

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

VSA Council Minutes for April 10, 2011

1 Call to Order

-The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

2 AttendanceOperations

-All here, except Operations who will be late and Academics who was saving a life.

3 Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Minutes from 3/27

-All approved

4 Announcements:

a. Declaration of Open PositionsOperations

5 Special Guest:

Luis Inoa: Director of Residential Life/Assistant Dean of Students

-This has been a significant year of transition in Res Life. They went from five full time employees to three, with two employees with half time responsibilities. They now have less time for the informal relationships with the students, but they are more involved in other aspects of campus life like international students and campus activities. The Student Conduct Panel is great because their office really values shared governance. The house advisors are spread thin, but he thinks overall it's a good step for the institution. Previously the way house changes worked was that if a student wanted to change houses they would simply be drawn into that house according to their draw number, but this year for the first time they decided to place students with house changes at the bottom of the dorm list. If you draw into a double then you can only move to another double.

-Raymond asked about putting students in draw based on conduct, does being on probation affect you? They are considering it, but currently it doesn't affect housing. They would have to consider how long probation lasts. It would be announced over summer. Current probation people would definitely not be affected.

-Lathrop encouraged improving the relationship of the BHP with Luis and his team.

-They're working on improving Joss and Main kitchens.

-Main asked about the house advisor committee this year. The Tanenbaum fellow is now with RSL full time. In terms of senior feedback, they want to give intermural sports more attention. They want to open a contemplative space in Jewett. They are going to hire a person would be responsible for finding these spaces, working with Health Ed., and Campus Activities on Up Cafe etc.

-Student Life asked about what part of Health Ed. they will be taking over. The person that they are looking for now is going to be in charge of TIPs, as part of training apartment residents and maybe dorm residents as well. They might try to get the fellows together more and they are also working on the UpC café. Student Life thanked him

for helping with the transition and doing a good job. He felt they were stronger in the fall semester than the spring semester.

-There was a question about transitioning students. There are Trios that are responsible for each transitioning student (a faculty, admin, and student). They are working on a full year report; they have taken 3 surveys and will take these into account. They have gotten very positive feedback. They are thinking of doing a four day orientation instead of three days and working on the academic component more. They have gotten 35 applications for being transitions interns this year. They had a dinner with the students in December, and a trustee that attended is helping fund the whole program. He wanted to stay involved with CIE without being responsible.

-2011 asked about dorm life and damage. He said that it feels like it's gotten better since last semester, but overall student conduct has been pretty much normal. Student life responded that CCL is working on the alcohol related issues; they want to bridge the gap between perception and actuality. They would like to have a small task force.

-He mentioned that from videos he's seen, the parties aren't anything like they were in 2001. He acknowledged however that he has conversations more with students who are following rules than with those who aren't.

-Student Life asked about spring training. They want to work more with the VSA to work on the fall leadership conference and cover more nuts and bolts up front with the officers; they want to make sure they do all they can do and let the new Council look at the bigger issues.

-Activities brought up bringing in the new org leaders earlier than the freshmen so they're ready. He feels that they already have a lot of students on campus and they don't want students coming early simply to party. He was very open to the idea of bringing in newly elected council members to help with orientation etc.

6 Appointment of Aaron Grober to Board of Elections Co-ChairOperations

-He approached Operations a few weeks ago asking if he could get involved and showed enthusiasm for giving elections this year lots of hype.

-Jewett asked about publicizing the open position.

-Strong also thinks that this position should be announced open again.

-Academics feels uncomfortable punishing someone due to the position not be announced open again. In terms of the timeline, they can't really do this at this point. This position was announced at the beginning of the year.

-Activities brought up appointing more students to BEO.

-Town Students was concerned that all the blame was falling on Exec Board.

-TAs stated that they need more people.

-Mookie asked about the responsibilities of this position--lots of housekeeping duties: emails, talking to people, clarifying rules. Student Life talked about the importance of getting all of Council's help on this, using study breaks, etc.

