

VSA Council Minutes

April 6, 2008

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.

2. Attendance

Guests: Evan Altshuler (ViCE), Leona Brannon (WOCA), Kendra Carlton (WOCA), Brian Farkas (Miscellany News), Elysia Glover (Miscellany News), Julianne Herts (Miscellany News), Hannah Kullberg, Alison Lotto (Library Committee), Juliana Ma (SFPC), Olivia Mak (SFPC), Acacia O'Connor, Yuridiana Rojas (WOCA), Jamie Rosen, Sam Rosen-Amy (Miscellany News), Angie Sosa (WOCA), Adam Wolfe

3. Consent Agenda

a. Allocation of \$250 from Collaboration to Town Students

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

4. Reports

a. Committee on Curricular Policies

A representative from CCP reported that their last report was on February 3. Since then there were four scheduled meetings that are regularly held on Wednesdays. The meeting directly before Spring Break (March 5) was cancelled. They have considered two proposals: one regarding a World Literature Correlate, which was rejected because it wasn't well thought-out; and another request from the Chemistry department to have labs on Wednesday afternoons, which was rejected because that is an illegal time for class.

In addition to these proposals, they have been talking about 2-2, and decided at the February 13 meeting that the discussion of 2-2 would be focused around the Environmental Studies staffing plans and the Political Science staffing plans. These two departments were chosen because they are very different and will provide different perspectives. On the meeting last Wednesday the committee was only able to talk about Environmental Studies; the program director of Environmental Studies provided CCP with courses ranked 1-5 on how required they were, how much students relied on them, and whether they could effectively be cut under 2-2.

b. Library Committee

A representative from the Library Committee reported that they have met three times since their last report on February 3. On February 7 the committee looked at the Amazon Kindle and the Sony Electronic Book Reader, which the library just purchased, and discussed the place of online and electronic resources in the library. This led to a larger discussion about the future of the selections and the use of such technologies in the library. The committee also discussed the different journals that Vassar receives, and whether each is needed, as part of a larger discussion of canceling certain journals. Any student concerned about the cancellation of journals that are on the cancellation list should contact the library about keeping those journals.

The committee discussed the creation of an Art History classroom, how renovations will be affecting faculty studies, and the creation of a scholarship repository of Vassar professors. Regarding library hours, the committee discussed the question of whether the library should be open on Good Friday; it was the opinion of the committee that if the campus is open, then the library should also be open. The committee is also

attempting to create library hours that better meet the needs of the students during breaks, including keeping the library open at the end of breaks, even before classes begin.

The committee will soon be discussing the library Annex, including the issues of what exists in the Annex, and what should be brought out into the normal access of the library. The committee also wants to refocus the discussion of how books are actually being used in teaching, to move beyond simple statistics of when and how often books are checked out. Main requested that the library committee re-introduce the discussion of a creation of a 24-hour study space in the library.

c. Admissions and Financial Aid

A representative from CAFA reported that the committee has only met once in the last reporting period, because one of the meetings during midterms was cancelled. The admissions office is reportedly understaffed, and continues receiving more applications each year. The number of applications from China has highly increased this year, and about 34% of the applicant pool consists of students of color. The committee discussed the Common Application, and whether it favors certain students over others. The committee also discussed what it should focus on, and the inclusion of African American students is always an item discussed. Also discussed was the necessity of documentation to apply to the school, which is problematic because of the large number of non-documented residents in the country.

The representative noted that she took a tour of Vassar, and the tour guide did not discuss either the ALANA Center or Blegen House. 2010 explained that discussing those items are optional, and that the tour script is too large to include everything. The committee has discussed local recruitment, and general ways that people associated with the college can informally help to change the image of the campus—including possible actions by student organizations and Vassar alumni. There will be one student from Poughkeepsie High School attending Vassar next year.

The VP for Academics then briefly discussed aspects of the committee itself. She expressed frustration that nothing really gets done by the committee, and nothing really changes about the admission process as a result, and that this has been true for years. There is a possibility of holding training sessions for members of CAFA in order to help them better understand the admission process. There is also a possibility of forming a newer committee to more effectively bring change to the process.

d. Science Facility Planning

A representative from the Science Facility Planning Committee reported that the committee has a new student member, and has had three meetings since their last report. One of those meetings happened over Spring Break and as such failed to include its student members. That meeting involved viewing models for the new Science Facility.

The committee is currently in discussions about the specific spaces necessary for each department in the new facility, and which departments already have satisfactory facilities on campus. The Physics department has asserted that it does not want to move its location, asking instead for room-by-room renovations, and there are discussions in the committee about not creating an area for the Math department.

