

# The Bylaws of the Vassar Student Association

## *Preamble*

These Bylaws shall set forth many of the procedures of the Vassar Student Association. It shall be a subordinate document to the VSA Constitution.

## *Article I – VSA Council*

### **Section 1: Meetings and Agenda**

VSA Council meetings shall be held every Sunday at 7 p.m. that classes are in session on the following Monday. A tentative agenda shall be sent out to VSA Council members no later than Thursday evening prior to the appointed meeting time, and shall be posted on the VSA website.

### **Section 2: Chair**

The VSA President shall chair all VSA Council meetings. In the case of his/her absence, this duty shall fall to the VSA Vice President for Operations.

### **Section 3: Parliamentarian**

The VSA Vice President for Operations, or his/her designee, shall be the Parliamentarian during VSA Council meetings.

### **Section 4: Speaker's List**

A speaker's list shall be taken by the Parliamentarian, and shall be followed by the Chair.

### **Section 5: Consent Agenda**

If there are no objections from VSA Council members, all items placed on the Consent Agenda at the start of a Council meeting shall be considered adopted. As stated in Article III, Section 2, all Fund applications shall be placed on the Consent Agenda.

### **Section 6: Disruptive Members**

- A. Any non-Council member who exhibits disruptive behavior may be forced to leave, by the Chair, through appropriate security measures.
- B. Any disruptive Council member may be suspended from the proceedings by a two-thirds majority vote.

### **Section 7: Attendance**

- A. In the case of a Council member's inability to attend a meeting, he or she must send a proxy from his or her constituency, which shall represent the constituency and vote in that member's absence.
- B. Members shall be allowed a maximum of three proxies per semester. Impeachment proceedings must be undertaken if there are additional absences.
- C. If a Council member does not attend a meeting and fails to send a proxy, the organization

that the Council member represents shall be fined \$25 or 5% of the organization's current budget, whichever is greater not to exceed \$500.

- D. If a Council member misses two meetings in a semester without sending a proxy, impeachment proceedings must be undertaken.
- E. If a Council member is absent for more than 15 minutes of a meeting without a proxy, the organization which he or she represents shall be fined \$25 or 5% of the organization's current budget, whichever is less.
- F. If a Council member is absent for more than 15 minutes of a meeting without a proxy twice in one semester, censure proceedings must be undertaken.
- G. If a Council member cannot send a proxy or is late because of an extreme situation, the VSA Executive Board or the VSA Council may excuse his/her absence.

### **Section 8: Rules for Meetings**

Meetings of the VSA Council shall be run according to the attached Special Rules for Meetings. For situations that warrant more formal parliamentary procedure not covered by the Special Rules, the VSA Council shall follow Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.

### **Section 9: Reconsideration of Meeting Rules**

At the beginning of each new term of the VSA Council, the incoming Council shall look at the rules for meetings and parliamentary procedure followed by the previous Council. It shall discuss if these are the rules they wish to follow and vote on keeping the previous rules, or modify them.

### **Section 10: Committees of the VSA Council**

- A. The VSA Council shall have the following standing committees: Academic, Activities, Operations, Finance, and Student Life.
- B. Non-Executive Board Council members shall serve on at least one Council Committee, not to include the Operations Committee.
- C. Council Committee membership shall be determined by the VSA Executive Board.
- D. Committees shall:
  - 1. Meet on a weekly basis and report weekly to Council, or as needed.
  - 2. Make decisions by a majority vote.
  - 3. Consult with relevant student delegations to joint committees.
  - 4. Write and recommend legislation, policies and positions for consideration by Council.
  - 5. Make all recommendations to the VSA Executive Board.
- E. If the VSA Executive Board has concerns with a Council Committee's recommendation, the concerns shall be brought back to the committee for further consideration and debate.
- F. At Council, the VSA Executive Board shall explain any changes made to the Council Committee's recommendation.

### **Section 11: Academic Committee**

The Academic Committee shall:

- A. Be chaired by the VSA Vice President for Academics.
- B. Consider issues pertaining to academics and the academic life of students.

### **Section 12: Activities Committee**

The Activities committee shall:

- A. Be chaired by the VSA Vice President for Activities.
- B. Oversee all VSA organizations and organization partnerships, in conjunction with the Vice President for Activities.
- C. Consider all applications for certification.
- D. Recommend to the VSA Council new, and review existing, policies pertaining to organizations.
- E. Consider and recommend to the Council all disciplinary action relating to organizations.

