

VSA Council Minutes
April 19, 2009

1. Call to Order

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

2. Attendance

Proxies: Noyes, Cushing, 2012.

Guests: Andrew Bennett (Student Asst. to the President), Matthew Brock (Misc), Brian Farkas (Misc), Julianne Herts (Misc), Emma Mitchell (Misc), Molly Turpin (Misc), Danny McBee (Food Committee), Nick Dressler (2011 Candidate), Louise Conner (Davison President Candidate), Michael Mestitz (Misc), Caitlin Halasz (Misc), Ruby Cramer (Misc), Chelsea Kelly (CCET), Francesca Veres (Main Treasurer), Brian Moody, Stephanie Damon-Moore (COOP), Daniel Gordon (Shuttle Committee), Mrinmayee Paril (Cushing President Candidate), Stephanie Wilmes (Transmission), Rebecca Levin (Transmission), Tristan Feldman (Transmission), Loghann Rimel (Transmission), Irene Beauregard (Transmission), Emily Hamilton (Transmission), Anne Sando (Transmission), Jared Augenstein (ProHealth), David Bridgeman-Packer (ProHealth), Hannah Goch-Begley, Colin Bernatzky (COOP), Rachel Glicksman (COOP, Hunger Action), Allison Bloom (CCAC).

3. Consent Agenda

a. Allocation of \$250 from Council Discretionary to Ballroom Dancing

No objections were made, and the Consent Agenda was adopted as presented.

4. Reports

a. Shuttle Committee Report

Dan Gordon, student assistant to the Poughkeepsie shuttle, explained that he works with chairs Jeff Kosmacher and James Challey to coordinate the weekday and weekend shuttles. On a weekly basis, approximately 160 students utilize the weekday shuttle and about 160 utilize the weekend shuttle. The Sunday shuttle's hours have recently changed, and will now be from 2-6 PM. The committee is aiming to increase student participation, and hopes to do so by posting more flyers and distributing revised maps of downtown Poughkeepsie. A new event, highlighting the shuttle service and various Poughkeepsie destinations, will likely be added to next year's new students orientation.

The VP for Activities supported incorporating such a program into Freshmen Week, and suggested expanding this idea to include Poughkeepsie-oriented activities and trips for all students throughout the year. 2009 was concerned that negative stereotypes about the area prevent some students from utilizing the shuttle and venturing into the city to explore. He recommended that the Shuttle Committee devise and distribute a facts sheet that debunks common myths and details fun, safe, interesting features of Poughkeepsie. Dan concluded that any questions and comments about the shuttle service should be sent to pokshuttle@vassar.edu.

b. CCAC Report

Allison Bloom, student representative, reported that CCAC has recently formed several new subcommittees, each focused on a different significant campus-community issue. The Student Training Sub-Committee has been holding roundtable discussions for students in the Poughkeepsie schools, and is working on preparing a packet of materials for Freshmen Orientation. The committee has also been devising questionnaires and organizing focus groups geared toward obtaining feedback from other members of the Vassar and Poughkeepsie communities. Recent discussions have also involved the Poughkeepsie shuttle and its impact on community relations. The Communications Sub-Committee has just completed a slideshow that will be shown at various forums; the video will detail “what CCAC does” and will hopefully encourage Vassar students to become more involved in the outside community.

c. Food Committee Report

Danny McBee, of the Food Committee, explained that conversations this semester have focused on improving “Grab & Go” options in ACDC, as well as the idea of establishing a meal equivalency plan in UpCDC for the Fall. There will likely be a new reusable to-go container system; students will be able to pay \$5 to obtain a keychain, which they will exchange for a container and retrieve when they return the container. UpCDC has now become the “de-facto convenience store”, as asbestos issues and financial stress have halted plans to develop the original “C-Store” space. Though Campus Dining is “still working out what to supply”, the new Java City/C-Store seems to be quite successful thus far. Danny concluded that the committee has also been tackling “the usual menu gripes, service things”, but that the transition to the “all-you-care-to-eat” plan has gone fairly well.

d. CCET Report

Chelsea Kelly, CCET rep, announced that Vassar has decided to officially shift from Blackboard to Moodle next year. As Moodle is open-source and free, this switch will enable the College to significantly reduce its spending. Blackboard currently costs approximately \$35,000 per year, while running Moodle will only require paying miscellaneous third parties for tech support. Moodle will also provide CIS with the opportunity to develop Vassar-specific programs. Operations expressed concern with the switch, as “off-campus vendors won’t be able to use V-Cash machines if we aren’t using Blackboard”. Others, like 2009 and guest Emily Hamilton, echoed Operations’ hesitation, explaining that they had utilized Moodle in some of their courses and found the system to be quite confusing.

