

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Council Minutes for Oct. 2, 2010

Time: 7:00pm

Location: College Center 223

“You don’t become what you want; you become what you believe.”

—Oprah Winfrey

1 Call to Order

-The meeting was called to order at 7:01 with some fabulous stretching. Thank you Finance Committee for your unending devotion to Supplemental and Capital budgeting!!

2 Attendance Operations

-All here.

3 Student Conduct Forum with Batia Epelbaum, House Advisor For Lathrop/Jewett and Rich Horowitz, Associate Director of Residential Life

-Rich: Vassar Sorting Hat and student conduct issues. He deals with more serious student conduct issues; he works with the student conduct board and panel on these cases.

-Batia: She is the investigator for any cases that go on and she’s been working recently on sexual misconduct policies.

-2014 asked about the VSA’s role in student conduct—what does the discrimination clause mean exactly? The response was that participating in the Student Conduct Panel is a good way to get involved. In the past the panel has been made up of students from the judicial board, but he thinks it could be expanded.

-Activities asked about the specifics of the student Conduct Panel. In terms of training, they’ve outsourced to expert sources. Rich sits in on all the meetings, but he doesn’t contribute opinions, he simply moderates. He will be sending out a week in advance warning about when a conduct case is proposed to the judicial board members who have been trained. Then whoever can come will be allowed. If it’s a sexual misconduct case, then there are additional trained individuals who can sit on the board.

-Socos asked about title 9. They’ve moved to a best practice model where it’s an investigative approach looking at each case. Less antagonistic.

-Finance asked about how probation status affects room draw. A system is in place that considers it.

-Noyes asked about what the training entails. It is very comprehensive.

-Student Life talked about getting some judicial board members to come in and share their experience with training. He also brought up consistency and the lack thereof in the system, or at least the students’ feeling this way. Rich talked about how it’s hard to create strict standards because many situations are context based. Above all, they try to remain neutral going into any case. They have a system in place, but sanctioning applies depending on history, context, and record. Context almost always benefits the student.

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-2014 asked about the “students of concern” list and the response was that D.B. Browne is in charge of that.

-Davison asked if they deal with cases of vandalism. Yes. Most vandalism cases end up being paid for by the whole building because no one comes forward or can be proven guilty.

-Ferry asked about how they monitor for honesty. Usually they’ll side with campus security, but they do depend largely on trust. He handed out a students F&Q sheet.

-Joss asked about transferring student record from other schools if a student transfers. This doesn’t currently affect students.

-Cushing asked about student misconduct rules and a sense of community at Vassar. The idea is not to discredit the sense of community, but at the same time students must be aware of what the expectations are for their conduct and follow this to their best ability and take the consequences if possible.

-Socos asked about the process of a hearing. College Rights Hearings take place in the President’s conference room. It’s one of the most formal events that take place on campus. Witnesses come in and talk about confidentiality and respect. The accused person is allowed to bring an advisor, but that person doesn’t really do anything. Then Batia presents the facts as she knows them and everyone has the chance to ask questions. The accused student can say anything they would like to contribute and questions are again allowed. The idea is that the same standard needs to be held for all cases.

-2012 asked about the party class structure. You take the party class and sign some paperwork and it can be helpful.

-Activities asked about how registering a party affects student conduct. It hasn’t in the past, but usually authorized parties aren’t blamed for student misconduct.

-President asked about kegs. Possession of a keg doesn’t cause loss of party privileges, being unauthorized does.

-Town Students asked about their relationship to off campus students. Chris Roelke will send complaints about noise or parties close to campus and they’ll deal with it. They don’t limit a student’s ability to move off campus due to their conduct record. There’s a different threshold for unacceptable behavior.

-Campus Patrol operates Tues-Sat 7-1 p.m. They have a very full roster so they created more shifts for students to work. They are looking for safety hazards/concerns, noise complaints, etc. Their role hasn’t really changed, except they now sit at desks in the common areas and do rounds about once an hour. They turn in reports in the morning and they address it if

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it’s repeated or significant. Students can work as much as their aid allows. The response from students has been very positive so far. Continuity in the supervisors has been ok and they are constantly promoting new ones. Noise complaints are dramatically reduced through this new system.