### **Section 13: Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee shall:

- A. Be comprised of at least seven students from the Council and the VSA Vice President for Finance, who shall chair the Committee.
- B. Review all fund applications and make final recommendations to the VSA Council.
- C. Review supplemental and capital budgeting applications and make recommendations to the VSA Council.
- D. Be held at 4 p.m. on every Wednesday that classes are in session on the following Monday.
- E. Require attendance from its members.

### **Section 14: Student Life Committee**

The Student Life Committee shall:

- A. Be chaired by the VSA Vice President for Student Life.

Consider issues pertaining to the quality of student life and relevant administrative offices.

### **Section 15: Operations Committee**

The Operations Committee shall:

- A. Be chaired by the VSA Vice President for Operations.
- B. Conduct all VSA appointments, unless otherwise specified, review applications for vacant positions and make recommendations to the Executive Board and Council.
  1. The committee shall rank applicants in order of preference, providing rationale for their selections.
  2. All applications will be made available to VSA Council members to review privately upon request.
  3. After reviewing the rationale of the Appointments Committee, Council will vote on the final appointment.
- C. Review the governing documents of the VSA to ensure that these documents reflect current and best practices.
  1. The committee will make recommendations to the Council, who will vote to enact any such changes.
- D. Be responsible for maintaining a full inventory of all capital items possessed by all recognized VSA groups.
  1. "Capital Items" shall be defined as any item that is anticipated to last no less than

- three years. Such inventory shall be kept on file with the VSA VP for Operations and updated no less than once per academic year.
2. Any group not cooperating to the satisfaction of the Operations Committee may be subject to the freezing of their account, fines, and/or the punishments as laid out in the VSA Constitution.
  3. In the event of a conflict of interest between the audited organization and the committee, the Judicial Board Chair shall form a special Audit Committee.
  4. Any member of the VSA may request that an audit be carried out. A written request for an audit shall be submitted to the VSA VP for Operations. The Operations Committee shall review all relevant documents and interview all involved parties.
  5. Decisions by the Operations Committee may result in further punitive action as outlined in Article X of the VSA Constitution.
- E. In the event that an Elections Committee is not chosen, the responsibility for running elections will fall to the Operations Committee.
1. If a committee member has a significant conflict of interest in the election, that member will recuse him/herself from all election proceedings.
  2. Should the Vice President for Operations have a conflict, he/she will recuse himself/herself from the all election proceedings. The remainder of the committee shall internally select a chair.

## *Article II – Budgeting*

### **Section 1: General Applicability**

These Bylaws shall apply to all financial expenditures of the VSA and its certified organizations.

### **Section 2: Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the VSA shall be the same as the fiscal year of Vassar College.

### **Section 3: VSA Overall Budgeting Procedure**

- A. The VSA Overall Budget shall be set based on a six-semester average of the previous three years of actual Full Time Enrollment.
- B. The VSA Operating Budget shall be defined as the VSA Overall Budget less those monies budgeted to the VSA Contingency Funds by the VSA Vice President for Finance as guided by these Bylaws.
- C. All VSA Organizations and Funds shall be budgeted from the VSA Operating Budget.

### **Section 4: Budgeting of Contingency Funds**

- A. The budgets of the Contingency Funds shall be set by the VSA Vice President for Finance prior to the budgeting of the VSA Operating Budget.
- B. The budgets for each Contingency Funds (Organizational Contingency, Capital Contingency, and Supplemental Budgeting Contingency) shall be set as the average of the expenditures from that account over the previous three fiscal years, plus any addition seen necessary by the Vice President for Finance.
- C. All excess moneys remaining in the three Contingency Funds at the end of the fiscal year shall be used first to eliminate debts held by the other two contingency accounts. Any

excess moneys after all three Contingency Funds have balances of zero or greater shall be remanded to the Emergency Fund.

#### **Section 5: Budgeting of the Emergency Fund**

- A. The Emergency Fund shall have a budget equal to one half of the combined budgets for the three Contingency Accounts.
- B. The balance of the Emergency Fund shall carry over from one fiscal year to the next.
- C. If the balance of the Emergency Fund is greater than one half of the combined budgets of the three Contingency Accounts, the excess moneys above that amount shall be remanded to the Great Works Fund.
- D. If the balance of the Emergency Fund is less than one half of the combined budgets of the three Contingency Accounts, the amount necessary to reach this amount shall be budgeted by the VSA Vice President for Finance.