5. Allocation of \$1500 from Council Discretionary to Hunger Action

The VP for Finance moved to allocate \$1500 from Council Discretionary to Hunger Action for the Family Partnership Benefit Dinner, which will feature speakers, live entertainment and food catered by Zoronas, Mole Mole and Twisted Soul. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

6. Transfer of \$950 from Great Works to Speakers/Lectures/Panels

The VP for Finance moved to transfer \$950 from the Great Works Fund to the Speakers/Lectures/Panels Fund. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

7. Allocation of \$950 from Speakers/Lectures/Panels to ProHealth

The VP for Finance moved to allocate \$950 from Speakers/Lectures/Panels to ProHealth for a lecture by Ann Sherwood, who will discuss “seeing the world” as a female photojournalist. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

8. Certification of Transmission

The VP for Activities moved to certify Transmission. Transmission’s representatives explained that the group formed out of a need to discuss and advocate for trans issues; after identifying “problems with Baldwin” regarding “differences between trans identity and intersex issues”, members began meeting and working with various professors in the Women’s Studies, Psychology and Education departments to ensure that all course reading materials and syllabi are sensitive to the experiences of trans individuals. The group has participated in All-College Day, has been in communication with Baldwin and Metcalfe, and has been working hard all year to establish itself on campus. Finance expressed concern at the notion of certifying new orgs, given the College’s financial situation. Activities spoke in favor of Transmission, noting that she has

been working with its representatives since November, and sees its application as quite strong. Strong, 2009 and others also voiced support for the group, claiming that its focus is distinct from QCVC's and that it will provide students with a valuable, safe space. Finance was not in favor of certification, though all others were in favor, and the motion passed.

9. Organization of the Month

The VP for Activities moved to declare SASA Org of the Month for March. SoCos was not in favor, though all others were in favor, and the motion passed.

10. Amendments to Article IV and X of the VSA Constitution

The VP for Student Life moved to amend Article IV and Article X of the VSA Constitution, as presented at the April 12th Council meeting. TAs felt that the Judicial Board's function is to evaluate violations and determine punishments. 2009 was not entirely comfortable voting on all of the amendments at once, and moved to divide the question. Strong, Noyes, 2012, Raymond, Main, Lathrop, 2011, Student Life, TS, SoCos, Ferry, 2010, Joss and TH were not in favor; 2009, TA, Activities, Finance, Operations, Cushing, Academics and Jewett were in favor, and the motion failed. 2009, TA, Joss and Finance were not in favor of the proposed amendments, though Cushing, 2010, TS, Ferry, Activities, Operations, Student Life, Academics, Main, Jewett, Raymond, 2012 and Strong were in favor, and the motion passed.

11. Appointment of Mary-Catherine Halfpenny to the Board of Elections

The VP for Operations moved to appoint Mary-Catherine Halfpenny to the Board of Elections. Mary-Catherine announced that she is excited at the prospect of sitting on the BOE, as she has been "trying to increase student involvement with elections all year". Strong abstained, though all others were in favor, and the motion passed.

11. Open Discussion

- 2009 announced that 35 days remained until graduation.
- Brian Farkas announced that the Misc had its elections this past Wednesday. Caitlin Halasz, Molly Turpin and Ruby Cramer will serve on next year's Executive Board.
- Main moved to allocate \$2700 from Residences Fund to Main for its Pool Party, taking place on Sunday April 26th. The party will be open to all students, and will involve food, live bands, a smoothie maker and a Community Works raffle. Main explained that it needs this allocation because certain anticipated co-sponsors "have pulled out". Main abstained; 2009 was not in favor, though all others were in favor, and the motion passed.

- Finance announced that filing will conclude on Monday at 5pm. The candidates' meeting will take place on Monday in Blodgett at 9pm, and the VSA Exec Board candidates' debates will take place on April 23rd in Rocky 200.

12. Adjourn

The meeting concluded at 8:31 PM.