

VSA Council Meetings 9.27.15

Attendance

2016

2017

2018

Cushing

Davison

Ferry

Jewett

Joss-proxy

Lathrop

Main-proxy

Noyes

Raymond-late

Strong-proxy

SoCos:

TA-proxy

Town Students

Finance-Josh

VP Academics-Logan

VP Student Life-Chris

VP Ops-Ruby

President-Ramy

Consensus Agenda

Finance: Punx is hosting an event with VC bikes and Mikology that we are funding and the Davison event is getting funding. And SJP is now a full org so they applied for the annual budget funding and for a conference and yeah that's it.

Ramy: Also we have some positions that are old that are finally being appointed since we didn't ever have a boea so yeah... Raymond and Davison have fall junior reps! Does anyone object?

2018: What exactly does Punx get? What are they doing?

Finance: Basically it's like a diy day with pizza and music where their going to have like a bike repair workshop and things like that.

Ramy: Any objections? [none] Alright it's adopted. Alright now we turn to Ops to discuss new meeting procedures.

Operations: Yeah so we have new meeting procedures which are these listed guidelines... except I can't put them on the board because of technical difficulties so it goes as follows:

If you agree with something, knock

You can speak twice on one topic
Do not repeat what others said for emphasis
You can directly respond once
Only discuss the topic listed, do not bring up a new topic in the middle of one
Hold up the number of the topic you want to speak on, which doesn't really apply here because we're going to try not having multiple topics...
Everyone has the power to add to the agenda
At Large members are not moved to the top of the speakers list

Ramy: Are there any questions? Alright well we're going to move onto our serenading debrief so basically this is how we will format this: the co chairs of the traditions committee are here and they will give a rundown on the event in general, then we will form smaller groups to discuss the topic for a little bit, then meet again as a whole.

Traditions Co Chair: So we had serenading last week and in our opinion it went well considering it was Sunday and Families Weekend. We set up around 3-4, senior council got together and talked about responsibility. Then we set up the balloons and that went well. One scary aspect was that the water balloons seemed like they could break windows, but fortunately that didn't happen. So we moved house to house, and the water balloon fight went well. The opinions on house members was that they felt pressured to join but we tried to make it not like that. It did kind of get scary especially at Raymond just because everyone got very into it. We were also ahead of time 30-40 minutes which was not too much an issue. We reached Ballentine around 5:30 where we played kickball and stuff. Houses that were participating came around 6 and serenading started. Raymond deserved the win because they all got into it and they really rocked the water balloon fight. We didn't expect that many people, so yeah turn out was good. People enjoyed themselves and Gino's pizza was brought. The pizza and beverages should've been handled better on organizing and distributing food because some TA students just took boxes of pizza blatantly. The other houses that didn't choose to sing showed up around 7:10-20 and just ate the food and stayed for fireworks. We would've appreciated if they came earlier so that they could've seen the singing and realized that it wasn't hazing. To me, it wasn't hazy but rather was quite enjoyable. Then the DJ started around 6:30-6:45 but unfortunately due to cold and wet weather and homework his set went unwatched. He did rock it though for an empty field, and we will definitely use him in the future, but money went down drain on that. Maybe serenading should've been held earlier, but yeah. Then the fireworks were at 8 and they were great. So that's that... are there any questions or comments before you split into groups?

Derek Sonntag(at large): As one of the few freshmen from Jewett that went, I thought that it was great and very fun.

Traditions Co Chair: Great thanks!

Ramy: Alright, we are going to spend 15-20 minutes discussing serenading now. We'll geographically split so like groups of 5 ish. Focus on these things like: were you at the event, what went well, and what should be changed?

[Discussion in small groups for 15-20 minutes]

Ramy: Alright so why don't we have one or two people from each group share a little bit about what you talked about. So yeah we'll start over there.

SoCos: Yeah so we just basically talked about communication and how there should especially be communication with senior class council.

Ferry: Yeah another thing is the fireworks. A lot of people don't like fireworks so we thought like an hour before there could be a warning about them, like an email warning. Yeah I thought that was a good idea.

SoCos: I think something that really set people off was that they did a test firework which scared people because it was a loud explosion at like 5:30 maybe. I remember it being a loud explosion in the middle of serenading and everyone was like "what was that". I don't know, I just think there could be more communication about it. There also seemed to be a few people that were worried for the Posse people and stuff like that. I think security and like fire watch they were well aware. So. Yeah.