#### **Section 6: Budgeting of VSA Organizations**

- A. The VSA Vice President for Finance must inform all treasurers of VSA organizations of the annual budgeting process at least a week before the budgeting process begins.
- B. At this meeting the VSA Vice President for Finance shall explain the budgeting process, the applicable section of the VSA Bylaws, the dates of mandatory meetings, and deadline(s) for budget requests. Failure of an organization to send its treasurer or a proxy to this meeting may be grounds for personal or organizational disciplinary action and/or funding ineligibility.
- C. On the date set by the Vice President for Finance, all VSA Organizations must submit their budget requests by the previously specified deadlines to the VSA Vice President for Finance.
- D. If an organization does not turn in a budget request before the joint Activities/Finance meeting, the organization must not be included in the Spring Budgeting allocations, except in extreme circumstance at the discretion of the VSA Executive Board. If an organization turns in the budget request after the appointed deadline, but before the meeting, the organization must not receive a budget increase and must be penalized by a seizure of no more than 50% of the organization's account.
- E. Within a week of the due dates of the budgeting application, the Finance and Activities Committees shall hold a joint meeting. This meeting shall allow all organizations at least 3 minutes to present their case for their budget and answer any questions.
- F. The Activities and Finance Committees shall meet and review the budget requests. The committee may meet with any person or organization or review any financial documents in the course of their meetings. The committee shall vote on the final recommendation.
- G. The recommendation of the Finance and Activities Committees shall be forwarded to the current Executive Board and incoming Executive Board. The joint meeting of the Executive Boards shall recommend a budget to the VSA Council. In the spring semester, any member concurrently holding a member-elect position shall have only one vote.
- H. The recommendation of the Executive Boards shall be posted for a petition process of 48 hours. Any VSA member may petition any aspect of the budget. Such a petition shall be submitted to the VSA Vice President for Finance and all petitioners shall be brought

before a joint session Activities and Finance Committees and both Executive Boards.

- I. All petitions shall be reviewed by the joint committee and final recommendations shall be made by the joint committee. The final recommendation shall be posted no less than 24 hours before the VSA Council budgeting meeting.
- J. The final recommendations shall be the starting balance for each organization for the next fiscal year. The VSA Vice President for Finance shall transfer the necessary amount to make the remaining balance in the organization's account equal to the approved starting balance.
  1. Organizations in debt will receive a maximum allocation of the recommended starting balance. Allocations will not be made to cover previous debt.
  2. WVKR, *Vassarion*, and *The Miscellany News* shall be exempt from the above provision and shall receive an allocation equal to the amount in the approved recommendations.
  3. If a final recommendation is not applicable the organization's starting balance for the next year will be their balance from the previous year.
- K. After the process in Section 6, J is carried out, 25% of any remaining money shall be allocated to the Supplemental Budgeting Contingency Fund and 75% of any remaining money shall be allocated to the Council Discretionary fund.

### **Section 7: The VSA Budgeting Meeting**

The VSA Budgeting Meeting shall be executed in the following manner:

- A. The VSA Council, after reviewing the recommendations of the Executive Boards, shall apportion money to eligible organizations under the guidelines stipulated in this section.
- B. This meeting shall occur no later than Spring Convocation and no earlier than the spring Elections.
- C. The VSA Council-elect shall be required to attend as observers.
- D. At the beginning of the VSA Council Budgeting meeting, the VSA President shall review any petitions submitted to the joint Activities/Finance/Executive Boards committee and the outcomes of the petitions.
- E. The first motion of the meeting must be a motion to pass the recommendation of the joint committee in full. Discussion of this motion shall be limited to twelve minutes with 90-second individual time restrictions.
- F. Should the motion outlined in part E above fail, a speakers' list must be generated with each speaker expressing the part of the budget they would like to address.
- G. This phase of budgeting shall be a section devoted to listening to the opinions of the audience present. While Council may question any guest and respond if necessary, it is recommended that they keep their comments to a minimum. No member of the VSA shall make a motion following the motion made in part E above of these Bylaws and until the requirements of part H below have been completed.
- H. After exhausting the speaker's list, the Council shall enter a closed portion of the meeting for no less than thirty minutes, where they can discuss the issues raised by the audience and ensure that any alteration of the budget shall result in a balanced budget. No motions or votes of any kind may be made during this period. Official minutes of this period shall be taken and the VSA Council elect is urged to be present, although they remain as observers.