-Rich wants VSA to encourage students on the judicial board to participate in the student conduct panel.

4 Executive Board Reports

- a. Activities- They will be looking at the reports given to VSA after money is given away discretionarily. Meet me in Poughkeepsie now has a committee and they are doing great work. He’s had meeting with different members of the Campus Activities Office. They’re looking at changing the restrictions put on UpC for programming. They are going to revamp the organizations page on the VSA website and have orgs resubmit their mission statements and update meeting times. There are many new orgs looking for certification and they’re looking to decertify about 2. Holistic and Multiracial/biracial students union are being revamped.
- b. Finance- The VSA is in good financial health. All orgs have now been given their budgets. Discretionary Fund has been filled (55,000) and 25% of that will go to supplemental allocations. He has been working on replacing the sound system which must be done in sections, but hopefully they’ll find a more durable system and it will be purchased in the next few weeks. They are also looking at organization accountability on all fronts.

5 Certification of ACCESS.....Activities

-Representatives talked about how it’s a group for students with disabilities. They’ve been having events in dorms to increase awareness, done alternative planning, and spoken up for students’ rights with the administration. There’s a new ramp that they’ve put in place and made some great changes. They’ve influenced the master planning committee and there’s lots of room for more things they can work on. The motion to certify Access passed with all in favor.

6 Declaration of Open Positions to CAT Operations

-Committee on Academic Technologies, apparently we need another rep on that committee. They were supposed to be elected at large but because they weren’t, Council needs to appoint someone. They make sure technology is being used appropriately and equally on

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campus. The position is now open and you can apply through a form on the website under elections-tab. They meet in the library.

7 Amendment concerning the composition of House Teams Noyes & Jewett

-The change doesn’t affect the role they play or what they do. It makes it more consistent with their job on the contracts. It was endorsed by BHP. These are officials appointed by Residential Life and they’ve been spoken to and they agree. This decision legitimized student fellow votes on house team. This is a consistency issue, not a legitimacy one. Student Life spoke to discrepancies and confusion in the house team structure in general. How much does this decision affect how dorm meetings’ structures will be made? The idea is that this doesn’t affect the day to day functioning of any house team.

8 Amendment regarding Class Councils2013 & Noyes

They discussed running for positions versus being appointed. They think that running allows students to specialize in areas that interest you. Elections are great, but they want to encourage the idea that people can get involved on this campus if they want to. What does the formal appointing process change exactly? There was a lot of discussion about this, but I was thinking about cupcakes and took a pee break, so all I know is the right decision was made...

-2013 made a motion to amend the amendment (Article 7, section 2F) to not say “non-voting”. This motion failed with a majority.

-Student Life made a motion to table the amendment to Operations Committee and re-proposed at its discretion. This motion passed with all in favor.

9 Amendment regarding composition of the Library Committee.....Academics

-Someone from Academics committee must sit on the Library Committee. She wants to make sure that all sub-committees are sort of connected, in discourse. This amendment passed with all in favor.

10 Amendment to Article VI, Section 1(B).....Operations

-They want to have 4 more individuals appointed by the election chairs. 2014 asked how the election chairs are appointed. Ideally, Council the previous year appoints them.

Operations made a motion to adopt this amendment and this passed with all in favor.

11 Open Discussion

-2012: 231 days until graduation. 84 days until she turns 21!! Yaya

-Student Life talked about dining and how it kicked off tonight in different dorms with empanadas!

It’s all on the blog. 6-7 Tues. and Weds. They’ll be holding conversations in the dining rooms in

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the DC. There’ll be a town hall coming up with all the important dining representatives. Also October is sexual violence awareness month; there’ll be lots of programming, a speak out hosted by CAREs in the Mug, and study breaks in the dorms.

-Main wanted to bring up the conversation tomorrow night on Justice Equity in Rocky 300 from 6-7. There are lots of professors involved and

-Davison: Harvest Fest coming up, win a date with Douge and Manning!

-President: next Sunday is the first pre-council meeting.

-CONGRATULATIONS BENEDICT!! You’re the best, most awesome, and coolest everrrr

-Senator letter will be further talked about.

-Student Life made a motion to adjourn and this motion passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.