-This motion passed with all in favor, except TAs, who abstained.

7 Student Amendment to Bylaws Article VI..... Seth Warner

-He thanked everyone for their support. He believes the change is great because it's fairer, more competitive, and more requires more substance. Right now the campaigning and filing are completely separate, but with this change they would be concurrent. It allows for more candidates because they know elections are going on. It introduces people to the issues before the candidates and enhances face to face contact.

-2014 is very excited about this change.

-Lathrop also showed support and added that they talked about it in Operations committee and asked for Operations to share what they talked about.

-Operations talked through some of the smaller issues in their committee like Res Life and Operations coordinating about elections dates. They also added a section to hold internet campaigning also for the first week.

-Activities wanted to amend part of the amendment to keep people from handing out papers, she wants to strike section 7.

-Seth feels that people should be allowed to give out paper with their name and a website, etc. on it as a free speech right. People are allowed to give a flier only if they are face to face with them. It is to reinforce the face to face contact.

-Activities expressed concern about enforcing this rule. Last year fliering wasn't allowed at all.

-Town Students encouraged having candidates put their name on themselves rather than giving papers because they just pile up in someone's room.

-Lathrop suggested banning fliering and instead just giving each candidate a big poster in the College Center with their platform.

-2014 was in favor because it was a way to give people a reminder of them, but thinks that online is another way to do this.

-Motion to strike section 7: all in favor, motion passes.

-Town Students asked about how they enforced these guidelines. She feels that they'll still face all the same problems. Basically, if someone violates, they warn them and then they have the right to disqualify them. They let candidates know about these in the mandatory candidates meeting. People take it pretty seriously.

-2014 asked about how this will play out this year. Would Filing and Campaigning all begin on Tuesday? He was worried about how hectic this could potentially be. Only people who have been planning to run know what the difference between filing and campaigning is. This year there would be one week of each and the first week is only face to face contact.

-Seth thinks the sooner the better these changes are publicized. Timeline: Tues filing starts. Email saying that you can begin campaigning if you go and sign a paper in the VSA office. Filing: Tues. the 12th- Sun. the 17th, Campaigning: Sun. the 17th- Sat. the 22nd, Voting Sat, the 22- Tues the 25th. Results announced on Monday April 25th. There was a lot of

discussion about confusion and logistics and Seth's college choice. If someone doesn't sign it, then they will be brought to the Office of Elections.

-Activities was concerned about reserving the spaces for postering for 2 weeks.

-Town Students thinks that the poster should explain the new system rather than have faces of candidates.

-Seth thinks that with the posters, competition will be increased.

-Lathrop doesn't feel that this is fair because people will be making decisions the night before and they might have to change their whole campaigning strategy.

-Noyes was worried about confusion.

-Seth made a motion to implement this for next year.

-Vince- the student body is going to shit their pants. Too much confusion!

-Operations suggested putting this off until next year. Lathrop thinks we should put as much as we can into this this year as well as many others.

- The motion to strike section 7 passed with all in favor.

-The motion to amend passed with all in favor! Yay Seth!

8 Update on The Limit..... Activities

-There's a lot of miscommunication between orgs and academic buildings. There were other orgs using the space at the same time, so it's unclear whose fault this was. The storage until behind the chalkboard is no longer allowed for use. Activities won't be approving any more events after this week. They will be certifying one or two orgs before the end of the semester.

9 Allocation of \$1,060 to Debate Society from Conference Fund..... Finance

-They requested \$1320 initially to go to a very prominent conference in Amherst and they think they've managed their funds well. They have more than doubled their membership this year, but received the same budget as last year which was \$6000. They wondered why they weren't being given the whole amount.

-Finance suggested that they borrow cars instead of renting. They moved it to Conference from Discretionary to get them more money.

-Main made a motion to amend the allocation to \$1320.