Ramy: Next group.

2016: Yeah we were talking about all the things we can do with \$3000, mainly like ferris wheels and dunk tanks.

Finance: That's about 3 full days of dunk tanks.

2016: Yeah you can run a prison for about a month.

Finance: Yeah one prison cell can be rented for about \$95 a day. Also, two ferris wheels that way we can cut down line time. I think that'd be cool.

2016: Also I thought they told people about the fireworks very well, they made sure people knew through email and Facebook. check email and facebook. So I think it's just about making sure people actually check email and Facebook.

2017: Yeah I only knew because of Facebook and campus email. People don't often read campus emails because it's just long and they just skip it.

Ferry: Yeah we could maybe send an email with the subject Firework Warning that way people see the subject and know right off the bat cause I know some people actually are scared of fireworks.

Ramy: Alright our group.

Student Life: Yeah so we talked about, as far as improvements for next year, we brought up one thing, just a small thing, the catering thing because as Audrey explained it was a last minute thing for the ACDC to do the pizza thing. If there were more choices it would have made it a lot harder for people to sell food which I think is one of the issues we both saw.

Jewett: Yeah the other thing is that we didn't think timing was very good. As far as the dorms not participating, we told them we weren't going to only a few days before the event which caused a problem with timing. So yeah I think like maybe a week before the event or so just to give Audrey and I a bit more time before the event.

Ramy: Alright next group, oh wait 2016 you wanted to say something to that.

2016: Yeah I just wanted to say that we also discussed like having traditions committee and senior class council serving food "lunch lady style" that way no one can really steal the food.

Ramy: Alright next group.

Operations: Yeah so we just spitballed a bunch of ideas. Raymond freshmen had a lot of fun. Main freshmen just kind of felt okay about it. We also sensed a correlation between house team attitude and freshmen attitudes toward the event. And of course there are a lot of reasons for that. Different house teams have different levels of energy at different times of the year. We also wanted to sort of revisit Joss's concerns about social anxiety and we wondered if there was maybe a way of forming the event so that people don't feel so threatened by the event I suppose. So maybe like increasing the solidarity and maybe shifting the focus on house pride and maybe having each house have like a uniform or costume and they could make masks to eliminate some social anxiety and stuff like that.

TH's: One of the things I noticed was about Raymond and how they had that phoenix, or griffin guy in his costume and when you saw him you had no idea who he was and he knew that no one knew who he was so he went for it and got really into it because you couldn't tell who he was. It's like if singing and standing is uncomfortable that may change if there is a crafts-oriented aspect of this so that everyone is wearing a mask so everyone gets to be a Jewett owl or a cow or whatever respective things. So that could help bring unity to making the event more focused on house unity and house bonding. Just a thought based off of what Cecilia said last week about how it could be very meaningful for people who do have social anxiety because that sucks that some people feel they can't participate because of that and that's sad because there are things we can do to tweak it.

Main: At Main we felt there was a lot of pressure to put on programming with all of our other pressure of organizing programming at Main and stuff. At yeah so that's why we at Main were not so enthusiastic about it, just like the scheduling of it and the pressure that house team feels. Davison: Yeah I just want to reiterate the social concerns and like maybe we shouldn't continue an event with a history like this or yeah finding ways to make it more focused on senior and

freshmen interaction and making it more meaningful rather than about singing and dancing in public.

Noyes: Yeah there were problems with communication and the idea of being coercive. Like there is actually a line between hazing and enthusiasm and school spirit.

Ramy: Cool so do either of you wanna respond [at the traditions committee co chairs]?

Traditions Committee Co Chair: Yeah that was very constructive. We will definitely reevaluate going forward with this even, renaming the event, what the event entails, event structure, etc.

Ramy: Anyone have any specific ideas of moving forward with the event?

Ferry: So as I discussed previously the dynamic of freshmen singing to seniors and like all the freshmen choose the song not the house as a whole. And seniors, since there is a vassar song. seniors can sing that back to the freshmen to eliminate the freshmen senior division and enforce more of a house dynamic and building house spirit. Also, houses obviously can't say you have to go.

Raymond: I like the idea of being house centric. Like we made our song about Raymond instead of about the seniors. We supported house spirit more.

Noyes: Yeah but it should be either house pride or seniors vs. freshmen. If we are trying to move programming, we should move away from singing and water balloons and go to like flowers and talking.

