

Vassar Student Association Council Minutes for September 4th, 2011

I don't know much about algebra, but I know $1+1=2$, and it's me and you, that's all we'll have when the world is through. – Beyoncé

1. Call to Order
 - The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.
2. Attendance.....Operations
 - All here except Academics who is sick.
3. Consent Agenda
 - a. \$1500 from Discretionary Fund to Debate Society
 - Council voted to move this item to the agenda, item number 13.
4. Announcements
 - a. Freshmen Elections.....Operations (10 minutes)
 - Tomorrow at 5 p.m. is the first event for freshmen elections. Filing begins today—it's a 2 week period. Candidates have to pick up a candidate filing form and can campaign door to door for 1 week. The specifics of the process were sent out to the whole campus and there is also information available on the website.
 - 2014 talked about how tabling went well and there were many productive questions asked. Council is talking about the idea of having student fellows talk to their fellowees about what student government is to them.
 - b. Declaration of Open PositionsOperations (5 minutes)
 - The Board of Elections has open positions. They need a chair and people to sit on the board. Under elections, there's a place on the website to fill out the application. One of the chairs must be a senior on Council.
 - There's also a campus life position open for 2013.
 - c. Peer Advising.....Academics (5 minutes)
 - Moved to next week.
5. Special Meeting Rules of the VSA.....Operations (15 minutes)
 - These are new rules that will be used every year. Important changes include time limits for all the agenda items and a restriction of two times being put on the Speaker's List per item. These rules will be posted on the website.
 - Student Life made a motion to change the wording from 60% to a "simple majority" in the 19th rule on the list. It passed with a majority.
 - Operations made a motion to adopt these rules. All in favor, this motion passed.
6. Guiding Principles of the VSA..... Jewett (15 minutes)
 - Jewett read the new principals and made a motion to adopt them. All in favor, this motion passed. The guiding principles will be available on the website soon.

7. An Amendment Concerning the Elections of Class Council OfficersMichael Moore (15 minutes)
 - Michael Moore read the changes that will be made; basically the constitution says that the class representatives should be appointed by the class councils, but he believes that this isn't a good system. This amendment changes the wording of the constitution so that this won't be the case. There is an issue with juniors coming and going JYA; these changes also address this because they require students to vote for each candidate for each semester.
 - Jewett brought up a change in language, but it was decided that they can't discuss this now; there'll be a meeting about details in Operations committee this week.
 - President will send out an email.
8. Appointment of Jewett Vice-PresidentOperations (10 minutes)
 - The Vice-President of Jewett resigned over the summer so Jewett let his constituents know, sent out applications, and Operations committee picked a new VP. However, they aren't official yet, so Operations made a motion to appoint Max Morris as Jewett VP. This passed with all in favor.
9. Appointment of Strong Vice-PresidentOperations (10 minutes)
 - Kaity Chen, there was a motion to appoint her and it passed with all in favor.
10. ViCE CensureActivities & Finance (15 minutes)
 - ViCE ended the year with 12,000 of debt in 2009-2010. Over 2010-11 they decided to pay 6,000, but they ended last yr in \$30,000 of debt. They have been discussing this all summer and the 2 main provisions of the censure is that ViCE needs to report to Finance committee detailing each section, their budget, etc. The second provision is that if an event is set to have \$4,000 or more then the budget must be brought to Finance Committee so there are 2 sets of eyes looking at all situations.
 - Activities explained how normally this would go to Activities committee and they would make the decision, but since ViCE needs to be planning events now, they are taking a different approach.
 - Socos wanted to clarify that they really made this decision collaboratively with ViCE because they want to make sure the student body doesn't lose out on any of ViCE's awesome programming.
 - Activities made a motion to override referral. All in favor, this motion passed.
 - Activities made a motion to ratify the Censure; all in favor, this motion passed.
11. Suspension of Finance BylawsFinance (15 minutes)
 - Wednesday at 4 is the set time for Finance committee to meet.
 - Activities thinks that this might exclude certain people from being on Finance committee and that a certain time should be set for each semester.
 - President made a motion to table this bylaw to the finance committee until the end of the meeting. She is doing this so that there will be time to find the amendment and look at the specific language. All in favor, this motion passed.

