

VSA Council Sunday, October 18, 2015, 7:00

New England 105

Attendance

Main	Late
THs	Not here
Town Students	Not here
Activities	Not here

Consensus agenda

Capital Fund to LiNK (\$250/\$250)

Discretionary to Jewett (\$0/\$600)

Discretionary to VMSU (\$300/\$300)

Discretionary to CSA (\$550/\$1800)

Finance: Okay, so capital fund from LiNK for cooking storage, discretionary to Jewett—we're willing to come back to in the spring—full allocation to VMSU for an upcoming event, and \$550 to CSA because they're budgeted for it.

President: Any questions for finance? Does anyone object to the consensus agenda?... It's passed. So no we're going to go to the unFramed fund app.

unFramed Fund App

Finance: We're doing a special finance committee because we have an app that needs immediate attention. Mathew will present the fund app, we'll discuss it, he'll leave the room, we'll discuss, and he'll come back in if you have any questions to ask.

At-Large: So unFramed is bringing Kay Ulanday Barrett on Saturday and Sunday, a trans poet. We've collaborated with different orgs, but we had a verbal agreement with Cappy last semester to fund part of the event but she fell through and hasn't gotten back to us; we have a meeting with her tomorrow. We reached out to ViCE special events, but they're busy this semester, so we're \$1,000 short of what we agreed to, so we've asked for an increase in our finance application.

Finance: Any questions at this time?

Cushing: What happens if Cappy gives the money?

Finance: Anything coming from other sources is subtracted from VSA's contribution.

Socos: Quick question: this fund app has a total fundraising of \$850, the total cost is still \$4680, and the requested is \$2000; can you explain the discrepancy of that?

At-Large: We spent time over break asking other orgs for contributions, so that brings our new total with the \$2,000 the VSA already approved to \$3,350. In the meantime, a few costs went down, and the new total cost is around \$4,390, so it should mean that the new amount we're asking for is...

[original fund app projected – total cost \$4,675, amount requested 3,500]

President: What is the new amount requested on top of the \$2,000 [the VSA already committed]?

At-Large: With the amount we secured over break, we need \$3,050 basically.

Finance: Any other questions?... Okay, can you step out? So, unFramed did a lot of fundraising for this; they reached out to Cappy at end of last year, and she said to come to her in the fall, and they did, and there were just miscommunications, and now it's coming up soon and they need funding for it. QCVC booked the same speaker, so they canceled but had to pay cancellation fee, so they can't contribute to this. Last time they asked for \$2,000; we approved that; we cancelled that and now they're coming in for \$3,050. I would recommend full allocation; none of this is their fault. I move to make this a closed session for fifteen minutes.

President: Does anyone object to a closed session?... Great, we're closed.

[minutes from closed session redacted]

Finance: Thank you for coming in; we discussed it, and we voted to give the full allocation minus Cappy's contribution.

At-Large: Thank you so much.

Reports

Operations

Operations: I have to change my report because I have to be at an ops related meeting on Saturday. We're ahead of schedule with restructuring, and we'll likely have a macrostructure before Thanksgiving. At this point, it's very important for you and your constituents to be involved, come

to restructuring meetings... for this coming week, we will not be having a discussion with ViCE; we will be having restructuring meetings about student life and academics; please make an effort to appear, and tell your constituents to appear. We're going forward to buy shuttles to run Saturday shuttles. We met with Ben Lotto, and his suggestion is to put together a report and outline how much money it's going to cost, how much the VSA will put forward, and how much we're requesting. Hopefully next semester we'll have shuttles run by students. We have to rethink who comes to Tasty Tuesday because they're on semester contracts... Subway, strangely enough, asked if they could come to Tasty Tuesday, so we'll be talking about that in ops this Tuesday.

President: Any questions?

SoCos: Just curious about the shuttle—is this an opportunity for multiple options? In this scenario it's students, in this scenario it's buses... bigger buses are more expensive but fit more people.

Operations: Yes, we'll be discussing that in ops this week.

Ferry: The space Tasty Tuesday is in—have we ever thought of having it in bottom of UpC so more people could come?

Operations: Student activities runs it, but I think the idea is that it's central.

Ferry: Or even in the Villard Room.

TAs: I want to make sure those student employees actually get paid, so let's be on top of that.

Raymond: I agree with Main being central. Are the [student employees] being paid by student employment?

Operations: Student employment said we should write a report about if they're being paid by student employment, governance, et cetera.

SoCos: I have a feeling there's going to be a lot of costs associated with it, like insurance. I agree about no Subway, but other local vendors are really expensive, and this is a more affordable option.

