

# VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

## Council Agenda for October 26, 2014

Time: 7:00pm  
Location: College Center 223

“It is the very pursuit of happiness that thwarts happiness”- Viktor Frankl

### 1 Call to Order

Start: 7:01

### 2 Attendance

Operations

Absent: Davison, Town Students

Proxies: Main, Raymond, Strong

### 3 Consensus Agenda

a. J Street U (PreOrg)	\$1175/\$1175*
b. Archery (Capital)	\$1800/\$2100
c. ASA (Capital)	\$34.99/\$34.99
d. TLC (Speakers)	\$2800/\$3500
e. Amnesty International (Conference)	\$230/\$230
f. NSO (Capital)	\$1600+Cost of Security Tags/\$2542.33
g. Pro-Health (Collaboration)	\$500/\$500
h. Class of 2015 (Discretionary)	\$2530.65/\$2530.65
i. VISA (Capital)	\$918/\$1721.25
j. ViCE (Capital)	\$700.02/\$700.02
k. Accidentals (Discretionary)	\$65/\$125
l. Minutes From 10/12/14	

Finance: I'm going to go through what we did. For Archery, it is its first semester as a full-fledged org, so they need to buy equipment, and it is their first time using a capital fund. ASA realized needed something else, TLC needed money for a speaker, they are collaborating with the Office of Health Education to speak about suicide prevention. Amnesty International is attending a conference, sending two people. For NSO, it is the third year in a row that their room has been broken into and almost all of their stuff was stolen. We didn't give them all the money requested because frankly we are sick of doing this and they need to figure out how to get all of their stuff secured. They are talking to security and we are also giving them security tags for some of their big ticket items. Pro-Health is bringing in a speaker, I think about sexually transmitted diseases. 2015 needed more money for Halloween because we didn't pay for serenading. VISA needed flag stands for flags, which are very expensive. VICE needed something else, I don't remember what it was, but it was something complicated with cables. The Accidentals need cardigans because that is there thing. J Street U, it is the first semester we are allowing pre-orgs to apply to funds. They want to bring in a speaker, and the committee had a good conversation about Zionism, and decided the speaker would work with the Speakers Fund. Typically we try to remain apolitical, and we only won't fund if we think it could be offensive or hurtful, so the decision is not based on our own political beliefs. Questions?

President: Great. Does anyone object to the consensus agenda? Okay it is assumed passed. Next we have the forum.

\*Denotes a non-unanimous decision

### 4 Forum with DOSPAAR

Marianne Begemann (30 min)

Begemann: Hi everyone, I am the Dean of Strategic Planning, and most people know the areas I am responsible for, but I will list a few. Reporting to me are Athletics, the Library, Art, Administration, Finance, Faculty Housing, the nursery school and infant and toddler center, those are the major direct reports in terms of individuals coming to me. I oversee capital planning in respect to academic spaces,

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including upgrades, offices, classrooms, the science center, and other capital projects moving forward. I work with the VP of Finance of the college, in addition I am responsible for the sustainability intern, who reports to the associate dean in my office who oversees work with sustainability. What I am hoping to do today, a brief update on the science project, in particular some faculty rumors about Olmsted. I am not sure if it is just a couple of students or faculty or whether the rumors are full blown, but I thought I'd let you know so you can spread the word and quench the rumors. I have been hearing people say that Olmsted is condemned and being torn down and that the Bio department is being moved out, and that is not true. Olmsted is undergoing a partial renovation. Most of the work has to do with mechanical, electrical, and safety upgrades. A quarter to a third of the building is being physically upgraded as well. There will be some spot renovations. It is not being torn down, and the biologists moved out because of some concerns expressed about fumes and dust mitigation that could interfere with the semester. In order for construction to occur as simply as possible, they have moved out for the semester. All work will be finished in January and the department will be moved back in. We have had conversations with staff in the Bio department about how the move will proceed, and what happens if the building isn't ready, but it should be reopening in January, and Bio will be moved back in along with some fraction of the psychology department. Questions?

