

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

VSA Council Minutes for Feb. 27, 2011

1 Call to Order

-The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. with a completely new seating arrangement! ☺

2 Attendance.....Operations

-All here, Academics was late.

3 Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes from 2/20
- b. Allocation of \$184 to Ballroom from Speakers & Lecturers
- c. Allocation of \$250 to Idlewild from Council Discretionary

-all adopted

4 Forum: Drug and Alcohol Education Committee (DEC)

Renee Pabst, Director of Health Education; Jeff Carter, Head Athletics Trainer,
Committee Chair

-They feel a little frustrated with the DEC right now. They've consistently been trying to bring to the students' attention the detrimental effects of drugs and alcohol. The administration, since they disappear after Friday afternoon, doesn't see what happens on weekend nights: the constant ambulance calls, hospital visits, etc. They are trying to put all the policies together and summarize them and figure out ways to make changes on campus. They want to work on accountability on all sides. They also want to make sure security is well trained and not always viewed as the bad guys. They think maybe they should be more visible in the dorms and perhaps not responsible for writing students up.

-They have taken under scrutiny the Student handbook, Residential Life handbook and Health Resources handbook in order to make sure the rules and regulations correspond in all of them and that the repercussions of their actions are transparent to students.

-Student Life asked about how the administrators are going to take action and they responded that they now have a new student space. Renee also said that there always need to be alternative events and focus on prevention of drinking. One aspect she's noticed this year is the fact that there are fewer classes on Fridays and Mondays which increases drinking on Thursdays and other days. It's hard to make the faculty the bad guy, but she thinks they can be used to help the students get involved in alternative events. They think they could better educate the freshmen as well, maybe some sort of seminar or orientation class that freshmen are required to take. Alternative ways of stress relief would be part of this.

-Activities asked about the causes of the drinking problem. Jeff said that intermingling of legal seniors and illegal freshmen is one of the big problems because they live close or together. Kegs are also a big problem. Whereas here on campus seniors aren't held accountable for serving to a minor, in the real world they are. Consequences should be reflective of the risk that students are being exposed to. There are different levels of risk and the students should be educated about these differences and their repercussions. Also,

some of our biggest traditions on campus center around drinking, like Serenading and Founders Day, and it only takes a few loud individuals to make drugs part of the tradition.

-2012 believes that having kegs at parties may actually decrease drinking. They responded that statistics don't show this. 2012 also inquired about "study drugs" and the response was that they did research on it last year and the actual use is very minimal, but they will work on increased education.

-Lathrop addressed the decreased presence of security and how more of them in the dorms might help with reducing drinking if they could just tell people to quiet down or remind them that they shouldn't be drinking, but not necessarily write them up. The DEC see the role of campus patrol as being more visible, whereas security are the ones who control events etc. Lathrop also brought up the perspective that drinking with upperclassmen may be beneficial to freshmen because they have more experience and can show them the ropes.

-Joss inquired about how we are doing now in terms of intoxications, stating that he's been under the impression that they were decreasing after the banning of Four Loko. However, they have not. There are always spikes at the beginning of each semester, and this one was no different. They still had upwards of ten hospital visits each of the first couple weekends. There have been fewer calls due to Four Loko, but still about the same amount of overall calls. The first year adjustment issue is a big one for them to work on.

-Operations asked about the difference between the DEC and SWAC. The answer is that they wanted to separate the alcohol/drug piece from the rest of the health issues, so that's what the DEC does. SWAC is most of the student groups and health orgs and works on facilitating collaboration between them. It's hard to find time for both groups to meet, so this year there's been a lot more collaboration with CCL as well.

-2014 discussed the fact that the very first weekend of orientation there were parties at the THs which gave freshmen the idea that that's what happened every weekend. He feels that there's a split between the administration and the students because they can't advocate drinking on any level, even though social drinking should be ok. The response was that the line is fine and difficult to decide on because the administration is required to follow state law and other regulations. They want to avoid the Vassar drinking culture norm being projected on freshmen right from when they arrive.

-Finance asked about the liability aspect and if they've ever been prosecuted for something. The response was that students are usually responsible about driving and property damage. The police department usually lets the colleges enforce their own discipline policies. The college is usually first or second on the list of parties held responsible if something goes wrong. Finance also inquired about the role students take in making changes on campus relating to these issues. They said that talking about it on VSA is a big help.

-THs expressed concern about security finding intoxicated students, rather than fellow students helping them. They responded that even if groups go out together, if everyone gets just as drunk then it's not helpful. This issue is something that Vassar needs to make sure is addressed in educating students and making sure they're aware of the Good Samaritan rule. They think everyone who throws a party on campus should be involved with tips training.

-Ferry was curious about what the biggest drug used on campus is. Alcohol is the biggest one, then marijuana, and then a variety of harder addictive drugs, but these are used less and change year to year.

-Ferry asked about using the mixed classes issue to their advantage. They felt that it's more up to the students to do this.

-2011 wondered about the volume of repeat calls this year. They feel like they're not seeing as many repeats, but she feels that the severity of intoxications is going up. This was the first year that parents have had to be called in because their student may or may not make it through the night. 2011 also addressed what was learned this year at Halloween, and that revamping security in the beer room was a big one—she wondered if seniors are ever the ones being called in on these big nights. Renee responded that seniors usually aren't, but more calls are made where seniors are drinking alcohol because there's a perception that everyone will be drunk so other students feel that they should be as well. The studies they are using to get alcohol related statistics come from a variety of schools nationally.

