators once a month, so if you have something to tell them we will pass it along. You can email me or someone else on Exec. We were mostly talking about goals for year so there is not a lot to report back yet. A lot of projects from last year are continuing. There is some curricular reform stuff going on we will hear about throughout year. With Cappy, there is a big push for student dialogue and productive dialogue on campus. With the fund, they really want people to apply to it. Senior level officers are Cappy, the Dean of Faculty, the Dean of the College. There is also the VP of the College, who is the greatest man ever, we asked to come into council. He did last year and it was the greatest hour of my life. A lot of the big projects, like the new book store, come out of his office, big directional stuff is what he oversees. His philosophy is that if you can't get it done in less than a year... everything should be able to get done in less than a year. He is great to talk to if you have ideas, and I can help you get in touch with him. Also the Dean of Strategic Planning and Resources, she works with the VP of the College a lot, oversees athletics which is fun, so she's great too. You don't see them a lot but they have a lot of influence, and I can put you in touch or I can bring things up at the monthly meeting. An update for everyone on the BOEA, there is an adjusted timeline. We wanted to sort of, there was confusion due to a lack of communication and everyone was on a different page, so I just wanted to clarify. The CIS got back to the BOEA after council meeting and realized they couldn't make it feasibly happen for another few days, so its pushed back 2 days, but the whole process the same. The easiest way to take care of the extra days was to open campaigning for a longer period, and results will be announced Friday not Wednesday.

At-Large: According to the email, the debate happens before filing closes.

President: I have basically only the information the email had, so yes, I believe. I don't know if filing closes tonight and if it's just campaigning after.

Jewett: The debate was planned for Tuesday when filing was supposed to close Monday, that was original plan.

President: Do you know if filing closes Tuesday?

Jewett: According to email it closes Wednesday.

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President: Hopefully we can find BOEA and he can answer some questions. So if people, I know I've received a lot of emails asking why there was switch, it was purely technological.

BOEA: I'm not too concerned about what happens, if someone doesn't file before debate, you can basically see it as a loss for campaigning. I briefly thought about it and forgot about it, and I'm also resigning, so does anyone care? Should we change it?

President: What are peoples thoughts?

BOEA: Voting opens when filing closes, so instead of having a gap, we moved it back and added the debate.

Finance: Does this functionally change anything?

BOEA: No.

2016: When was the debate before?

BOEA: There wasn't one, we didn't have time.

2015: Do we need a debate?

BOEA: We don't need one, but we have time, and our last discussion was about how the student body should know who they are electing, so seemed like the appropriate thing to do.

Cushing: Can we just move the, can filing end right before the debate, can we do that? For there to be no more discussion?

BOEA: The difficulty is that we will confuse people again, so we could, but I don't necessarily think we have to.

2017: I'm with you in preferring that filing not be open during and after debate, but also the email has already been sent, and it comes to a point that people get so many emails they stop reading. So I don't know how feasible that is.

BOEA: Also when we set the time for the debate, we can just send an underlying statement, beware that it is campaigning going to the debate, so if you aren't there you lose that opportunity to campaign and no one feels sorry for you.

President: So should we leave it where it is?

BOEA: I'm fine with anything.

President: Does anyone have issue leaving this where it is? No? okay we will leave it.

b. Student Life.....(7 min)

Student Life: Committee updates: we have been talking a lot about Title IX. There is a campus climate survey, that is happening, and we had a conference at Wesleyan about how to construct a campus climate survey. I think ours will be a lot better than at peer institutions, mostly because we have a consent based sexual assault policy, so our survey will be better than those produced at other institutions without consent based policies. Resumes are in for the new SAVP director. Interviews

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begin next week, and I will attend meetings to help look at the candidates. The committee is working on a project, something starting last year, aiming to demystify the reporting process. There is an infographic out, but it is slightly outdated because things no longer go through DB Brown's office. We want to put out information so people understand what the process is like, so when they are choosing whether they want to go through it, they can make informed decisions. Some members of the committee want to make food their project on campus this year. So I will be assisting and supporting them. They are going on a food crusade to fix campus dining. Gender Neutral Bathroom updates: when Sanders Physics was built it didn't include them in the plans, so the departments that inhabit that building have decided they want gender neutral bathrooms there so it's looking like that academic building will be the first with multi stall gender neutral bathrooms. When we have forums with faculty and staff, the staff just wants to know how things work, you know, what does this look like, and once questions are answered they seem like they are satisfied. I think they are happening in the old Juliet space, now the college bookstore. On a BIRT note, they are looking for transparency and are trying to get upper level administration to have an email go out when something is reported, linking to the website and on the database a list of the report will be there, not classifying it as a bias or not bias incident, and just say what was reported and what's being done. Personally I think that would be good for the campus climate, and you can express concerns to me or Cappy. Also in BIRT training, the entire BIRT went to training a few weeks ago and this past week went to 2 hour conversation with a guest speaker on the difference between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. So that is what administration is doing to be better.