The big scheme of the project is to incorporate all disciplines together to promote interdisciplinary studies, but disagreements among the disciplines has made this more difficult. The renovation is also facing uncertainty about the future of Mudd; the renovation may include creating a dry lab in the basement of Mudd, and the Physics and Earth Science departments have expressed concern about the renovation of Mudd, because they do not want to move. There is also an excess of space in Sanders Physics and Olmstead.

e. Computing and Educational Technologies

A representative from CETC reported that the committee is very excited to be joining the Class of 2010's class gift project.

The main issue being tackled is the consideration of moving away from Blackboard in coming years; this is under consideration because according to a survey, the faculty does not like Blackboard and considers it overly "clunky." If Blackboard is indeed abandoned, another option being considered is Moodle, which will be used next semester to see how it works. Moodle is free because it is open source, which is preferable to the high-cost of Blackboard. The representative explained that at the beginning of the year Blackboard offered Vassar a discount on Blackboard Enterprise, which is the higher level of Blackboard, but that this discount will disappear in several years. CIS has yet to integrate some of the higher-level features of Blackboard Enterprise.

Academics suggested that the committee should look into ways to maintain access to uploaded files and student posts from Blackboard, once classes have ended. 2010 made note that it would be useful in the coming semester to get input from students using both Moodle and Blackboard simultaneously, in order to help choose the better option.

In regards to printing, the issue of quotas will be addressed in a discussion at the end of the year. Activities suggested making exceptions for students writing theses, as well as other students with outstanding circumstances. Another helpful tool would be getting information and input from students who are going over the quota, and why that is the case. Operations suggested having a conversation with Financial Aid about how the quota is affecting Aid students. Academics suggested looking at different majors and courses, speaking to professors about their online resources, and what their specific students' needs are.

f. Exec Report (Activities)

Activities reported that the transportation system now includes a grocery store stop and a train station stop. He explained that what will truly affect the system is ridership, and encouraged all students to use the shuttle and bring their friends to the shuttle, in order to increase the number of students using the system. Ferry expressed concern about the unsustainability of the shuttle; Activities responded that if the shuttle is maintained for future years, the college might invest in a bio-diesel shuttle.

There was a forum on Tuesday to discuss the upcoming Bookstore renovation, which effectively cleared up a lot of questions about the Juliet project. The project includes moving the College Bookstore into the Juliet space, and building a new bookstore in the current College Bookstore location. The renovation will actually be going all the way out to the westbound arterial. The college is currently talking to Barnes and Noble about what they'd like to do with the new College Bookstore. The college will also soon be entering a formal bidding process, but due to the hard economic times, there is relatively low interest and a few independent bookstores have already dropped out of bidding. He additionally noted that during the renovation CIS would be running conduit to both the Alumni House and the Juliet, in order to provide WiFi. Town Student asked whether there would be a study space in the new bookstore; Activities responded that it is a possibility, and that there may be an introduction of food services in the bookstore, but that the college must be mindful of the Krafted Cup, the Cubbyhole, and Babycakes.

Activities is currently working to get the Farmer's Market using V-Cash machines. There are currently 124 VSA organizations, and new applications are winding down for the semester. He is also currently working to get the Campus Community Advisory Committee (CCAC) website up and running.

g. Finance Report

Finance reported that the Annual Budgeting Process has begun. She will be receiving account balances every day instead of every week, in order to make sure that all finances are in line. The interviews for annual budgeting are on April 19th. There are lots of issues that Finance is currently facing, including people attempting to meet with her before interviews start who are not actually the financial contacts for their organization.

h. ViCE Report

Evan from ViCE reported on the upcoming M.I.A. concert, which will be taking place on Friday, April 11. The show will be happening on the West side of the ACDC, and ViCE is working tirelessly to make the space as different as possible, to make it feel like students are actually getting a show. They will be working to maximize the space available, in order to allow as many people as possible to have good seats and a good view of the stage. Evan acknowledged that the ACDC is not an ideal venue, but due to the unavailability of other spaces on campus, this was the necessary choice. He explained that as much as Walker would have been a wonderful space, it would have required forcing community students to move an annual event out of the space.

Evan also reported that ViCE would be making the ACDC as safe as possible. The West side of the ACDC would be closing at 2pm on Friday, and the East side will stay open until 8pm for dining. Lathrop commented that many students had trouble with getting tickets on TicketWeb, and Evan responded that there are often unfortunate circumstances with Internet ticket merchants. Student Life suggested turning on the air conditioning in the ACDC several hours before the show, in order to avoid overheating the audience during the performances.