-TAs think that students should be helping in the educating of the freshmen. She discussed her experiences of growing up legal and thinks that the long term effects need to be addressed further.

-2014 suggested using the freshmen seminar as a means of educating students on alcohol etc. It's hard to influence the faculty department.

-Student Life inquired about the Arlington/Transcare role in all of this. They hope that they'll have less of a role in the future, but they aren't always consulted about getting extra services or when Arlington will be called.

-Joss thanked them for coming and asked about the relationship with Arlington's fire department. There have been issues due to both sides feeling that the other doesn't trust them and hiring out. Some of Vassar's taxes do actually go directly to the Arlington fire department.

-Motion to recess for 5 min, motion passed.

5 Executive Board Reports

a. Activities

The calendar is full. The drama department isn't doing any more senior projects. Theatre groups are dominating all the time slots on many weekends so many orgs can't hold events. There was discussion about using dorm parlors and MPRs, and other creative spaces. Academics inquired about having so many shows on the same weekend

and if the good attendance balances this out. Activities addressed the fact that many shows have been auditioned for and produced without guaranteeing a spot on the calendar first.

b. Student Life

-The committee will be meeting again tomorrow discussing a variety of issues. They have been discussing the relationship abuse issues, reaching out to other student orgs, etc. The social norming is based on gathering information from surveys, allowing students to see what the normal behavior is and moving in the direction of the normal behavior. They are working on posterings, addressing issues not just limited to drugs and alcohol, but issues such as eating disorders, abuse, etc. The relationship abuse charge will not go through this semester, but they have been working on it consistently and hope their work will push through to next semester. They have a group of admin and various other campus members involved this year. Student Life continues working on dining.

c. Academics

-Academics commended student life on his work. She has accepted 15 mini course applications that she'll be going through now. There's a Majors Fair coming up the week before or of registration. The peer advising survey shows that it needs to be advertised more, but has overall been very successful. They are doing lots of planning for the sesquicentennial trivia event. Davison suggested putting peer advising into orientation week, and 2014 spoke to that and the fact that they're trying to add in more administrative awareness to orientation.

6 Allocation of \$1,000 to Polo from Council Discretionary Finance

-They will be hosting the pre-regional tournament this year. Since they don't own their own barn, they must pay a significant amount to rent the barn for the entire weekend. Each polo member pays \$500/semester out of pocket. They are also planning on inviting the entire campus and publicizing the event in many different ways. Only 6 of their 7 members will be competing.

-The allocation passed with all in favor.

7 Allocation of \$1,150 to VIS from New Organizations Fund Finance

-The motion passed with all in favor.

8 Allocation of \$1,650 to GAAP from Speakers & Lecturers Finance

-On March 24th they are hoping to get David Harvey to come and speak. Strong asked about paying for food and the answer was that the dinner is for a select group of professors and the speaker, not the general public. None of the departments hosting are providing any funding.

-The motion passed with all in favor, except Finance and Ferry who abstained.

9 Allocation of \$1,900 to GAAP from Community Fund Finance

-They want people to get out on Saturday to empower. It will be a weekend long event. They will need a constantly running shuttle for transportation. They want more money for

advertising (big posters), snacks for the Sunday event, and speakers in various rooms so there won't be overcrowding.

-Student Life asked about the speakers—they will have a couple coming that run a co-op in the city, an alum who's a community organizer, and on Sunday a professor talking about cars (basic mechanics, etc.). They are requesting an increase of \$590.

-Activities made a motion to increase the allocation to \$2,390.

-Academics stressed publicity.

-The motion passed with all in favor.

-The allocation passed with all in favor.

10 Allocation of \$3,000 to the Council of Black Seniors from Speakers, Lecturers, and Panels..... Finance

-They need money for senior week activities and working on their **Baccalaureate** Program. There is a big dinner, with a DJ, gift baskets, a plaque, etc. They have fundraised a couple hundred dollars. They also have to raise money and pay for the black and white dresses that all applicants wear. They are using a DJ on campus that they've used in the past. They connect a lot with the community through events like the 'seniors to work' day.

-The allocation passed with all in favor.

10 Open Discussion Anyone

-2011: between 83 and 85 days left until graduation. They continue with the campaign for the senior gift. ABC was very receptive to the gift. 2011 Mug night is coming up in March and there will be food and senior DJs.

-Jewett: Seven Deadly Sins went well. At first seven security guards sat in the lobby and didn't do anything. Orgs are also welcome to use other security companies rather than Vassar security.

-Joss: he wanted to know more about the no drinking in the library event. Apparently the champagne toast went a little awry. There was broken glass, books taken off shelves, toothpicks everywhere, and overall disarray.

-Student Life: All College Day went well, but he was disappointed about attendance, and that those who did come were only looking for free things. I am Vassar and Can I Kiss you are under discussion. 2012 suggested changing the All College Day day of the week.

-Cushing spoke to the lack of publication that other security options are available for events.

-Davison congratulated Jewett on Seven Sins and spoke to how cool Vassar Voices in the city was.

-President spoke to the coolness of being in a room with 1,000 alums.

-Joss says yay Mr. Vassar and made a motion to adjourn. All in favor, except Joss.

-The meeting was adjourned at 10:14 p.m.