

VSA Council Minutes
December 2, 2007

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

2. Attendance

Proxies: Student Life.

Guests: Evan Altshuler (ViCE), Mike Alvarez (Sustainability), Andrew Bennett (Master Planning Committee), Elizabeth Bock (Bookstore Advisory), Shira Collado (Dean of College), Ece Dogrucu (Italian Club), Brian Farkas (Miscellany News), Kyle Guinta (Assistant to President Hill), Garrett King (CIRC), Wendy Leung (TONCA), Elizabeth Mermel (Committee on Disability Issues), Abra Sussman (FMLA), Dana Van Brunt (Bookstore Advisory), and Shannon Wilton (Italian Club).

3. Consent Agenda

a. Minutes from November 25

No objections were made, and the consent agenda was adopted as presented.

4. Certification of the Italian Club

Activities moved to certify the Italian Club. Ferry questioned why there should be an Italian Club instead of an Italian Studies Majors Committee, and the organization's representative responded that there is currently no Italian majors committee, and that the proposed club would not require its members to be Italian majors. The majority of the people interested in forming the club are not part of the academic Italian department, and do not necessarily take classes.

Activities moved to amend Article 6, changing the word "officers" to "members." All of Council voted in favor of the amendment, and the motion passed.

Council then engaged in a discussion about the proposed size of the club's budget.

Vote on Certification of the Italian Club:

Abstentions: None (0).

Not in Favor: Finance, Operations, Academics, TAs (4).

In Favor: Town Students, Ferry, Joss, Jewett, THs, Lathrop, Raymond, Cushing, Davison, Activities, 2008, SoCo, 2009, 2010, Strong, Noyes, 2011, Main (18).

Result: Motion passes.

5. Reports and Discussion

a. Bookstore Advisory Committee

The representative from BAC reported that they have had their meeting this semester, and that it was very successful. The meeting included two professors, from the History and Russian department, the manager and assistant manager of the bookstore, and the students on the committee. The faculty addressed concerns about getting desk copies (teacher editions) of books. The committee discussed the problems with V-Print, and discussed the possibility of allowing Blackboard prints to be exempt from students' quotas. Teachers are concerned because they do not want students to have to pay for course packets, but feel that students are not printing out their articles with the new V-

Print policies. 2009 asked a question about the possibility of the bookstore stocking sweatshop-free apparel, and the representative agreed to look into the issue.

The committee requested that the Bookstore Suggestion Box be placed in a more prominent location, because currently very few people realize that it exists. They also discussed the buyback policies and the timetable of buyback, in order to hopefully give students more time to sell back their books to the store. The committee will be sending out a survey to the student body to get input about bookstore hours and the items available in the store.

The committee meeting did not happy until recently because the new manager was only recently hired, and the committee can only meet twice a semester due to faculty and staff scheduling issues. The representative expressed concern that there is too little input and communication between students and the bookstore.

b. Campus Investor Responsibility

CIRC had another meeting two weeks ago, since the last time they reported to Council. The committee discussed divestments and renewing the college's contract with the company monitoring divestment decisions. They examined divestment platforms of other colleges to compare with Vassar's divestments, in order to decide whether the college should reevaluate the companies it's divesting from.

c. Disability Advisory Committee

The representative from DAC reported that the committee's subcommittees have been meeting, but that the group as a whole has not met again yet. The group as a whole will be meeting again on Friday. The representative reported discussing event ideas, including a workshop to teach about the diverse learning styles of students. Other event ideas included a workshop for faculty about faculty members with disabilities, an event on All Campus Day featuring the Eye-to-Eye program that tutors local children with disabilities, a movie screening, and a lecture hosted by someone local.

The representative made note that only two faculty members out of nine members on the committee actually showed up to their meeting. In response to a question from Main, the representative reported that another subcommittee is discussing accessibility of VSA organization programming.

d. Master Planning

The Master Planning Committee has been meeting about many renovations taking place and being planned for the future. The "North edge of campus" subcommittee has met to discuss the construction about to take place on Raymond Ave up to the arterial, and on Collegeview Ave up to Fairmont Ave. There will be trees removed on Collegeview in preparation for the construction of the road. Many of the trees will be replanted after the construction, but not all of them. These trees will be those that were not intentionally planted by Vassar, and have just grown on their own. Many members of Council were noticeably concerned about tree removal. There will be a roundabout on the corner of Raymond Ave and Collegeview Ave, the gate will be pushed back about 45 feet, and there will be a plaza built on the campus land.

There is an ongoing project to name the roads on campus, which will require putting up street signs. Soon a map will be available with the roads being named. The signs will have a red background with white lettering.

The MPC received reports from both the Science Planning Committee and the Classroom Committee, the latter of which is involved in rehabilitating classrooms and classroom spaces on campus.

There is an effort on behalf of Buildings and Grounds to work on improving the ways in which contractors on campus treat the campus and the quad. There will now be

contractual clauses with the contractors to prohibit parking on our lawns and the quad. They will be told where to park, and there will be shuttles to transport them to and from campus. The same regulations will also be imposed on B&G vehicles.

The college has received conditional approval for the new Town House construction. The new THs could possibly have geo thermal heating, which if possible would allow the THs to be heated by a sustainable, renewable resource that doesn't cost anything. The THs construction should begin in January.

The move of the Baldwin parking lot has been postponed, and a new idea has been proposed by Professor Lucy Johnson to eliminate the Baldwin parking lot, the Swift parking lot, and the lot next to the Casperkill. This would require faculty to park at North or South Lot, and use an electric bus or transit system to transport to and from parking lots and around campus.