5. Amendment of Elected Positions

TA moved to amend the list of elected positions, to add three Programming Directors for the respective apartment areas, the Town Students Vice President, and the Judicial Board Chair, and to remove the positions from EOAA and Disability Issues. Cushing questioned why the Exec Board decided to add a Vice President instead of a Treasurer for the Town Students, and Exec responded that ideally the position could encompass both roles. Members of Council also engaged in discussions the nature and roles of Committee members, in response to the change in EOAA and Disability Issues. All of Council voted in favor of the amendments, and the motion passed.

6. Certification of Women of Color Alliance

Activities moved to certify the Women of Color Alliance. Members from the organization discussed their rationale for forming the organization and applying for VSA certification, noting the need for a space for women of different racial and cultural backgrounds to collectively meet at Vassar. All of Council voted in favor of the certification, and the motion passed.

7. Transfer of \$2170 from Great Works to Speakers

Finance moved to transfer \$2170 from the Great Works Fund to the Speakers Fund. She explained that the transfer was necessary because the previous week's allocations accidentally overdrew from the Speaker's Fund. She only received updates of VSA Funds once a week, and the previous week's update had an outdated estimate of the Speakers Fund.

All of Council voted in favor of the transfer, and the motion passed.

8. Introduction of Amendments to Articles II of the VSA Bylaws

Operations moved to amend Article II, Sections 4-B, 4-C, 6-J, 8, and 9, of the VSA Bylaws. Activities reported that these amendments are responsible for changing the budgetary regulations of VSA, as previously discussed among VSA Council. Several members of Council raised questions about the new amendments, including how the amendments would affect the financial aspects of student organizations, and what students' responses would be to the new regulations.

This was only the introduction of these amendments, and they will be voted on at next week's Council meeting.

9. Introduction of Amendments to Articles III of the VSA Bylaws

Operations moved to amend Article III of the VSA Bylaws. Council engaged in a discussion about the cap for organizations attending conferences, addressing the issue of whether a monetary cap or numerical cap would be most efficient. Another item discussed was the nature of applications from collaborating organizations, and how they would function under the new bylaws.

This was only the introduction of these amendments, and they will be voted on at next week's Council meeting.

10. Amendments to Articles VI and VII of the VSA Constitution

Operations moved to amend Article VI, Section 1-B, and Article VII, Sections 2-G and 2-H, of the VSA Constitution. In response to a question from Main, President informed Council that the changes made by these amendments would not affect the upcoming set of elections. Several small technical changes were made to the amendments by unanimous consent. All of Council voted in favor of the amendments, and the motion was passed.

2009 moved to amend Section 2-G, to read "The Freshmen, Sophomore, and Junior representatives shall communicate their respective class concerns and/or ideas to their respective House councils and assist with House programming in cooperation with other House officers," and to delete Section 2-H. All of Council voted in favor of the amendment, and the motion passed.

All of Council voted in favor of the amendments to Articles VI and VII of the VSA Constitution, and the motion passed.

11. Amendments to Articles VII of the VSA Constitution

Operations moved to amend Article VII of the VSA Constitution. The language of "Ferry House" in Section 1 was changed to "Ferry Haus Cooperative" by unanimous consent.

Activities moved to change the wording of "Programming Director" to "Vice President" for the respective roles in the Apartment areas. After considerable disagreement was expressed from members of Council, Activities withdrew his amendment.

Activities moved to amend Section 1-C, to read "President, Treasurer, and Programming Director," with regard to the elected positions of Town Students. Main questioned whether there would be sufficient student interest to create a new leadership role for Town Students. Activities moved to call the amendment to question.

Vote to Call to Question:

Not in Favor: Main, 2011, Noyes, Town Houses, 2008, Town Students, Operations, Academics, Student Life, Finance, SoCo, Jewett, Joss, Lathrop.

In favor: Strong, TA, Activities, Ferry, 2010, Cushing, Davison, Raymond.

Result: By a vote of 14-8, the motion failed.

Activities moved to amend his amendment, to simply add "Town Students" to Section 1-B, and strike the contents of Section 1-C. Activities then withdrew all of his proposed amendments.

2010 moved to amend the amendment, to add "Town Students and" to Section 1-B, and to strike the contents of Section 1-C. All of Council voted in favor of this amendment, and the motion passed.

Council then voted on the overall passage of the original amendments to Article VII of the VSA Constitution. All of Council voted in favor of the amendments, and the motion passed.

12. Amendments to Articles VII of the VSA Bylaws

Operations moved to amend Article VII, Section 5 of the VSA Bylaws, with regard to the issue of campaigning. Sean Boley was present at the meeting to discuss the intentions of the proposed amendments. 2010 expressed concern about allowing candidates to print 500 pages, because such campaigning methods are not very sustainable.