- I. Following this closed portion, the VSA Council shall resume the twelve-minute discussion periods following any motion with ninety-second individual time restrictions.
- J. A ten-minute recess must be taken every sixty minutes should the meeting exceed two hours, not including the closed portion addressed in part H of this section.
- K. The final budget allocations of the VSA shall be posted within 24 hours of the adjournment of the VSA Council budgeting meeting.

**Section 8: Student Activity Fee Account**

- A. Surpluses from the SAF account after the final semester enrollment figures have been computed by the VSA Vice President for Finance, in accordance with the Offices of the Controller and Registrar, shall be devoted to the Great Works Fund account.
- B. In the event of a deficit in the SAF account after the final semester enrollments have been computed, moneys shall be first transferred from the Great Works account and then all appropriate Contingency Funds in order to balance the SAF account.

***Article III – Funds and Accounts***

**Section 1: General Powers**

The VSA Council may establish Funds for specific purposes. The amount allocated to each Fund shall be determined during the spring budgeting process, unless otherwise stated in these Bylaws.

**Section 2: Approval of Fund Applications**

As stated in Article I, Section 12, Part B, Finance Committee shall review and make final recommendations on all fund applications submitted to the Council by VSA Organizations. To make this recommendation, Finance Committee shall meet with Treasurers to discuss their respective applications. The Finance Committee’s recommendations for all fund applications shall be placed on the Consent agenda at the start of each Council meeting. If a member of the Council wishes to discuss a fund application further before voting, he or she can remove it from the Consent Agenda onto the general Council Agenda for full discussion.

**Section 3: Emergency Fund**

The Emergency Fund is intended to cover the debts and liabilities of the VSA. The Emergency Fund may not be allocated to any other VSA account except under extreme financial circumstances, which affect the integrity of the VSA as a whole. The VSA Vice President for Finance must make a recommendation in such a situation, and any action requires a unanimous vote of the Council with no abstentions, even if an emergency session must be called.

**Section 4: Contingency Funds**

- A. Requests for Contingency Funds must be presented to the Council and voted on after the Vice President for Finance and Vice President for Activities make a recommendation.
- B. The Supplemental Budgeting Contingency is intended to allow active organizations to

function under dire financial circumstances limited to the following:

1. The organization was under budgeted during the spring budgeting process to an unsustainable degree.
  2. The organization has decided to increase its programming of an “annual” event, which had not been considered during the spring budgeting process.
  3. The organization has sustained substantial deficits due to financial mismanagement by previous officers or members, whom no longer hold a position in that organization.
  4. This Fund may only be used in the fall semester.
- C. The Capital Contingency is intended to replace lost, stolen or broken capital items.
1. All claims of loss and/or theft must be presented to the VSA Auditor in writing. If no one is appointed to the position of VSA Auditor, the Vice President for Operations will assume the role’s responsibilities.  
An audit must be conducted prior to any allocation approved by the Council unless the VSA Executive Board unanimously agrees that an audit is not necessary.
  2. The Capital Contingency shall only be used to replace capital items purchased by VSA organizations.
  3. The VSA Auditor shall make a recommendation to the VSA Council as to what percentage, if any, of the loss shall be paid by the Capital Contingency. This percentage shall vary based on the degree of negligence the investigators believe was associated with the loss.
- D. The Organizational Contingency is intended for the following purposes:
1. To assume any liability, surplus, or debt of any inactive account.
  2. To fund a one-time allocation for a newly certified VSA organization.
  3. For supplemental budgeting should the Supplemental Budgeting Contingency no longer have funds.

### **Section 5: Conditions for Non-Eligibility**

The VSA Council shall deny any Contingency request made by an organization that has:

- A. Fiscal problems due to financial mismanagement, irresponsibility, or impropriety of any present officers or members
- B. Organizational spending practices inconsistent with the stipulations of the VSA Bylaws.
- C. Failed to regularly attend meetings called for by the VSA Council or VSA Executive Board.
- D. Failed to meet budgeting deadlines or attend mandatory treasurer's meetings.
- E. Failed to submit organization reports to the VSA Vice President for Activities upon request.
- F. Failed to submit a Constitution to the VP for Activities and adhere to its stipulations.
- G. Failed to attempt to fundraise on its own.
- H. Failed to operate in accordance with the VSA Constitution and VSA Bylaws.