There is also a discussion to make the intersection from South Gate to Raymond Ave right-turn only, and prohibit left turns out of that exit.

e. Founder's Day

The Founder's Day Committee will be reporting at next week's meeting.

f. Sustainability

The Sustainability Committee is currently working on an energy audit for all campus buildings. Once the audit is complete, it will help create a comprehensive plan for reducing greenhouse gases on campus. This comprehensive plan will then hopefully be committed to by President Hill. The group has a green building subcommittee, who will have a voice in the renovations of Davison and new Science Facilities. Council asked about the sustainability levels of these renovations being only Silver, and the representative from the committee responded that the level is Silver due to both financial issues and because the whole Davison dorm is not being torn down, but only internally renovated.

g. Catalyst Political and Community Action Fund Report

No one was present from Catalyst to give a report to Council.

h. Feminist Alliance Conference Fund Report

A representative from the Feminist Alliance reported that the group attended a conference held by the Feminist Majority Foundation, which creates and sponsors the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance, the organization on Vassar campus. The representative expressed gratitude for reinforcing connections at the conference and networking with the larger organization. Members from the group split off and went to many different workshops, which focused on such issues as militarization, women's rights, and human rights. The group was also able to meet with the President of the Feminist Majority Foundation, and discussed participating in a nationwide effort against Crisis Pregnancy Centers. Upon a question from Council, the representative explained what these centers are, and informed that there are two in Poughkeepsie.

i. Act Out Conference Report

A group of students from Act Out traveled to Long Island to participate in the Power Summit, which was sponsored by the Lesbian and Gay Taskforce. The Summit focused on grass roots organizing, and hosted different workshops for students to attend. The members of Act Out split up and attended various workshops, and learned such skills as how best to get more students involved in activism on campus. The president of Act Out reported that the conference will help strengthen the organization, and allowed the group to network with students from SUNY New Paltz and Bard.

j. ViCE Report

The representative from ViCE reported that there only remains one more week of programming for this semester. Tuesday night will feature a big Jazz Night with a special piano player, and will take place in the AULA. The group will be showing themed movies during study week, but that the theme has not yet been chosen. ViCE hosted a very successful comedy show last night with Maria Bamford.

The representative also expressed gratitude for allowing ViCE to host a completely new cycle of events this semester, and announced that programming will be much heavier next semester. Additionally, the website for the group is now available at chooseyourvice.com.

Council then briefly discussed possible events last year, and specifically requested that the hypnotist from last year be brought back.

k. Financial Report

Finances presented a Financial Report to the members of Council, and gave them several minutes to review the report. She specifically made note that the Conference Fund is getting more money put into it, because Act Out had two less members attend their conference than originally thought, and Hip Hop 101 didn't end up attending their conference. \$280 will be returned from the Act Out allocation, and \$400 from the Hip Hop 101 allocation.

In general, Finances reported that the VSA is in good financial health. They are collecting data for the SPC committee, including data from house presidents about the replacement of capital items, and from ideal budget forms. Finance Committee has also been looking at rollover trends for the past five years for all organizations, which also provides important data.

Davison provided some clarification about the money earned from Harvest Ball.

l. Exec Report (Activities)

Activities reported that after all the semester's certifications and decertifications there are now 125 VSA organizations. There are seven new organizations this semester, and three have been decertified. The space audit has been successfully conducted, and Activities has begun to free up space for groups that need storage, a process that will be complete by the end of the semester. This process will be completed through sharing space, removing groups' spaces, and reallocating space.

There are now about 30 organizations promising to help fund the V-Cash machines, which will hopefully be in place after the winter break. The org reports are now available, and all organizations should be filling them out before break. The org review has now been completed, after modifying anything wrong with the original org reviews.

Activities has met with club sports on Tuesday, and had a preliminary discussion about the relationship between VSA and athletics. The discussion will continue in the future, and hopefully there will be some sort of deal brokered.

The leadership workshops are now complete, and \$35 has been given to every group that attended all three workshops. There are website changes coming soon, including organization meeting times listed online. There is another winter leadership conference on January 22, and there will be a winter Activities Fair to give organizations another chance to get new members. The budgeting process and org certification process will be undergoing changes, and Activities is currently in discussions with Exec and SPC to draft new ideas. Additionally, Activities is working on the issue of transportation, and an update on that issue will be coming soon.

6. Allocation of \$1200 from Collaboration to TONCA

Finances moved to allocate \$1200 from the Collaboration Fund to TONCA. The representative informed Council that there would be around 100-150 people attending this event, and that everyone is welcome. The event's speaker is someone who worked at camp Heartland, and the presentation will include a slide show, a discussion of the speaker's experience at camp, in order to raise awareness about how children are affected. Only SoCo abstained from the vote, all else of Council voted in favor of the allocation, and the motion passed.

7. Declaration of Open Position

Operations moved to declare the CCP Multidisciplinary/Interdisciplinary/Independent Representative open for position. All of Council voted in favor of the declaration, and the motion passed.

Operations moved to declare the CCP Multidisciplinary/Interdisciplinary/Independent Representative up for appointment. All of Council voted in favor of the declaration, and the motion passed.

8. Open Discussion

- 2008 announced that 175 days remain until commencement.
- Cushing moved to formally wag fingers at those members of Council failing to participate in Festive Sweater Day.
- President requested that Council members bring their name cards and binders to the meetings, and announced that the next meeting would likely be 2-3 hours long.

9. Adjourn

The meeting concluded at 8:43pm.