2015: Considering it is October, is construction still on schedule?

Begemann: The management firm has little concern that we will be done in time to move back in.

There is an anticipated end date for the middle of December, and the rest of the time will be spent cleaning up and getting ready for occupants. The mechanical work is finished, and if you still see some plywood in windows, there was a little of delay on the glass, but that glass should be delivered on site in week or two. You always have to worry because it is winter and things happen unanticipated, but they are really confident that they can get the work done.

2015: Is it a goal to have the College Center labs move back into Olmsted?

Begemann: That is a conversation we've been having with the department. The goal is to move them back, that is my goal, and we really want to start thinking about renovating the College Center as an all-campus space, and the longer that is postponed the harder it is to make it work. We may decide to move out of College Center by spring break, and no work can happen in the College Center until summer anyway. There is a firm deadline for the end of the spring semester, but the conversation is still going.

President: So no updates, they're just electrical, so they won't be noticeable?

Begemann: If you're familiar with the building, a lot will be different. The basement specifically, all experimental courses will be taught there, and there is going to be a new learning and behavior lab, a new space for Cognitive Science, folks that use the EEG equipment and eye tracking equipment, all that will be moved into the renovated space. Some classrooms are completely renovated, faculty offices are being made. There is a significant amount of new work, about 30% building, but the rest is just sprinklers and duct work.

Joss: Thanks for coming in. Second, you mentioned turning the College Center basement into an all campus space. I'm curious if there are any plans for what that will be turned into.

Begemann: You probably know if you read the reports on the VSA website, there have been a number of studies that Chris Roelke has done, discussions I should say, with students about what is needed. Since that time I've pulled together a group of administration and faculty and the campus master

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planning committee to brainstorm. We are in the position to begin working with an architect, and we are initiating a contract with a member of the art history department. We are planning on partnering with his firm to begin to design work in the college center, primarily the first floor basement. The program will start full force this coming week or two.

Operations: Switching gears, can you talk about the searches for the athletics and library director?

Begemann: Yes. Another thing I wanted to talk about is the search for a library director. As you probably know, the associate athletic director stepped into the interim position and is doing a wonderful job trying to streamline operational things, increase transparency, and work on budgeting. A lot of things needed to happen before the search. We are also in the process of finding an assistant director for sports and recreation. You can go to job the website and see the description. We want to bring in an assistant athletic director responsible for life fitness, wellness, varsity club sports, and to be a liaison for VSA club sports. Last year we had a conversation about a long term plan for VSA club sports, and we hope they work closely with students, decide what kind of structures to oversee in terms of VSA club sports, and whether it is appropriate to report to athletics or leave it in the VSA's oversight. It is really important to bring visibility and structure to that side of athletics that gets lost, we think it gets lost in shuffle. With an assistant athletic director we can elevate those programs and be on par. We plan to move forward with the search during spring semester, so someone can be in by mid-summer and start next fall semester. We haven't put together a job ad yet, because we want to clean up housekeeping. As far as the library goes, she left as of August 1st. She took retirement and also a new job in California, at Sierra College which is a part of the community college system in the California system of higher education. she is the dean of learning libraries or something. She has been here 18 years, so we think this is an opportune moment to think about the definition of that position. The first things we are asking ourselves, what are some things we need to understand about the intersection between the library and other parts of campus. This is a critical question as we begin to interview candidates to understand what to bring to the table and help us move forward. The intersection between the library and technology, some institutions have technology and the library closely aligned, so the question was what can we learn from other institutions who have aligned it with the library, what can we steal the best parts of , so we know what direction we want to move in before beginning the search. There was a survey done in 2012 by students, faculty, and staff, and we are using that data to determine what the community thinks of the library. We are interested in hearing input about that or libraries in general on campus and how we might gather information from students.