12. Capital Loan BylawFinance (10 minutes)
 -Finance explained that this bylaw loan change is being made so that there will be more documentation. He made a motion to refer this to Operations Committee. All in favor, this motion passed.
13. \$1500 from Discretionary Fund to Debate Society
 - Debate Society requested \$5,000 to send 3 people to a competition in The Philippines. Finance Committee recommended \$1,500 because in general finance provides \$250 per person and this is double. They think that this amount is appropriate because more fundraising can be done and the members can make individual contributions. One of the main arguments by the debate society was that this is an investment in the debate society and would bring prestige and cause more people to come to their conference which would make more money in the future. Finance Committee thought that this could be taking away from other constituents.
 -2014 proposed 15 additional minutes of discussion.
 -Alex, the debate representative, explained this conference as the Olympics of debate and says that they would go as representatives of Vassar College. He believes that the reason for the student activities fee is for times like this when events are so important. The Conference fund allows \$5000 for each org per semester, so he thinks that the bylaws allow for these kinds of events. He also argued that the Discretionary Fund allows for the money to fund this, up to \$1,000 per org. He explained that the reason it is just 3 individuals is because they were elected by the whole team and because it benefits the whole team. They go, gather info, and bring it back to everyone. He explained that they don't have another option to go to a closer world championship and that's why they want to go. He pointed out that the debate society has 10% of the budget of many other liberal arts colleges and they have worked really hard to reach this point. They do not want to go into debt.
 -Jewett pointed out that Debate Society would be left with only \$500 if Council gives what is suggested. Also, he doesn't believe that cutting funding from other orgs was an appropriate argument.
 -2014 asked about three years ago when they went. It was in Europe so flights weren't as expensive. 2014 also pointed out that comparing our budget to Harvard doesn't really make sense because we're a very different school than them. He suggested changing the allocation to \$3,000. Alex responded that this would help.
 -Cushing pointed out that the Finance Committee has discussed this at length and has reasons for this allocation
 -Socos made the point that they can use the 35 other debate members to raise or donate more money.
 -President made a motion to extend the conversation 10 more minutes.
 -Finance brought up the point of sacrifice and the fact that Debate Society knew about this since last year and could have been fundraising since then. Also, only 3 individuals will be directly benefiting.

- Main was worried that they are focusing so much on clout and that precious money shouldn't be spent on this.
- Alex feels that the idea of clout is commonly seen in sporting events and this is comparative, it brings a good name to Vassar. He feels they are making personal sacrifice.
- Davison pointed out that \$3,000 is almost 10% of the Discretionary Fund.
- Activities wanted to hear exactly how they are bringing this back to campus and how they relate to other orgs.
- Joss felt that asking debate to forgo one competition is valid.
- Student life made a motion to call. Lathrop and TAs abstained, three in favor, and the rest opposed. This motion fails.
- Town Students was worried about orgs becoming VSA dependent. She strongly believes in the power of fundraising.
- Alex pointed out that they have 4 days because the money is due on Sept. 8th.
- The motion passed with most in favor.

13. Open DiscussionAnyone

- President: thank you Council for supporting Finance committee.
- 2012: 255 days until graduation. They are trying to change the atmosphere around serenading, making it less hostile. They are discouraging booing, letting all houses finish their songs, and only throwing water. They are also holding pizza dinners in each house the night before. They want a more "older sibling" vibe. Next Sat. the 10th at 2 p.m. serenading starts and the dinner is the night before at 6 p.m. After there will be a concert and fireworks. She has been really happy to get the feedback that she has.
- Activities: Yay Activities fair; it was a success. November 12th will be the Meet me in Poughkeepsie event. They've been thinking about turning it into a Founder's Day level event with committees and chairs, etc. There will be a sub-committee for Activities for Meet me in Poughkeepsie.
- 2014: shout out to 2015 members that are here out of interest. He thinks that class councils should be allocated more money. He thinks the Shiva rave was lovely. He heard numerous complaints about security and thinks it may have to do with Residential Life policies.
- Main wanted to discourage trashing of bathrooms during serenading.
- Operation: Saturday the 17th the weekend shuttle is officially starting; the stop is at north lot. Encourage freshmen to check everything out and go to the candidates meeting where there will hopefully be breakout sessions for further discussion.
- Socos: Beyoncé's 30th Birthday today!!! Quote read by President.
- THs: He's excited for VSA! He's concerned about freshmen getting EMSed. He wants to congratulate VSA on working hard.
- Main encouraged people to lobby Cappy to continue paying for the bus system because it's only for this first month.

14. Adjourn

-Activities made a motion to adjourn the meeting. All in favor, this motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.