Town Students: In regards to the crusade to fix campus dining, I know some groups wanted different coffee on campus, and I know that Aramark said we couldn't get rid of them, so are we trying to change Aramark or work with them?

Student Life: From what I've heard, they are generally very responsive to our requests, as a company that does everything from prisons to Goldman Saks, there is clearly a sliding scale of food policy. There was a review of the dining system in 2012 and to be honest, I think this group will see how much change is possible with Aramark, and if the answer is not a lot, it will empower future groups to move forward with that information.

2017: I recall from the conversation that there was a lot of talk about ways to discuss with administration Vassar's policies, and how Vassar administration is administering the student access to everything, to the Deece.

Student Life: There was a change in enforcement of policy.

Finance: Question for Town Students. What ever happened with trying to get the coffee on campus?

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Town Students: We were trying to do it privately, and they changed retreat coffee because students complained that it wasn't fair trade, so they changed it but then changed it back again. They try to work with you but don't really.

Activities: On Friday, we met with the VP of the College, and his office is currently working on a plan for campus dining. Your subcommittee can talk about what we can do together. He plans to have student dinners to see what students want in terms of campus dining.

President: To echo act about the VP of the College, this is one of his main priorities, and in the past he has had a lot of success working with large corporations, like with the bookstore last year. He is helpful and gets a lot done and is very reasonable.

6 BOEA Amendment Main (10 min)

Main: So basically this is the same as last week. This is exactly the same.

President: An issue last week was that people felt they needed more time. Does anyone want to speak to the amendment this time? No? I motion to vote since we have seen it 3 times.

Abstain: Student Life, Finance, Cushing, THs

All in Favor: Main, Jewett, Lathrop, Noyes, 2017, Strong, 2015, Activites, Town Students, Academics, South Commons, 2018, TAs, 2016, Ferry, Joss, Raymond, Davison.

All Against: None.

The amendment passes.

7 Open Discussion

2018: Basically I had my first meeting with class council, and there has been a lot of sexual harassment with the freshman class. There were lots of issues with the hookup presentation, and that was clearly not helpful. Can house presidents have student fellows talk to their freshmen about this issue? Student Fellows, I think that would be the perfect time for students to talk about sexual harassment, because I think a presentation isn't intimate enough. There are also 5 to 6 EMS cases on average per week within the freshman class, all hospitalized cases. I was wondering, can we have poster campaign, like, be careful with alcohol?

Finance: Student Fellows are trained to discuss issues of sexual assault right?

President: Yes.

....: A lot of issues have come up particularly in our house, and we are work-shopping to get in touch with Judy to put together a workshop series. I'm going to bring it up with house team and student fellows. It is more than just freshman but freshman especially.

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2018: I heard also that Choice is making a presentation to each house, which is great, but also a lot of fresh won't show up, so I really ask you to talk to your student fellows specifically about sexual harassment.

At- Large: I am a CARES intern this year, and I just wanted to say that it is domestic violence awareness month, so CARES does study breaks, and we have already reached out to house presidents to host study breaks in October or November. If you have any suggestions to bring to those study breaks, I just wanted to say that.

2015: Also if you do do that, please do it soon, because Halloween is the biggest EMS thing and also a night of reported and unreported assault.

Finance: Great, our committee met this past week, and we divided the committee into 2 groups. The first group does fund apps, and the second group goes over policy about how fund apps are decided on. The second group will be meeting on Tuesday for the first time, and we are going to talk about a big project. I am going to give you an idea of the projects to be discussed. First is a fund to set up so that students can cover the cost of extracurricular activities. Some orgs will charge to go to things like conferences, so if you can't afford that, this fund will help. Another is trying to figure out a system for capital items, because we currently buy them and forget about them and they're stolen so we buy them again. We are trying to create a better capital loan system. We will also do reviews of big orgs such as orgs receiving more than 20k. For example we usually do WVKR to see how that money is spent. If you have any interest in any of these projects let me know. 2018's ideas were great, we focus a lot on the process of reporting but we also need to address stopping this from happening beforehand.

Main: Our fall festival is this Friday, 5-9pm on the Quad. Most house teams will be tabling, there will be rides, food trucks, free food, and a lot of fun, so come.