-They've been selling sweatshirts and had bake-sales to fundraise. Comparable schools like Swarthmore and Amherst have \$20,000 budgets. They have asked to have fees brought down for every conference and they have tried to get vans from Vassar, but have been unable because of having a supervisor and being gone overnight.

-There's an all campus event every Friday and Saturday for the rest of the semester.

-All in favor of amending the allocation to \$1320, except Town Students and Student Life who opposed.

-All in favor, this allocation passes.

10 Allocation of \$1,200 to VISA from Discretionary Fund..... Finance

- They need funding for the Seniors' Dinner which is the only event where all the seniors come together. 70 students. This is a very important tradition. They have a very small budget and because of past debt their budget is smaller this year. This won't be enough, but it's something. They will go into more debt if they aren't given this money. Their biggest event is Kaleidoscope. They also helped with the teach-in and a few parties, one 2 weeks ago. They were given \$2,000, but had a debt of \$1,200. This is the first year where orgs can't use meal swipes.

-Finance said they probably shouldn't have spent on the party.

-Student Life talked about feeling super bonded with the international community and how they have become a strong part of the Vassar community. He thinks this event is a very cool event because many of them won't have family there for graduation and it's a way to still celebrate them.

-Ferry suggested collaborating with another organization of maybe moving it on to campus. They usually plan their events with OIS, but VISA always provides the funding.

-Town Students suggested not having it in that restaurant, somewhere closer and cheaper might be a better idea.

-Lathrop suggested that they cater an event on campus which they could do with the money that they are giving them.

-2014 felt that they should have managed their money better.

-Finance made a motion to table this event until next week.

-Main thinks that VISA and Finance should consult on their budget.

-Finance thinks that yes, this should happen, hopefully with OIS as well.

-Town Students supports this motion to let them think of a creative solution.

-Activities was worried about having more applications next week, but Finance responded that this would be at the top of the agenda.

-All in favor of the tabling motion except TAs

11 Allocation of \$5,400 to MECHA from Community Fund Finance

-The Sunday after Founders' Day. A day celebrating workers' rights and awareness. A rally will take place as well as some other fun events, and a Vassar workers' dinner.

-Finance Committee found a lot of small creative cuts. May Day is like an international Labor Day and in the US it's looked at as an immigrants' rights day. They are trying to publicize this as much as they can in the larger community. They need to purchase a \$2000 permit form the city of Poughkeepsie. They are in the process of getting the permit. Everyone that is affected by the march need to give their permission. It is meant to include the Vassar and Poughkeepsie community. They are looking to get performances from a capella groups, maybe a speech from a professor, and it would be them serving the attendees.

-Town Students wanted to recognize that many freshmen and sophomores are helping plan this. They want it to be more of a celebration, not too radical so it doesn't get too messy. They are focusing on keeping the park and the library lawn clean. They have an alternative plan in case they don't get the permit.

-All in favor, except Town Students and Finance who abstained, this allocation passes.

12 Allocation of \$1,000 to ViCE from Collaboration Fund..... Finance

-For Founders Day they want 4 guards during the day and 6 at night, which makes it more expensive, among other things, increased security. There's a silent concert going on outside in the South Commons, with special headsets that cost a lot. Main is the other contributor to this event. Main decided to help ViCE make this event bigger instead of having another calendar event. It's from the Collaboration Fund, it was incorrectly listed as Discretionary on the application.

-Main, 2012, Socos abstain, all the rest in favor, motion passes.

-Academics made a motion for a 5 minutes recess. All in favor.

13 Exec Board Reports

a. Academics

- They have been discussing what would be a better pre-registration system. Multiple people showed their support.