President

President: Bystander intervention for orgs has been going on. Twenty orgs still haven't signed up... The Seven Sisters Conference are Rebecca, Kevin, Lauren, Maya, Apoorva, Juleen, Sophie, Ashley, Cecilia, and Mark. It's in three weeks, so it's coming up. I've been working with people on transportation to New York City. We have some fun ideas, we have a fund app coming soon. We're leaning towards a once-a-month bus to the city which would be free or low-cost. Exec is meeting with the Board on Friday; we'll be talking about campus climate and things on students' minds like the burglaries. They have very little control over day-to-day things at Vassar, but if you have anything you want us to bring up, let us know. Judy Jarvis talked to me about the Privilege Campaign—if you're interested, sign up. Any questions?

SoCos: A thing to bring up to the trustees is joint committees... with my joint committee, the chair went to faculty first to see when would work, then students after. I emailed him to ask him to reconsider... just wondering if anyone has similar sentiments and concerns.

President: Logan and I are on P&P, which is the committee, and they left us off the email list, which means we didn't get to go to the first meeting.

TAs: I had a similar experience. You have to ask people when works; you don't just tell them when it's happening. We really need to do something about that, get all the heads of those committees together, say "You need to get your shit together." I don't know if it's the trustees you should go to, or the individual people.

President: Exec is meeting with Cappy tomorrow, and she'd be a good person to bring it up with.

Ferry: Most of the time, they don't show up... the people in charge of joint committees aren't leading and being responsible.

Operations: This should be a part of the restructuring conversation; what shared governance means, because oftentimes we find that the student government gets the short end of the stick...

Ferry: Miami had a Class D legislation, which means that if the government passes Class D legislation, admins have to vote on it and respond to it... Could be an idea on how to do that.

President: At Bryn Mawr they also have a thing once per semester, it's called plenary, they need a third of the student body there, but anything they pass there is binding, it becomes part of the college handbook... so we can talk to them about that.

Constituent Concerns

Operations: A concern was brought up over Facebook that there seems to be culture that students receiving aid must be thankful.

At-large: Everyone knows about scholarship teas: you are guilted into attending. I got a grant, and in the fine print was "If you don't write thank you letter by this time, we'll take the money back." It seems to indicate that they care more about gratitude than actually helping students.

SoCos: These are also very different offices, IDF and CDO. With scholarship teas and endowed funds, you get money through the financial aid office, but it's the development office that requests a letter... unless you receive a separate letter that it's come from an endowed fund or alumni donor, that's from the development office, they're the ones saying "We'd like a letter of appreciation." This should be part of greater dialogue; students need to get their fair share of the bargain, and not feel pressured or coerced by any offices.

At-large: How do they intend to enforce that? Do they sue you?

President: I think they charge it to your student account.

Operations: We can move on, I just wanted to bring it up.

President: I was concerned about fireworks going off without any notifications. We are meeting with Cappy about a notification system.

Cushing: There's a \$5 fee for the fall concert. We're moving toward culture of paying for on-campus events, and it doesn't make sense.

2016: I used to be ViCE director. Typically we've always ticketed one show. I think it's this committee's form of fundraising this year.

Cushing: If it's a fundraiser, it should be labeled as such... we have only two concerts on campus, fall and spring, and we give them a lot of money to do it; don't charge it.

Women in Computer Science Film Screening

Raymond: I spent last couple days of break in Texas at the Grace Hopper Conference. We talked about closing gender gaps in tech; we talked about a documentary about it, and we're seeing about having a screening of it. YouTube would make it free for the first five days, and we might be able to bring the director to campus. We're hoping maybe this could be a VSA event.

TAs: YES, but you should approach certain departments—computer science, math, etc. and I think they would want to support it.

SoCos: The Science Bridge is going up, and Cappy is big on the science push... beyond this event, we should see about doing more stuff like this, but absolutely we should do it, even an event in the spring, too. I think Cappy would be keen on it if it was bringing in... I would even love a speaker in a CEO role who could talk about women in computer science.

Ferry: I love this idea; it relates to the issue of women being recruited in the hard sciences, how to recruit women to do hard sciences. I would love to discuss that, because we're supposed to be a pro-female school.

Ops: Josh and I sit on the Committee of Admission and Financial, and we're having similar discussions.

Ferry: It's more about how we recruit students at this school... course titles matter.

Ops: The other thing is, I think this is a good idea, should we table it to committee so they can make a plan?