Strong: I agree with Noyes. House teams have to be behind the event. It should also be further into the academic year because it's hard to mobilize everyone and they should lay out more expectations.

TH's: I think that often times it's awkward to tell people to talk. It's awkward to say like "Talk. This is to bond." But I liked the idea of incorporating camp style games like kickball and games that people can get physically acquainted because like smiling can do so much. Then later you could be like "yo i saw you there thats cool lets talk" and that way you talk when you want to talk.

SoCos: In regards to the timing of the event, no one wanted it last weekend except the administrators. We should decide the time, not the members of traditions committee and its administrators. It's should be up to us.

Joss: I think there's no correlation with water balloons and singing. Like on our house team we discussed that water balloons and singing are weird to think they bring people together.

Finance: Also something to be said about the freshmen to senior dynamic that is important is that there are social geographic locations where that can happen. Like all grades can interact in dorms and things. Some of it may even be drunken weekend context or if a senior takes an intro class to get a better GPA.

Traditions Committee Co Chair: Can we do a poll on who actually wants the event for next year? [12 council hands raised, 2 at large members]

Ramy: 14, with 2 at large so that's a slim majority of VSA.

TA's: Yeah I would it should just focus on class togetherness.

Ramy: Alright now we move to reports. First the academics report:

Academics: Alright so the peer advising system has had a slow uptake this year. We are currently turning the system over by removing last years seniors putting the last year juniors in. After this happens there will be a large push to have people sign up which will involve a dinner during fall pre-registration which went bad last year so hopefully this year it will be better and people won't storm me looking for tamales. CCP, which is the Committee on Curricular Policy met last week. Most of the discussion was on course curricular proposals but nothing was actually decided on yet. One was a trip to Iceland, and a prison studies correlate under Africana. And the architecture studies major which has been bouncing around committees for a number of years. And medieval studies will probably become a multidisciplinary program. It's all pretty boring stuff but an exciting thing! We are going to start talking about the pre-major advising system and the restructuring of that. A list of ideas came out of the faculty in the Dean of Studies and Freshmen so we're going to take that to academics this week so if you are interested in pre-major advising come to the academics meeting this Thursday at 6 pm. Lastly the library committee is meeting this week and the agenda for this year is still pretty nebulous so if you have any ideas on what you would like to see done in the library this year please speak to me and I will pass those things along.

Ramy: Any questions for academics? Alright student life you're up.

Student Life: Alright everyone so I have a few updates. CIE met for the first time this last Friday. The way CIE is structured is there are various subcommittees under the one big committee and members of the CIE have to be on one or two subcommittees. And yeah one big thing was subtraction of some of the subcommittees in which people believed that their job had been completed. We're adding two know committees, one working on the social justice requirement which I know CCP does a lot of work in however we think CIE will be doing a lot more with administration and stuff like that about the social justice requirement and what we would like it to become. The second subcommittee is going to be morphed into the previous subcommittee that was once known as Transitions due to a push from students for an undocumented students subcommittee in order to provide support and help for undocumented students on Vassar's campus. It'll now be called the First Generation, Low Income, and Undocumented Students

committee and it's important to emphasize that one student is necessarily all three, but to a certain extent, it is necessary to incorporate all three under one. Admissions associates them into international students which has made this process hard, but yeah we're working on providing resources to all three types of students so that their time at Vassar is more acclimated to them and so that they can actually enjoy themselves here. Other things we are working on is reporting on progress of last years rapport and we're trying to get help from the senior administration to help rapport and be more open to discussion. I know one of the issues last year, I wasn't on CIE last year, but one of the issues last year was there wasn't a lot of support from the CIE rapport release at the end of the year from senior administration. SO we're going to be working with them on revising that draft and getting their approval. That's really t for CIE. Also, CCL meets next Wednesday, so if you have anything to say to them, Joshua has already told me things so yeah just email me and I'll try to email Chris Roelke so feel free to tell us. So I guess yeah that's it.

Ramy: Any questions on that?

SoCos: Can we meet sometime to talk on that?

Student Life: Yeah.

Ramy: Anything else? Alright we'll get an update on restructuring from ops.

Operations: Yeah so we had our second meeting Saturday with more people than before. We basically had a conversation on general structure and all the things we do that we should keep like the Saturday shuttle and Tasty Tuesday. We also talked about different offices and committees and tried to organize them better. We basically wrote them all down on a post-it note and worked to arrange them better. So yeah come Saturday from 12-2pm at the faculty commons if you want to help and have a voice on this!