-Motion to endorse the resolution: all in favor, passed.

b. Finance

-He has a meeting with religious and spiritual life. The Pagan society has been in debt for 2 semesters, so they'll have to be decertified. Fund left: Discretionary-\$5,800, Collaboration-\$4900, Community-\$100, Speakers-\$1,687, Conference-\$13,095, Flex funds: \$17,429.50. They will be asking for input about orgs having more events than they can support. Finance of bylaws, as well as a few other issues. These meetings will take place next weekend all day both days and they will be balancing the budget. There is no policy on publicizing to the public the amount of money in each fund. It's clean up time. This is the first time they've reevaluated the finance system at the end of the year.

- Funds are getting down there in all the accounts so that's why they've been doing careful cuts.

14 Open Discussion..... Anyone

-2011: 42 days left until graduation. Wabash reminder will be sent out. The all school gift website is up and running. Pizza party challenge. Senior party graduation schedule is being worked out.

-If the BOE finds the change unconstitutional then we will start filing on Tuesday with the old structure of VSA enacted. The constitutional advisor is Operations, but President will

be serving in this case. The BOE will take the judicial board's recommendation into account.

-Ann Marie: CIE on Wednesday from 8 to 10 CC MPR. Show me the Money: there will be a panel on socioeconomics at Vassar

-Academics talked about a conversation about focus weekend. Suggestions are always welcome. The only events they have is the Soco event and the Voices thing. The more events the better.

-Strong offered to collaborate with something on the quad.

-Lathrop said that the Soco event is a whole day thing, so it might be hard to get people to come out to something on the quad. The weekend will be Saturday, Sunday, Monday.

-Tonka is a good event, but there was a discussion about how representative this event is.

-Mookie asked about the schedules students were given, are shows on there? He thinks they should be.

-Strong: Giant rainbow parachute.

-Seth wanted to say thanks, handshakes and hugs, which caused general chaos.

-Cushing asked about senator candidates running on very different platforms and how this would affect productivity. There will be sub-committees and the cross-connections like with Exec. Board.

-Town Students is excited for more students to get involved because there will be more sub-committees. She had previously brought up the idea of people on the residential council having to sit on one internal committee to stay involved with VSA. Has this been discussed more? She also wants to talk about educating people more and what we're going to do about this.

-Student Life stated that we will have to wait until next year to make these changes.

-2014 derailed into gibberish and for a minute Council became a "ghost army," "it would be as if the witch king took a mace to Gandolf's head.'

-Activities: If the referendum stands, then we can make amendments to the responsibilities of the positions and internal committees. Also, they will be holding open Council sub-committee meetings as well. She also addressed the teach in and the bickering between council members takes away from the educational process, so whatever happens on Tuesday she feels we all need to embrace it as a unified unit. She thinks we should go around and say one thing we'll do to educate this week.

-Lathrop will use Facebook to educate. She agrees with Activities that we shouldn't rush any changes, like with the new amendment. Lathrop has had people complain that council members were on the panel and they would have preferred fellow students. She feels that we shouldn't look at it as if one way is good and one way is bad and this shouldn't be how we portray our views. We all need to get behind the result. There's an Operations meeting tomorrow that everyone could come to in order to discuss this.

- Cushing addressed how having the changes in the structure on a whiteboard in her house has brought up many questions.
- Operations will be sending out an email, but unfortunately the Judicial Board meeting is at the same time as the Operations meeting, so she's going to try to change the time to 8.
- 2013 wondered about who would vote on this change if the referendum stands.
- Town Students talked about how her experience with the VSA has been that it's ineffective, but is happy that's changing. She's inviting people to her house to educate them.
- Student Life feels they need closure, but wanted to thank everyone on opening channels of discussion, staying composed, and wanted to thank Exec. because it's been a trying process for all of them, but they've supported each other and moved on and he feels good about how they've dealt with it. He is trying to get a town hall together and sending out a flier to all the dorms.
- TAs thinks they should all draft a poster.
- Academics volunteered to write the blog for VSA today.
- Raymond made a motion to adjourn and this passed with most in favor at 10:41 p.m.