Sean moved to amend Section 3-B-1, to read: "For each election period the Board of Elections shall create policies concerning acceptable electronic campaigning methods based on current publicly available technology, and shall submit them to the VSA Council for approval." Council then engaged in a discussion about this amendment, and discussed an appropriate time period for Board of Elections to determine these acceptable methods, in order to avoid conflicts of interest. Ferry argued that in having the stipulations approved by Council inherently created conflicts of interest.

Vote to Amend Section 3-B-1:

Not in Favor: Activities, Ferry, Joss, 2010, Cushing, Finance, Academics, Operations, TH, 2009, TA, 2008, Main.

In favor: Strong, Noyes, Davison, 2011, Student Life, Town Students, SoCo, Jewett, Raymond, Lathrop.

Result: By a vote of 10-13, the motion failed.

Activities argued that it is highly irresponsible to amend these campaigning regulations so close to the dates of the elections and the candidates meeting, and moved to postpone consideration of the item until April 26, 2008. 2010 agreed, noting that there is not sufficient time for this year's candidates to fully understand the new regulations. Council engaged in a discussion about whether the changes being made are significant enough to warrant concerns about conflicts of interest, and whether using the Internet is vital to the upcoming election. Activities moved to call the motion to question; only Academics voted not in favor, and the motion passed.

Vote to Postpone Consideration until April 26:

Not in Favor: Strong, Noyes, Joss, Davison, 2011, Cushing, Finance, Academics, Operations, Student Life, Town Students, SoCo, TH, TA, Jewett, 2008.

In favor: Activities, Ferry, Main, 2010, 2009, Raymond.

Result: By a vote of 16-7, the motion failed.

Noyes moved to call the amendments to question, but President overruled the motion.

Operations moved to amend Section E-1-A, to replace the dimensions with "11" x 17" x 1"." All of Council voted in favor of the amendment, and the motion passed.

Operations moved to amend Section E-2-A, to replace "_" with the word "half," to strike the words following "constituency," and to add another sentence that reads: "For all campus positions this may not exceed 600 8_ x 11 pieces of paper." 2010 moved to consider multiple options. All of Council voted in favor, and the motion passed. 2010 proposed Option B, which would strike Section E-2-A entirely.

Vote on Section E-2-A:

Option A: Activities, Ferry, Strong, Noyes, Main, Joss, Davison, 2011, Finance, Cushing, Student Life, Academics, Town Students, SoCo, TA, Jewett, Raymond, 2008.

Option B: Operations, 2009, 2010.

No: TH, Lathrop.

Result: By a vote of 18-3-2, Option A was passed.

Student Life moved to amend Section E-2-A, to read: "For all campus positions this may not exceed 150 8_ x 11 pieces of paper." Main suggested that the number should instead be changed to 300 pieces of paper. Academics moved to amend the amendment, to change 150 to 300 as the maximum number of fliers. 2008 and Raymond argued that 150 fliers was a fair number, and suggested that it would be better to err on the side of sustainability. Academics then withdrew her secondary amendment. Cushing called Student Life's amendment to question; all of Council voted in favor, and the motion passed. All of Council voted in favor of the amendment, and the motion passed.

Sean proposed an amendment that would add a Section 4, which would be named "Other Campaign Materials," and would provide provisions for materials to be placed on an individual's clothing. Several members of Council seconded this motion. Activities moved to call this amendment to question; all of Council voted in favor, and the motion passed. By a vote of 12 in favor, and 11 not in favor, the motion failed. It needed a vote of 16 for to pass.

Council then voted on the overall passage of the originally proposed amendments to the Bylaws. Only Activities, Ferry, Main, Lathrop, and Raymond voted not in favor, and the motion passed.

13. Announcement of Fines

Finances announced that the following organizations have been fined \$50 for failure to turn in Organization Reports: BSU, Catholic Community, CBS, EDRS, Homework Club, Investment Club, Matthew's Minstrels, MEChA, Night Owls, Sailing, Unicef, Vassar Greens, Vassar Pagan Circle, Woodshed, and Wordsmiths.

14. Open Discussion

- 2008 announced that 49 days remain until commencement.
- TA moved to amend the list of Elected Positions, removing the position of Town Students Vice President, and adding the positions of Town Students Programming Director and Treasurer. Only Student Life voted not in favor, and the motion passed.
- Operations announced that Vassar Myths and Legends would be happening on April 12th at 9:30, providing such snacks as s'mores and hot cocoa.

15. Adjourn

The meeting concluded at 11:23pm.