Student Life: Kind of, in a broader sense thinking about space on campus, I urge you think of accessibility, because there are shockingly few buildings accessible for all kinds of people. I heard whispers, and I would also be really sad if the post office would be moved. I heard whispers that they might be trying to move it so it can be a more open space, and that the mailboxes are obstructive, but I really love where it is.

2017: In terms of construction, a rumor was that after completion of the science building, Mudd Chemistry is no longer needed and will be demolished. Is that true?

Begemann: Yes, the plan is that chemistry will be in the new building, and Mudd will be torn down in the spring of 2016. The new building deadline is November 2015, about a year from now. Chemistry will be moved out of Mudd and the building will be torn down right after.

2017: Is there any discussion about what that space will be used for?

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Begemann: The landscape plan is that we will be turning the science quad into a new landscaped area. What you see now, that is temporary landscaping, and is only in place until we finish the science project in 2016. In 2016 we will re-plan the landscape, it is only temporary now, so it will be much improved. In the Mudd space, that space between the two Sanders and New England will be landscaped by our landscape architect. We plan for a combination of storm water management zones, tall grasses to let rain water in, grassy areas, and some tree plantings.

Operations: Do you oversee dorm renovations?

Begemann: I do get a say in how we spend capital dollars, but that is not me.

Operations: I heard a rumor that Raymond won't have any renovations.

Begemann: There has been no decision. Everyone understands that Raymond is the worst, and it is in line after Strong to get bathrooms. It was actually before Strong, but they could use a cookie cutter approach with Lathrop and Strong, and they had to redo the draw for Raymond because it has an extra floor. But it is not off the table. I did want to say about accessibility, there are guiding principles concerning capital projects on campus, they are posted on the VP of Finance administration website. With the guiding principles, you can see in there that making buildings accessible is one. One thing about New England and Sanders that we are proud of, is that we were able to bring them up to an accessible level. It has to do with the landscape, and all paths are the appropriate grade.

Student Life: I think the major complaints are with residential buildings. Even with renovations, Lathrop has beautiful new bathrooms and elevator, but no ramps.

Begemann: We are pushing to do handicap renovation but other people felt the money couldn't be put towards that. I think that was a mistake truthfully, and I do think the project needs to happen sooner rather than later.

### 5 Forum with Miscellany News

Marie Solis (20 min)

Misc: Hi everyone. I'm the editor for the Misc, so I just wanted to talk about the weekly process, how production of the paper works, and a few other misconceptions. First, I want to talk about the weekly cycle. Every Sunday there is a General Body meeting, which happens at 9pm in the Rose Parlor. Typically reporters come in then, they are assigned articles, we talk about how it can be improved, and anyone is welcome, we welcome all criticism. Tuesday is production night, so between Sunday and Tuesday editors put articles in, they are making edits, and then Tuesday is production. So we start, people are in there starting at 6, and I don't leave until around 5:30am most Tuesdays. Everyone finalizes edits, and on Wednesday we send the paper to the printer at 3pm. Wednesday night at 7pm, the editorial meetings occur. Then we start again the next week. That's that. I also wanted to talk about how you can write and how to become a reporter. Anyone is welcome and you can just approach the editor of the section. Once you have written 3 articles that have been published, you can apply to be a full-time staff member. You undergo a workshop, and then we vote you in. So yeah. I also want to focus specifically on interviewing protocol. There is often a misunderstanding. Things go awry sometimes. First off, all reporters are encouraged to meet interviewees in person, we strive for that, but also email is what ends up happening in many cases especially on a tight deadline. So also, in terms of if it is an in-person interview, in order to get accurate quotes, some record interviews, I like to transcribe, but either way we really strive to make sure everyone's voices are represented exactly how they are. Also, we practice after the fact quote approval, which means if we interview you and you want to see quotes, you