### **Section 6: Special Purpose Funds**

- A. Special Purpose Funds are those Funds established by the Council during the spring budgeting process for a predetermined general purpose and method of allocation. The Council, prior to any allocation, must approve guidelines for the allocation of Special Purpose Funds. The Council may allocate these Funds to any member or group of

members of the VSA throughout the fiscal year.

- B. No special purpose fund allocation may be approved for a project or event that any participating student will receive academic credit for.

### **Section 7: Policies and Procedures of Special Purpose Funds**

- A. During budgeting for each year, the VSA Council shall set aside funds for allotment to the following VSA Special Purpose Funds, unless otherwise noted: Conference Fund; Hosting Fund; Speaker's, Lecturers and Panels Fund; Collaboration Fund; Community Fund; and New Organizations Fund.
- B. The VSA Vice President for Finance shall never budget a fund into debt.
- C. Only certified VSA organizations may apply to these Funds.
- D. Organizations shall not be eligible for Special Purpose Funds for the semester during which they are certified and for one full semester after their certification, with the exception of the New Organizations Fund.
- E. Each project or event may receive money from only one Fund. Only an entire project or event may apply for money.
- F. If the demand for any special purpose fund exceeds supply, the VSA Vice President for Finance and Finance Committee may recommend to VSA Council a reallocation of fund from one Special Purpose Fund to another. Council may not reallocate more than 25% of the original value of any Special Purpose Fund per academic year.
  - 1. The original value of a Special Purpose Fund shall be the balance of the Fund at the beginning of the academic year.
- G. No more than 60% of the original value of any Fund shall be allocated in the first semester, except where otherwise noted. Money from all Funds shall be allocated on a first-come, first-serve basis. When Funds are depleted, and no further transfers are possible, applications for money shall no longer be accepted.
- H. For Special Purpose Funds, on-campus is defined as land owned by Vassar College, including the campus proper, the Farm, the Alumnae House complex, and the boathouse complex.
- I. All Special Purpose Fund applications shall be submitted to the VSA Vice President for Finance.
  - 1. All Fund requests must be submitted in writing.
  - 2. Applications must include fundraising proposals.
  - 3. Applications must state whether or not there will be a charge for the event.
  - 4. Applications must be submitted to the VSA Vice President for Finance no less than 14 days prior to the event or publication date.
  - 5. The VSA Council has full discretion to adjust any request.
  - 6. The VSA Council shall not review the proposal if the requester is not present at the meeting. If the requester of an organization is unable to attend, they must send a proxy. If the requester is unable to attend the meeting due to an emergency, or if the event being applied for is taking place at the same time as the VSA Council meeting, the proposal may be reviewed at the discretion of Council.
- J. Appropriate recognition must be given to the VSA during or prior to all events, which are funded, in whole or in part, through Special Purpose Funds.

- K. Should a fund allocation be deemed to have been used inappropriately by any member of the VSA, an audit must be conducted on the individuals in question. If necessary, the allocation may be remanded to the appropriate fund.
- L. If a Majors Committee is deemed to be in 'good standing' by the VSA Vice President for Academics, the committee may apply to any of the special funds. It shall be considered as an organization and be subject to the same funding rules and penalties.

#### **Section 8: Polices and Procedures of the Collaboration Fund**

- A. This fund shall be used to sponsor any event for which 2 or more organizations jointly apply. Collaboration includes, but is not limited to: the planning, executing and/or funding of an event and must be substantive, which is determined at the discretion of the VSA Council.
- B. Any one organization may receive money as a main applicant from this Fund a maximum of four (4) times per year.
  - 1. There can only be one residence in the main applicant section of each application.
- C. This fund shall only be used to sponsor events not listed in the operating budget plans of any of the organizations.
- D. Moneys from this fund may cover up to 75% of the costs of an event, not to exceed \$3750.
- E. As part of the application process, a member from each collaborating organization must be present at the VSA Council meeting at which the event is being considered to discuss the finances and details of the event.

