

**VSA Council Minutes**  
*December 9, 2007*

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 PM.

**2. Attendance**

Guests: Renee Bright (On Tap), Shane Donahue (Food Committee), Royce Drake (Catalyst), Mark Goneczny (Community Advisory Committee), Nate Kimball (Food and Sustainability Committees), Jay Leff (Hip Hop), Acacia O'Connor (Miscellany News), Lucy Robins (Community Advisory Committee), Jamie Rosen (Assistant to the President), Alex Sheff (College Democrats), Woodrow Travers (Vassar Filmmakers and Food Committee).

**3. Consent Agenda**

**a. Minutes from December 2**

**b. Acceptance of STAND Fund Reports**

**c. Acceptance of Habitat Fund Report**

Finances objected to items (b) and (c). Item (a) was adopted as presented, and items (b) and (c) were added to the agenda.

**4. Certification of Knights of CommuKnitty**

Activities moved to certify the Knights of CommuKnitty. Various members of Council asked questions of the organization's representative, including a discussion of the proposed budget. All of Council voted in favor of the certification, and the motion passed.

**5. Certification of On Tap**

Activities moved to certify On Tap. All of Council voted in favor of the certification, and the motion passed.

**6. Reports and Discussion**

**a. Campus-Community Advisory Committee**

The representative from CCAC reported that the committee has met once since they last reported to Council, but that the students are concerned with the group's lack of focus and the few number of meetings. The committee has met three times over the course of the semester. The students have proposed a proposal subcommittee, which is in response to students' concern that although the committee discusses many issues, there are very few written records of the items discussed. Making proposals about the discussions held is the proposed solution. The committee is making a website for community resources, and hopes to support community outreach.

They want to support local businesses, and are considering maybe having discounts for students at local businesses. The committee is also forming a welcome subcommittee, to deal with issues of inaccessibility of the campus for non-Vassar students. The subcommittee is considering working toward a welcome sign, a map of the campus, or a visitor's booth.

The representative also reported that the larger committee has been receptive to the students' proposals. Activities added that there will be changes made soon, and that he is working to help make the necessary proposals.

**b. Board of House Presidents**

The chair of the BHP reported that the dorms' scarves arrived on campus on Friday night, and that they are currently in Shipping and Receiving for dorm presidents to pick up. He expressed frustration about the board's relationship with RLAC regarding several issues. He briefly discussed an incident that occurred on a blog, and reported that Luis Inoa is involved in the discussion. Both Luis and the BHP want students to be able to voice their opinions about the incident. The chair reported that gender-neutral housing is almost a reality, and that the room draw policy will be reviewed soon. He also reported that the BHP worked well with the Class of 2009 regarding the issue of replacing Junior Representatives on house teams.

Upon a question from Council, he elaborated on the blog incident. There were homophobic comments posted on a blog with Vassar's name, which is run by a student on campus, about the Coming Out closet on the quad. The BHP has discussed possible ways of addressing the issue, such as a "Not in our House" campaign, but actions will not likely be taken until next semester.

#### **c. Food Committee**

The representative from the Food Committee reported that the committee has met four times since their last report to Council. Their agenda has shifted from Campus Dining to looking toward the future of food on campus. Campus dining has made several changes, including introducing new cream cheeses and new bagels at the ACDC. The committee is starting to look into the RFP process, and will have input in that decision. There are six companies bidding for food services at Vassar, and the six companies have now been made public.

The companies bidding are Aramark, Sodexo, Bon Appetit, Lackman Culinary, Metz and Associates, and Parkhurst. They came to campus to give reports about their services, and the Food Committee will work to be as informed as possible in April and May when the companies will be returning to campus, in order to help make the most educated recommendation as possible. The representative also announced that the college is working toward a meal-based system, and there are currently three plans for the breakdown of meals and points. The four concerns that the Food Committee has posed with meal-based plans are: taking out food, the dining center as a social space, food waste, and point driving.

#### **d. Hip Hop 101 Fund Report**

The representative from Hip Hop 101 reported that the organization held the event, and that it went well. They were able to fill up Rocky 300 for a discussion with Two-Face and three professors, and the discussion covered all elements of hip-hop. The event consisted of an academic panel, a performance, and Two-Face speaking. There was a large crowd for the academic panel and the performance, but most attendees left after the performance. Two-Face spoke about himself as an artist, commercial hip-hop and why it's in its current state, and about how people should feel about that type of music and those types of images.

The representative reflected that the organization had trouble with the event, and that they acted fearfully after losing the main performer of the event.

#### **e. Democrats Fund Report**

The representative from the Vassar College Democrats reported that they had an interesting time at their conference. The presidential candidates all dropped out of the conference, while Bill Clinton was then named the event's main speaker. The members of the Dems who attended the conference were able to meet Bill Clinton and talk with him, and they appeared on television.

He reported that both older students and underclassmen attended the conference, and expressed excitement that despite lack of experience, the conference seemed to motivate the underclassmen to continue participation in the group. He also expressed disappointment in the actual organizing of the event.

#### **f. Catalyst Political Community Fund Report**

The representative from Catalyst reported that the group drove down to their event on the Thursday of October Break, slept in a church during their time there, and drove back to Vassar on Sunday. They participated in some marches against the World Bank, and marched in Georgetown. The representative reported that the members got training and attended various workshops.

#### **g. Self Study**

Sam Charner and Jessica Cho reported to Council to provide an update of the Self Study report. They reported that there are ten working groups, each focusing on different aspects of the college. The groups are: Mission and Goals, Institutional Resources, Organization and Governance, Academic Programs, Faculty, Library, Admissions and Financial Aid, Student and Faculty Support Services, Community Relations, and Summary. Sam briefly reported on "Mission and Goals" and "Organization and Governance," and Jessica briefly reported on "Admissions and Financial Aid" and "Academic Programs." They also reported that there are students on every committee.