Ramy: It would also be helpful if house presidents could add these sort of meetings onto their house wide emails.

Noyes: Also will reports be emailed at some point? Like the minutes to everything or a bulleted list to everyone?

Ramy: Yes. Anyone else? Alright let's move onto constituent concerns.

Joss: This is to finance, I'm curious about the status of getting food for halloween?

Finance: Yeah we brought it up last weekend in our committee. On Tuesday we're set to talk about it again and I will let you all know.

2018: Yeah and last year it didn't come from VSA it came from Dean Rolke. He gave like a \$8000 donation.

TH's: Yeah also it came to my attention that in regards to Tradition's committee, there was an amendment made to their committee without the consultation of the chairs of that committee? We really watch that and make sure other groups don't do that and that we don't do that.

Ramy: Yes we can discuss that.

Raymond: Do you know when the heaters turn on?

Ramy: I will find someone to email.

Ferry: Alright I have 3 concerns. For one, our house is only allowed 40 members at a party and there are 20 people at our house which is not really fair because the TA's and TH's can have 20 people per person. We should be allowed more people. Also there's a ban on parties during Halloween, which maybe for TA's and TH's makes sense since they are senior housing, but Ferry is sort of a dorm so we should be able to have a Halloween party. Additionally, during holidays, like especially super religious ones, teachers have not been accommodating. Teachers didn't seem to care but I think like I took a whole day off from eating and I think we should have extra days for assignments. And this affects anyone of any religion. They need to be more accommodating to those who need to take time off.

Ramy: Well so the party thing is controlled by fire codes and safety and that's something that's bigger than us.

Ferry: Yeah but what about big dorm events like 7 Deadly Sins?

Ramy: I think that's a matter of like party versus an event.

Ferry: So we should just call it an event?

2016: We should also be hesitant to let any org have events during all camps events. Like last year we allowed a smaller event during the Throwback Jam which limits things like security so like all of security may be at the big campus event and that is not so good for the people at the smaller event.

Traditions Co Chair: In addition, it's also used to prevent alcohol consumption.

Lathrop: So Lathrop is one of the houses that has four groups come through and there needs to be guidelines to that. One of my constituents went outside to walk their dog, I'm sure you know who it is by now, and they came back and two parents were in their room. And yeah there needs to be guidelines like it's not just the one event, they are disruptive and unruly so it needs to be moved to a different house or something else.

TA's: I would like to speak to this not as the TA proxy but as a tour guide. That should absolutely not be happening. We're not supposed to do that or allowed to so I'll make sure to let my boss know.

TA's: We'd like to bring up the number of burglaries we've had and yeah we need to catch that person.

Ramy: Yeah so we have some wonderful people from Safety and Security coming in next week.

2016: There should be like a TA neighborhood watch.

2017: Back to the tour guides, it's totally ridiculous. Once I was kicked out of the parlor where I was studying which was like what I live here you can't kick me out. And Strong has been recently renovated so it's always toured.

2016: I have a direct response to that. Moms are very into just going into rooms like they're like "oh I want to see inside cause my kid might live here". Parents are still going to want to look.

TH's: This has to do with the CRC and Safety and Security and how apparently if you call one group and then the other they can tell you completely different information even though one person literally sits there and answers both phones. They are also known to respond in a non polite or professional way. I've heard of experiences especially with transportation about how people will have legitimate reasons to need a ride but they won't believe you. Like we are not responsible for convincing you we need a ride. If you don't feel safe where you are they need to pick you up. I also met with EMS and they were the only one that took it seriously. Safety and Security spoke on their behalf when it's not their job. So yeah I want to address that. But it's good to know that Kim and Arlene are coming in, yay! But yeah if you hear anything about that unprofessional behavior or if you have experienced that let me know or write it down so I can help assure something gets done.

Ramy: Talk to me after I have a story about that. Okay so anyone else? Alright so we'll go to Traditions with the SoCo's amendment.

SoCos: So yeah we had some structural concerns of traditions committee and thought that it should basically be absorbed into the structure of the VSA.

Ramy: Any questions? Alright we're going to move to open discussion.