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can request that we send you quotes to make sure that they are accurate. However, we have had some administration make significant changes to quotes, we don't like that, but it is in place to ensure accuracy. Another thing, anonymous sources, we take them very seriously but it is not in the bylaws, but we deal with them on a case by case basis. For an article extremely sensitive in nature, we say okay it can be anonymous, or if the person's opinion could make them a target of harassment, so yeah. Any questions about interviewing? So now I want to talk about what articles make it into the paper and who gets to read them. So as I mentioned, we allow interviewees to see quotes before they go to print, but no one outside is allowed to see our content or know about it before print. Also if an article is questionable for some reason, offensive or biased, it is up to the discretion of the executive board and the editorial board on whether it will appear in the paper. That's case by case. But at this point I want to stress that we don't endorse opinions. Opinion columnists is often where the controversy happens, however if an opinions article comes to us and we think it is offensive, if we think it is potentially hurtful, we can choose not to print. Anyone is welcome to submit an opinion article, you don't need to come to meetings, so if you just want to write one piece one time, you can send it to the opinions editor, but it will also be subject to edits. We have limited space so it is mostly a logistical thing. That is basically it. Anything else you are curious about in terms our process, anything I mentioned or left out? Finance: Out of curiosity, how do you determine how many copies you print?

Misc: Historically it has been 2000, but we recently reduced it when we noticed they were lying around the college center for a really long time and put right into recycling. We reduced it down to 1700. Part of the problem is distribution when you see them lying around, they should be making it to other buildings. We are conscious of waste, so it is not fixed. We can change it every week if you want, but it has been consistent every week.

President: What do you do online?

Misc: Last year we were struggling with domain name, we finally have one, [miscellanynews.org](http://miscellanynews.org). All content in the newspaper appears online, and we also have a few blogs, such as the JYA blog, and main circle which is a lot of things. People write about fashion, food. Then the live blog, which is what we do here. I'm personally interested in doing live blogging at debates, we also do them at important events.

President: Thanks for updating.

### 6 Executive Board Reports

#### a. Finance.....(7 min)

Finance: A couple of things. This semester we tried a different way to review fund apps, and it is working really well. To remind you, that process is the committee is split into 2 groups, which rotate each time, I chair one and the former VP for Activities chairs the other as a member of finance committee. That way it cuts the time in half and is a check on my position which means it allows other voices to be heard. If you would like to stop by, you can, it is very exciting so feel free to do that. We are also working on projects, we have officially assigned people. Projects are 3 organizational reviews, for the Misc, WVKR and ViCE. We will do more next semester, Hip Hop 101 and 2 more. By review, I mean look through org practices, purpose, budget, and figure out where waste is or where they need more funds, because with these orgs we give the same amount every year and don't ask a lot of questions. The other project is the student assistance fund, and we want to do a process through which we are not compromising student privacy. We have money for the fund, we just don't know

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how it will be distributed. Last, we are trying to reestablish the capital borrowing system. The VSA used to buy all and rent them out, and now what we do is we buy capital for organizations and trust them to promote that they have these items and share them, but people get very protective of items. But they belong to the school so it is not fair. We are trying to get a master list and have an online system so people can see what we have and not buy things twice. Then everything will be cataloged and not be owned by one org, just watched over. Also I am adding a poem to the end of emails to the treasurers every week, so if you want that email let me know.

b. Activities.....(7 min)

Activities: So a lot of what we've been doing has been pre-org centric for a very long time. We have one left, and I'm super excited that we're doing that this week. Essentially we're trying to figure out how we are going to do it, and we are talking about it this week if anyone wants to come. We are discussing how to deal with it being approved so late into the semester, and so if we want to allow more pre-orgs to apply and just start everyone off in January, so we are working on how to approve those and make sure they are doing the things we require of them, in the sense that they are having meetings, having people come, and actually being successful. Part of helping has been allowing them to apply for funds this year. Since that hasn't been something that has been a thing for a very long time, we don't know how to organize them, so we are working on it along the way. Because in the past, they were almost set up to fail because they couldn't reserve spaces or a SARC intern, so we are really working on giving them things they need to actually move to each level and actually become an org, especially because organizations are important because people don't find a space on campus until find they find an org for them. Having more orgs that actually interest the student body, it is important for those things to be able to thrive. Also, we are working to create new events. There has been a lot of shift away from on-campus events, so the more orgs people are interested in, the more events people interested in. There has been a change in student body every year, so there is a change in new orgs, and it will create lots of fun things.

