

VSA Council Minutes

November 22, 2009

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:05

2. Attendance

2011 Proxy: The Honorable Mathew Leonard

3. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of the Minutes from 11/8

b. \$208 from Mid-Hudson Valley Fund to Iced Brew

4. Special Guests: Ken Oldehoff, Director of Marketing and Sustainability; Vanessa Raditz, President of the Vassar Greens

Mr. Oldehoff began by lauding the successes of the compost program. Currently it is operating really well. He was also really happy with the new to-go boxes, as last year they were using 300 paper boxes a day. The biggest problem right now is theft, something about 20 out of every 60 items are actually sold.

The adorable Ms. Raditz talked about environmental education and doing simple things such as replacing light bulbs. On Friday they had held Do It in the Dark, where they do all sorts of things in the dark, like make music together.

Cushing! wondered why Vassar didn't use our own farm. Currently, she was told, we cannot, as they are backlogged. He mentioned that he did want to do something on the top of ACDC, some Urban Garden thing.

Strong wondered if they could add compost bins outside of the Retreat. She was told, in so many words, no.

2010 wondered if we could talk to local farmers to get crops and stuff. Ken once again said no, as there just isn't enough storage, they have to go through a food distributor.

Main asked how much discretion was given to Vassar by Aramark. Mr. Oldehoff told her that he has never been said no to. Aramark is starting to use Vassar as their flagship baby project.

Ken also addressed campus coffee as something that needs to be fixed and is hoping to fix it in the future.

5. Exec Board Reports

These were skipped in favor of the copious items yet to come.

6. Allocation of \$7,500 from Speakers, Lecturers to NSO

Finance moved to allocate \$7,500 for the NSO Non-Con event. They were looking to bring in a Vassar grad and a rapper who covers Megaman Music.

THs told them to ask hip-hop for money.

Cushing! suggested doing fundraising, perhaps selling merchandise or the like.

The Soco's wondered if they had done any, beyond Rocky Horror, she was told that Rocky

was no longer a fundraiser, as they actually paid for rights.

2011 (Mat Leonard) wondered if they could apply for it as a separate event, earning him a "thumbs-up" from some dude on the side.

NSO then said that he wanted to do it as a panel, that could make him a panelist.

The dude on the side said that this would be a Media Studies lecture and the NSO has been trying to appeal to a larger population.

Lathrop wondered if they could apply to a different fund and get money.

2011 proxy, being a complete jerk, moved to give them \$10,000.

Activities moved to consider multiple options and it passed.

2012 worried that we didn't have enough money. Finance agreed, it would use 40% of the budget.

Noyes thought that we should vote for what constituents want.

Joss felt that they should do this.

It came to a vote, 2011, Joss and Noyes voted for 10,000 all else for 8,000.

7. Appointment of Olivia Mac and Andrew Chang to Founders Day Co-Chairs

All were in favor.

8. Campus Solidarity Working Group Letter

CSWG showed at Council looking to get them to sign a critique of the layoffs written by Judy Nichols. The document called for the halt of the cuts and listed curricular failings of the college.

2010 wondered how people could sign it, they said to come talk to them. CSWG said that the cuts had no student voice and that departments were told to make cuts, without talking to them, almost like we were in an economic recession.

2012 was concerned that she had never seen these facts before, despite being a council member. (It later turned out that most of the stats were incorrect.) The President countered that these discussions are private and cannot be released to anyone and encouraged people to contact the department.

Finance didn't think that the decision to keep people would work on a large scale. He also reminded everyone that cuts and revisions happen like this on a yearly basis, just not on as large of a scale.

Noyes also reminded people that the faculty had been sent a survey of possible options being considered, this was the most well received plan.

Main reminded everyone that endorsing this document meant calling for the trustees to stop all terminations.

2012 felt that endorsing this would be a good step to show that cutting things is wrong! and that council doesn't like wrong things!

Strong felt that endorsing this as strong would be unfair, as she has not addressed her constituents.

Davison would be more comfortable if the CSWG would actually offer a solution, unlike their normal complaining.

2010 pointed out that the depts. made these decisions.

Jewett talked about reaching out and getting signatures, saying they shouldn't support it officially.

It was tabled, until next week.

Or was it? Conversation continued despite the letter's tabling.

TAs felt that they should endorse it, and felt that everyone needed communication.

Raymond felt that we should be pro-active.

Operations was frustrated, as council is not where anything actually happens. Things happen in committee, not on the floor.

Lathrop agreed, this was not the place for new ideas, it is the place for things to finally be decided.

Operations also noted that the problem is not, cut or don't cut, the problem is what do we cut? There is a massive budget gap and the letter seems to not understand the difference between Operating Budget and Endowment.

Strong made a motion to un-table the letter and...they brought it back! The Franken-letter, briefly dead was returned to see another day.

Mathew Leonard, noble proxy for 2011, reminded council that none of this information was new. It had all been seen before. In addition, he felt it would be irresponsible to pass this without a) talking to constituents and b) taking time to correct the many errors in the document. He suggested waiting a week to draft a document of their own. In other words: stop, take some time to think.

Operations pointed out a lot of errors in the document, such as spelling Cappy's name wrong, or the Religion dept. being the only one without an Islamicist.

2010 felt that incorrect facts would tarnish the council rep. However, waiting would take time, and this document needs to go out soon.

Ferry hoped that the document would change before release, but the Pres. reminded her that they were endorsing the document as is.

Finance pointed out that Academics wasn't even there, the person who actually knew what was going on. In addition, the letter was drafted by faculty. The faculty could care less about Financial Aid, however the VSA likes financial aid, this document is in direct contrast to financial aid.

Davison reminded everyone that, sorry, but cuts will happen, no matter what,

Operations agreed with finance, saving faculty means losing student financial aid. CSWG tried to argue against this.

Cushing! felt that she had been getting large amounts of apathy from the student body. She was disturbed by the juxtaposition of recently giving an org more money with talking about cutting professors.

TH encouraged them to vote for it, despite the misleading or incorrect stats and operative clause, because it offered sentiment that everyone could agree with.

The motion came to a vote, 6 opposed, 15 in favor. The motion passed.

9. Open Discussion

2010: 181 days till graduation

Lathrop raised concerns that people at the VSA didn't feel comfortable speaking.

Noyes felt that there is a divide between exec and Council

Activities didn't know what they were talking about, council is open.

The notetaker found this conversation amusing.

11. Adjourn

11:03, wow.