Ramy: I have stuff to say. So elections voting happens tomorrow from 12-5pm to Wednesday at 12pm. There will be physical polling centers in the College Center and the Retreat. 12-5pm at the College Center on Monday and then in the Retreat on Tuesday and we'll also send the link in an email. We are unable to conduct a practice poll too so there is a small chance that there will be a technical glitch but yeah. It'll be posted by Wednesday in the Retreat at 9pm. Also shoutout to Raymond for their event Under the Stars! That was great.

TH's: I didn't raise my placard event to bring up a discussion on the Tradition's amendment, but we really do need to consult chairs on moving forward with the Tradition's Amendment because they are the one's running it and the one's who probably have a lot to say on it. I think they should be invited to the ops meeting.

Traditions Co Chair: Yeah so can I know what exactly was the amendment?

SoCos: Yeah so we discussed this at operations committee and this copy I have isn't even the official draft this is just some stuff we came up with but we basically think that Tradition's Committee should talk to the Senior Class Council for serenading. Yeah I just want to bring up that before you hand him that draft like this was just our first thoughts.

TH's: Okay so it's still in the drafting process?

SoCos: Yeah that's I didn't reach out. It wasn't at a point of voting if it was at a point of voting we would've reached out.

Operations: Can I interject? As the one doing reconstruction I can assure you that we'll be in touch about what you want done and yeah. We'll be in touch.

SoCos: Again I want to finally add that we wanted to get as much information about what you do like and don't like about traditions committee because it's a very autonomous body and I've been hearing a lot of things from senior class council and otherwise about in general how things are going and I wanted to see what those of you from this council had to say. And the general discussion is that it's too early and we're trying to fit this into the greater reconstruction of the VSA and at that point everything is on the table and yeah, everything is on the table its like that what the discussion is for. We weren't trying to circumvent you we were just not far enough in the process.

Ramy: Do you have any response to that?

Traditions Co Chair: I just wanted to ask, why didn't you approach us before bringing it here?

SoCos: That was just my decision.

Student Life: So one thing, a clarification on bystander intervention training. All orgs need to be trained and you can't go for 2 orgs. If you went already, someone still needs to go from your org. There are 6 total, 3 before October break and 3 after. So the answer is no, if you've already been trained you still need to have someone from your org go. The point is to get as many people trained as possible until eventually everyone is trained.

Noyes: If you and the other exec member are trained, could you go again?

Ramy: You could but there'd be no point because eventually all of your exec board will need to be trained.

Noyes: Okay but hypothetically.

Student Life: Yeah someone has to go no matter what but the logic is that someone else go so that more people are trained but yeah sure.

Jonathan (at large): I wanted to speak on the whole not bringing in the traditions committee for their amendment thing but I can withdraw since you want them to take that out of the council?

Operations: I just don't want to cause a heated debate between the two yelling at each other if it does not pertain to council. If it relates to council, I guess you can say it.

Jonathan (at large): Yeah I guess I just want to bring up a problem of VSA that they are wanting to be transparent and hear all the student's voices but it's basically small populations and committees that come up with completed stuff like amendments and projects so that when students want to raise a voice they only have a yes or no to say because the amendment or thing is already done.

Derek Sonntag (at large): Small question: is this our permanent council space or are we still looking for permanent one?

Operations: Yeah I'm still figuring out how to reserve New England. I can like send out a poll, and if we can't get New England, then this works or we can move. For now, this is where we are and it also says in the campus emails.

Traditions Committee Co Chair: In response to concerns of VSA and traditions not being very in tune with the student body, we are considering proposing an amendment for adding traditions to council so that the student body has a true voice through the traditions committee. In addition to that we would have a vote on matters that relate to the exact events that we overlook and plan.

Operations: That's a conversation we're having in ops this Wednesday at 7pm!

2016: Have you talked to Sia and Michelle?

Ramy: We did talk to Sia, yes.

Operations: Yeah and I can ask again, but yeah.

Ferry: There should be a better way to reserve rooms like online.

Ramy: There is but some buildings aren't on it because of student or professor status like students aren't allowed to reserve some buildings.

2017: Yeah it is really hard for students to get into New England.

Jewett: Do we need to change rooms? I feel fine here.

Ramy: Alright let's do a poll on changing the room?

TA's: Does a poll make sense with so many proxies here?

Ramy: Alright yeah we'll vote next week. So we'll be in this room for next week then.

2016: Can we try to get New England so I can try and see if I like the feel of it better.

Ramy: Alright meeting closed.