As part of his working groups, Sam inquired about the level of participation in each committee reporting to Council. He also asked Council members whether they thought there is enough student input on campus, which areas of the college have enough student input, and in which areas student input is lacking. In response Council engaged in a discussion about the nature of student input on campus, and how best to go about getting feedback about student input. In general, members of Council felt it necessary to emphasize that student input needs to consist of more input than only a casual conversation with one student.

Jessica reported that Rachel Kissinger is the head of the Admissions and Financial Aid committee, which met earlier in the semester. The committee is reviewing the processes of the Admissions Office, including how Vassar markets itself through its website, catalogues, and publications. The committee will also examine students' roles in the admissions office, through such roles as tour guides and student interns.

She also reported that the Academic Programs committee is very slow in making progress. They made a brief presentation to the Committee on Curricular Policies (CCP), and will be looking at the curriculum, multidisciplinary programs, and the Study Abroad program.

### **7. Allocation of \$5000 from Speaker's Fund to Hip Hop 101**

Finances moved to allocate \$5000 from the Speaker's Fund to Hip Hop 101. The representative from the organization told Council that the event is intended to make connections between socioeconomic issues, race issues, and economic issues. All of Council voted in favor of the allocation, and the motion passed.

### **8. Allocation of \$731.75 from Council Discretionary to Filmmakers**

Finances moved to allocate \$731.75 from the Council Discretionary Fund to the Vassar Filmmakers. The allocation amount is the highest amount of money allowed to be allocated from the Council Discretionary Fund this semester, according to VSA Bylaws. 2010 moved to amend the allocation to \$1000, which is the amount actually requested from the organization. Council

then engaged in a discussion about the unclear VSA Bylaws and what they prescribe for this particular allocation.

**Vote on Amendment to Allocate \$1000:**

*Abstentions:* None (0).

*Not in Favor:* Ferry, Davison, Finance, Student Life, Operations, Main, TA, and Noyes (8).

*In Favor:* 2011, Town Students, SoCo, 2009, Raymond, Joss, 2010, Academics, Activities, TH, 2008, Strong, Lathrop, Jewett, and Cushing (15).

**Result:** Motion passes.

By a vote of 15-8 the motion passed, and the allocation was amended to \$1000.

**Vote on Allocation of \$1000 to Filmmakers:**

*Abstentions:* None (0).

*Not in Favor:* Ferry, Noyes, and Main (3).

*In Favor:* All else (20).

**Result:** Motion passes.

**9. Appointment to CCP**

Operations moved to appoint Julia Coffey-Esquivel as the Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary, Independent Representative for the Committee on Curricular Policies. Council discussed extensively the rationale used to appoint Julia over the other candidates. Only Raymond abstained from the vote, all else of Council voted in favor of the appointment, and the motion passed.

**10. CA 22-2: Resolution on Transportation**

Activities moved to adopt Council Action 22-2: Resolution on Transportation. Ferry raised environmental concerns about the forms of transportation that would be utilized by the college. Cushing responded that the current local forms of transportation are not viable for students to travel to locations in Poughkeepsie, and that new forms of transportation are necessary. Student Life called the resolution to question; only Activities voted not in favor, and the motion passed.

Only Ferry voted not in favor of the resolution, and the motion passed.

**11. Announcement of Dean of the College Review Appointments**

Student Life announced that this week they stopped accepting applications for the Dean of the College Review Committee from the student body. Appointments met and reviewed the applications, and recommended 9 students to have interviews. Exec and the co-chair of the committee interviewed 7 of those candidates; one of the candidates couldn't make the interview due to scheduling confusion, and one is currently abroad. The following students were appointed: Katrina Homel, Jennifer Shiroky, Shari Silver, Austin Saddlemire, and Nate Silver.

**12. Introduction of Amendments to VSA Bylaws**

Operations moved to amend portions of Article III and Article VII of the VSA Bylaws. The proposed amendments were presented to Council as part of the VSA Council Agenda for December 9, 2007. These amendments will not be voted on until January.

### **13. Declaration of Open Position**

Operations moved to declare open the position of Noyes Vice President. All of Council voted in favor of the declaration, and the motion passed.

#### **13.b. Declaration of Open for Appointments**

Operations moved to declare open for appointment the position of Noyes Vice President. Council expressed desire for the appointment to be made with the opinion of Noyes' constituency in mind. All of Council voted in favor of the declaration, and the motion passed.

### **14. Organization of the Month for November**

Activities moved to designate TONCA as the Organization of the Month for November. Only SoCo abstained from the vote, and the motion passed.

#### **3.b. Acceptance of STAND Fund Report**

Finances moved to accept the STAND Fund Report. All of Council voted in favor of the acceptance, and the motion passed.

#### **3.c. Acceptance of Habitat Fund Report**

Finances moved to accept the Habitat Fund Report. All of Council voted in favor of the acceptance, and the motion passed.

### **15. Open Discussion**

- 2008 announced that 168 days remain until commencement.
- A representative from the Founder's Day committee reported that both co-chairs, Allyson Won and Brian Bacchi, have met. They have chosen the chairs of subcommittees, and discussed different ways in which the theme could be chosen.
- Main discussed that there is a Christmas tree in the library, and expressed concern that there were no other decorations for students that celebrate other holidays.

### **16. Adjourn**

The meeting concluded at 10:23pm.