#### **Section 9: Polices and Procedures of the Conference Fund**

- A. This Fund shall be used to sponsor the participation of members of the VSA in non-annual off-campus conferences that are relevant and compatible with an organization's goals and objectives as stated in its Constitution.
- B. VSA leadership conferences and conferences held at Vassar are not eligible for the Conference Fund.
- C. Organizations are limited to receiving funds for four (4) conferences per year.
- D. Conference Fund moneys may not be used to attend competitive events or tournaments.
- E. If 1-2 members of an organization attend a conference, the maximum that may be allotted for each person is \$500; for the next additional 3 people that attend the conference, the maximum that may be allotted is \$350 each; for the next additional 5 people that attend the conference, the maximum that may be allotted for each person is \$150 each. The Conference Fund may only cover up to 10 people.
- F. Moneys from this fund may cover 100% of the cost associated with the number of members stipulated in Section 7, E.
- G. By the end of the semester, the participants in the conference must report to their organization's membership and submit a written and/or oral report to the VSA Council about the events of the conference attended.

#### **Section 10: Policies and Procedures of the Community Fund**

- A. This fund shall be used to hold non-annual on-campus or off-campus events which actively include the Poughkeepsie and greater Vassar community.

- B. Applications for the Community Fund moneys must be presented no fewer than 30 days prior to the event.
- C. Moneys from this fund may cover up to 100% of the costs of the event.
  - 1. Applications submitted at least 60 days prior to the event may receive up to \$10,000.
  - 2. Applications submitted less than 60 days prior to the event may receive up to \$5,000.
- D. Organizations may apply to this fund a maximum of four (4) times per year.
- E. By the end of the semester, organizations must submit an oral report to VSA Council about the event.

**Section 12: Policies and Procedures of the Speakers, Lectures and Panels Fund**

- A. This fund shall be used to sponsor on-campus events for which a speaker or group of speakers has been invited or selected in some way.
- B. Moneys from this fund may cover up to 100% of the related costs, including but not limited to honorarium, transportation, room and board, fire watch, security, and publicity, not to exceed \$10,000 per event.
- C. Applications must include each speaker's bio and information.
- D. Organizations may apply to this fund a maximum of four (4) times per year.

**Section 13: Policies and Procedures for the New Organizations Fund**

- A. This fund shall be used to sponsor events held by newly certified organizations.
- B. Moneys from the New Organizations Fund may cover up to 100% of event costs, not to exceed \$2000.
- C. Only organizations certified within the last two semesters may apply to the New Organizations Fund.

**Section 14: VSA Council Discretionary Fund**

The VSA Council may establish an operating budget to be administered by the VSA Council titled the VSA Council Discretionary Fund. It may be used to sponsor proposals and investments.

- A. Any member of the VSA may request funding from the VSA Council Discretionary Fund.
  - 1. VSA Certified Organizations may receive a maximum of \$5000.
  - 2. All other VSA members may receive a maximum of \$1000.
- B. VSA Council may review and/or approve any request at its discretion.
- C. Applicants must be present at VSA Council in order for a motion of approval to be recognized by the chair.
- D. By the end of the semester, applicants must return to VSA Council of a motion's approval in order to present an oral report on their use of funding.

**Section 15: Policies and Procedures of the Capital Budgeting Fund**

- A. This fund may cover up to 100% of extraordinary/one-time costs incurred by a Certified Organization, subject to approval by both the VSA Finance Committee and VSA Council.
- B. Capital Items shall be defined as items, which are anticipated to last at least three (3) years.
- C. Individuals are not eligible for the Capital Budgeting Fund.
- D. One-time costs are non-recurring and are subject to approval by the VSA Vice President for Finance.

- E. Capital Budgeting Fund moneys shall be dispensed twice per academic year.
  1. Applications for the first round of Capital Budgeting shall be submitted to the VSA Vice President for Finance no less than two (2) weeks prior to the beginning of Fall Break, the precise deadline to be set by the VSA Vice President for Finance.
  2. Applications for the second round of Capital Budgeting shall be submitted to the VSA Vice President for Finance not more than 4 weeks after the end of Winter break, this deadline is to be set by the VSA Vice President for Finance.
  3. Within 48 hours of this deadline, the VSA Vice President for Finance shall give a copy of each application to the members of the Capital Budgeting Committee.
  4. The members of the Capital Budgeting Committee shall have 48 hours to submit any questions about these applications to the VSA Vice President for Finance, who shall then forward these questions to the contacts of the appropriate groups.
  5. The contacts shall have 48 hours to respond to these questions to the VSA Vice President for Finance, who shall then pass these answers on to the members of the Capital Budgeting Committee.
  6. The VSA Vice President for Finance shall then call a meeting of the Finance Committee with the VSA Vice President for Activities and the VSA Auditor.
  7. The recommendations for Capital Budgeting shall be e-mailed to all contacts and treasurers 24 hours before the VSA Council meeting at which they will be considered.
  8. VSA Council must vote on allocations as a block. There shall be no line item changes allowed.
  9. Should the allocations fail to pass this vote in the VSA Council, the VSA Vice President for Finance shall make any changes he/she may feel necessary at anytime. He/she shall then bring the new allocations before Council to be approved.
- F. No more than 2/3 of the Capital Budgeting Fund moneys shall be allocated during the Fall round of budgeting.
- G. No organization shall be allowed to use its previously allocated capital budgeting monies to purchase items for which those monies were not approved.
- H. Organizations are responsible for conducting an annual inventory of all capital items, to be submitted to the VSA Vice President for Finance before the Annual Budgeting Process.

