

Vassar Student Association Resolution 27-5
A Resolution in Support of Widespread and Coordinated Use of Trigger Warnings

WHEREAS, research on post-traumatic stress disorder (“PTSD”) has demonstrated that experiences related to an initial traumatic event (“trauma triggers”) can cause painful flashbacks, memories, or further traumatic episodes; and

WHEREAS, this research has been generalized to those who are not diagnosed with PTSD, indicating that trauma triggers can cause negative, painful, harmful, and damaging experiences in any trauma victim; and

WHEREAS, trauma triggers are not a special or abnormal category of occurrence but are instead common and everyday events, harmful especially to those with particular histories; and

WHEREAS, adequate forewarning of specific events that may be personal trauma triggers can prevent a recurrence of traumatic experience; and

WHEREAS, such forewarnings (“trigger warnings”) are commonplace in many communities; and

WHEREAS, the Council of the Vassar Student Association (the “Council”) wishes to be mindful of the needs, rights, and wellbeing of members of the Vassar community and to actively promote their welfare;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council shall endorse and support the broad use of trigger warnings on campus publications, announcements, and documents of all kinds; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Vassar Student Association shall recommend to the Assistant Director for Campus activities that the Programming Resources Guide be amended to include a required trigger warning on all advertising for events that have potentially triggering content; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Academics Committee of the VSA shall provide the same language to the Student Activities Resources Center for inclusion in their event-registration checklist; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Academics Committee of the VSA shall petition all department chairs and program directors to include trigger warnings in their course descriptions for any class that consistently and significantly involves physical contact with other students/and or faculty, animal dissection or harm, or substantial course content dealing with personal violation, abuse, or graphic portrayals of violence, or other severely triggering material; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Academics Committee of the VSA shall encourage the Majors’ Committees to assist the faculty in dissemination of information regarding such trigger warnings.