Davison: To 2018's points, my dorm has had a spike in EMS calls and we are moving up in the ranks from bottom to middle, so a lot of that, we believe as a house team, is contributed by the freshman class. There has also been a misuse of public spaces, such as the egg incident in the bathrooms, involving people smashing eggs in the bathroom for no reason, so I didn't understand what you want us to do? Do you want the president to facilitate a conversation about this? I would be open to bring this up in house team meetings. but personally I wouldn't want to facilitate a discussion to the freshmen. I am trying to clarify how you want us to respond.

2018: In terms of who is going to talk about not drinking, we really want it to come from all classes.

There is the issue of being kind of talked down to by upperclassmen, so if there is a balance between all classes it would be better. I think you should talk to student fellows to talk in fellow groups, then I'm thinking of a poster campaign. We did have the online class over the summer but people aren't going to put that into practice, and we want people to realize what EMS is and does.

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At-large: Just to speak to that, house presidents, talk to your HSAs. We meet with Luis Inoa and talk very thoroughly about these issues. During training student fellows are were told that they are supposed to facilitate circles, so encourage them to specifically make them about EMS and drinking safely.

Cushing: We have had a lot of incidents. One of the things a Student Fellow suggested was sending group texts to fellowees every Friday and Saturday to check in and also let them know what they can do, such as calling EMS and CARES. I thought that that was a good way to kind of make it seem less like they're being looked down on and instead being cared for. Every week having a small reminder from student fellows, I think it could work in other houses too. I encourage house presidents to kind of make sure that not only freshman attend but also upperclassman attend the CARES and Choice study breaks, because these issues concern all of us.

Finance: I think that the campus dining situation contributes to the EMS calls, largely because dining hours are from 5:30-8:00pm on Fridays and Saturdays, so we get used to it and eat a lot earlier than the average U.S. meal time. So dinner is at 5:30 and we don't start drinking until 11pm or 12pm, so our stomachs are more empty than if we were eating at lets say 9pm. A lot of other schools have food for freshmen on weekend nights, so it would be good to look up if that is effective. I know they do it at Yale and students like it because they have something in their stomach before drinking.

2015: A larger campus problem is a lack of programming, productive programming. There is a problem with a social scene run by students in houses involves drinking, and in that effect it would be great to have Friday and Saturday night things. Also it is important to have house teams stress alternatives and seriously try to get freshmen to go to anything they can to avoid things upperclassmen throw.

Joss: To my knowledge, the biggest thing administration banks on is Alcohol Edu program, but they are only made to seem mandatory. A third or more of the Class of 2017, that number is really ball parked, apparently didn't complete it, and the only threats are empty threat emails.

2017: At least from the reactions of people on the 2017 Facebook page, people who did do it don't take it seriously because of the format.

President: That is also super helpful, we will bring it up with Chris Roelke tomorrow.

Student Life: First, I would like to shout out to 2016 for the "Where are all the Juniors" event this Saturday, people said it was really great. Second, this is definitely something we will focus on in Student Life tomorrow at 8pm in the VSA office. To echo all the things that 2015 said, I know Halloween is coming up and is a destructive time for main building. People get really drunk and use alcohol to facilitate assault. Knowing it happens every year, I think Student Life and the VSA as a whole should put pressure on this. We are still coming up with things to do, and I think that the VSA is structured to reach out to students, so we could very successfully run some campaign, like "this is my house where I

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live please do not destroy it or assault people here." That could be effective. Even physical assaults happen on this weekend. We need to be aware of what is coming and try to stop it.

At-large: Since right now we haven't appointed a new SAVP coordinator, as a result alcohol based programming for the next month until the new coordinator is chosen is going to be stretched pretty thin. So keep that in mind.

Activities: Student Life did this last year, and printed out posters on the updated reporting process that could be helpful. We could post in convenient locations like the laundry rooms and bathroom stalls.

Speaking to 2018, as much as I hope that would work, I don't think we can stop it. EMS or administration did some kind of survey and found that there were more EMS calls on days with no programming, so something going on every weekend that is not at the THs and TAs is something that activities can focus on for the upcoming year.

Town Students: A random point, I feel that every year freshman have a ton of calls, so a good talking point in talking to the kids in the dorms is that when people are EMS'd or hospitalized, it takes resources away from the community. As Vassar students we want to be engaged and don't want to be taking resources, because that caters to our entitled entity.

2015: Vassar employs an ambulance on Halloween specifically for the event, and last year we took up pretty much every hospital bed in Poughkeepsie, so this is a big problem that reflects terribly on us.

Activities: I motion to adjourn.

All in Favor: All.

All Opposed: None.

End: 8:06