7 Open Discussion

Student Life: So, Halloween money update. The way we decided to do this, money has been transferred by Chris Roelke to the VSA operating budget. We thought this was a wiser way to approach this, so we ask all of you to put on programming in houses and give us the receipts.

Finance: So some of your treasures have issues with being treasurers, so the easiest way for you guys is to submit receipts as opposed to transferring the money into your budget, and I will reimburse you. You can make your treasurers do that, they can come into my office hours.

Student Life: With apologies, Ferry, Town Students, THs, TAs, we made a decision that the money wasn't enough to support programming in upperclassman housing. I am very sorry. You have a very high population density per budget, and also there was the argument made in the Student Life committee that people in the THs, TAs, and Ferry have access to kitchens which makes a difference in terms of eating and having a full stomach on Halloween. I am very sorry, oh and the SoCos, sorry SoCos! But really the goal was to try to one, make students who do not drink and have some sort of fun not feel left out, in addition to the Witching Hour, and also making sure food is in stomachs. Please no pizza, dorm dinners can lead to eating less. We crunched numbers based on people per dorm. Cushing \$105, Davison \$105, Jewett \$105, Joss \$121, Lathrop \$95, Noyes \$95, Strong \$85, and Main

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\$124. If you're looking for ideas I'm a fan of breakfast foods, you can reach out to orgs, and can pay them to make pancakes, whatever works.

Cushing: Since we can't make transactions more than \$100 on the Pcard, is that limit erased?

Finance: If needed, you can email me to raise the limit. If not, ask me to put it on my Pcard. Treasurers should all know this, if you ever need to spend more, you can put it on the master Pcard. During my office hours on Friday people can come in and order food.

2015: So Halloween this weekend, yay. We talked so much about this. Yeah, be safe, be excited, the Villard room will be great and cool. There will be beer if you are 21 and pizza starting at 1am in the Retreat. Tabling for tickets will be Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday in the College Center from 12-4. Seniors, wristbands will be given, bring ID to the event. This is VCash only, tickets are \$5 in advance and \$7 the night of, but buy them early or stand in line forever. There is no additional payment for drinks. Remind people that this is a VCash-only event.

Operations: A few quick announcements, as the interim BOEA chair, the timeline for the position filing begins tonight at midnight, ends next Sunday at midnight, and interviews will occur by

Operations on 11/4 at 7pm. We don't have to vote on anything. Also, there's a listserv I send the VSA agenda out to every week, so have people email me if they want to be added to the list. Last thing is the audit. This is the Ruby who helps send out the request proposals to come. Companies send us what they would do, and they will be getting back to us next Monday, and we will pick one and move forward with it. You can all keep me accountable.

Finance: Are we going to pay?

Operations: It depends on Chris Roelke.

TA: If house presidents could share the Halloween Facebook event to house pages so Freshmen know how events work, that would be great.

Joss: Question to 2015, I know it is VCash the night of, but can you pay cash in advance?

2015: Yes. And I realized I didn't plug the Witching Hour, thrown by the traditions committee in the Aula from 9pm-1am Friday. It will be happening the entire time the Villard room is and in advance of it. There will be a costume contest, cupcakes, fun, and a movie. It's going to be great and I encourage people to come if the Villard room isn't your scene, or you get there and it isn't your scene, but will be in an hour, go get a cupcake and come back.

President: Anyone else have anything?

Student Life: There was an email from Carolina about it, but Carry the Weight is happening thanks to Cares, TLC, We Are Here, and also Break the Silence.

President: Alright, if that's all, go home!

End: 7:54