SoCos: Can you put together a fund app and we'll discuss it?

Raymond: Yeah, sure.

2017: You should get in touch with the majors committee of computer science, and also non-profits associated with women in coding if you want to start branch here.

Raymond: Also we just started a lean in circle today for women in computing at Vassar. One thing they mentioned at the conference was that women are less likely to do it if they aren't introduced to it in high school, so there's something we can also do to bridge the gap.

Open Discussion

Cushing: I spoke to some of VSA about this, but for people who weren't there at the conference for the refugee crisis, and we spoke about what Vassar could do about it. It's the biggest crisis since WWII in terms of the movement of people. We talked about what we can do about this, being so far away. We have a precedent of helping in 30s and 40s in WWII... so Maria Höhn talked about starting a student corps leading Vassar's effort toward this, starting a scholarship for refugee students to come to Vassar, a scholarship for students to go help NGOs that help these refugees, maybe having the student gift be about the refugee crisis. In terms of creating awareness, taking conversations to dorms, having panels for every group of dorms. We'd have panels for every dorm, people show up, we create awareness, we get volunteers for the core group I was talking about. In terms of student benefit, she's willing to give them half credit as an independent study course. I spoke to Cappy about some of it, and she seemed in favor of it, but wants to hear about it from more students. Once we have a structure about how we can help, then we'll be able to help throughout the years.

Raymond: I had a suggestion: spring break is two weeks, so one thing we could do is have a scholarship for students go and volunteer with NGOs for those two weeks.

2017: How specific is it going to be?

Cushing: I think it will be focused on the Middle Eastern/European/African part, because that's where the most concentration is, but we don't have to limit it... if you want to join and take on a project in Latin America or Asia, you can join... the main objective is to raise awareness because it affects everyone.

Ferry: A lot of other colleges have alternate spring break, so we can also organize a big group to help all over the country.

At-Large: Going forward, it would be good to think about what do these people need most, maybe reaching out to someone in the NGO, asking what would be most helpful.

Cushing: One of the ideas is having online classes and having joint classes with these camps. We need people to work on one suggestion each.

Raymond: Something VCF is doing is donating clothing for refugees, so spreading the word about that right now is something you could start doing.

President: Anyone else?

Student Life: Updates for what we talked about last week... we talked about whiteness workshops, we met with them as an exec board because there were so many concerns, we decided not to fund them. What came out of the discussion was that there's a lack of organization and a lack of care in creating workshops for people of color, and student life will be working on creating affinity spaces for people of color for discussions about race relations and our place in racial dialogue on campus. It's going to be big project, so come to student life committee!

2018: Last week there were concerns about how this was sponsored by the ALANA Center—did you talk about this?

Student Life: I didn't speak to B about it; it is still being sponsored by the ALANA Center. They're definitely supporting it, but I don't know if they're supporting it financially; I don't think they are, but I can speak to B about that.

Ops: As we're having these discussions, remember that there are structures in place for programming around people of color—how we can support the avenues that exist already, keeping in mind that the ALANA Center is deeply underfunded.

At-Large: Were you able to talk to Diane about what type of training she'll get or the topics covered?

President: We didn't interrogate her, but she was hired for this and she did it last year and it went well.

Student Life: It won't be just Diane and Michael; they're going to be working with other people to help facilitate a good, intersectional discussion.

2018: Can I ask exec's opinions on this now, after the discussion, if you feel better about it?

Student Life: When we talked to Diane and Michael, I pretty much have the same opinion, that they're going to be happening either way so...

Ops: I wasn't able to attend the meeting, but my opinion hasn't changed after the discussions... I support it; I'm glad they're making an effort to talk to everyone about race, but the way it's being brought about is troubling.

President: Most of the racism I've experienced is from other students, so I think it's important, but it's still frustrating that they're spending money to cater to a privileged group of people.

Student Life: That's kind of the specific reason why this arose and why it's now going to be a student life thing, and I totally agree with supporting current avenues.

TAs: When is this, and was anyone invited?

[There was an email]

TAs: Was it a targeted email? It feels like they sent it to weird groups; I'm not sure who they want to have attend...

Raymond: They probably sent it to houses.

At-Large: We need to train freshman class council! Class presidents, can you stay after to talk about that?

President: Any house events coming up?

Noyes: There's a coffee house in Noyes this Tuesday!

Joss: Wednesday in Joss: Hairaoke!

SoCos: It feels like we haven't talked about events very much in open discussion... please share upcoming events here!

Davison: Artoberfest is Friday—there's going to be a ton of art and music.