### **Section 16: The VSA Operating Funds**

The VSA Council may establish operating budgets to be administered by the VSA Executive Board. These shall cover, but are not limited to covering: an overall Operating Budget, Fall Leadership Conference Budget, a Leadership Series Budget, a VSA Council Retreat Budget, and a *Poughkeepsie Journal* Budget. The exact accounts and amounts allocated for these budgets shall be determined during the spring budgeting process and shall be used solely for the expenses incurred in the completion of duties mandated in the VSA Constitution and Bylaws. The VSA Executive Board shall independently administrate these funds and shall not be obliged to fundraise.

### **Section 17: Polices and Procedures of the Great Works Fund**

- A. This fund shall have two purposes:
  1. To provide the campus at large with substantial investments in capital items and/or facilities on campus.

2. May be used to replenish any special purpose fund that has been emptied before the end of the second semester. Each fund may be given a maximum of \$3000.
  2. Any money left in the replenished fund at the end of the year shall be returned to the Great Works Fund.
- B. Moneys for this fund shall come from surpluses generated in the Student Activity Fee (SAF) account after the spring semester full-time enrollment (FTE) figures have been computed.
1. In the event that the SAF account no longer generates a surplus, the Great Works Fund shall become inactive.
  2. In the event that the SAF account remains negative at the end of the Spring semester, money used for Great Works must be remanded to the SAF account in order to eliminate the deficit.
- C. For uses falling under A.1 any member of the VSA may submit a proposal in writing to the VSA Vice President for Finance. For uses falling under A.2 the VSA Executive Board must submit the proposal.

## *Article IV – VSA Organizations*

### **Section 1: Applicability**

All student interest groups, clubs, sports teams, performance groups, publications, residences, and academic classes certified by the VSA Council shall be defined as VSA Organizations, and be subject to the stipulations of both the VSA Constitution and VSA Bylaws.

### **Section 2: Membership**

All VSA Organizations must designate one member as the organization's contact person and another member as the organization's treasurer, and register these names with the VSA Vice President for Activities.

### **Section 3: Meetings**

- A. Meetings shall generally be open to all members of the Vassar community, unless stipulated otherwise in the organization's Constitution, and be publicized. The Vassar community shall be defined as active, matriculating students, faculty, staff, and alumnae/i of Vassar College.
- B. VSA Organizations may occasionally hold closed meetings as stipulated in their Constitutions. Organizations may be asked to justify any closed meeting to the VSA Vice President for Activities.

### **Section 4: Constitutions**

- A. All VSA Organizations are required to draft their own Constitution, stipulating the functions and objectives of the organization, the positions and responsibilities of the officers, how amendments to their Constitution may be proposed and ratified, the process for election, impeachment and removal of organization's officers and organization's

membership guidelines, meeting format, and the definition of quorum. Residences and classes are exempted from this requirement.

- B. If any organization fails to forward a copy of their organization's Constitution to the VSA Vice President for Activities, the organization may invoke disciplinary action.
- C. After an organization has passed an amendment, it must be submitted to the VSA Vice President for Activities, who shall then act with all due expediency in reviewing the amendment. The Vice President for Activities has the power to veto amendments, which he/she deems to be non-structural and not affecting the nature of the organization; all other amendments are subject to the veto of the VSA Council.
- D. The executive board of each VSA Organization must submit a signed and dated copy of their organization's Constitution at the beginning of each academic year to the VSA Vice President for Activities. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.
- E. No VSA organization's Constitution may conflict with the VSA Constitution. In the event that an organization's Constitution does conflict, those conflicting portions shall be null and void, with stipulations in the VSA Constitution taking precedence.

#### **Section 5: Removal of Officers**

- A. Any organization's officers may be removed from office by the procedures set forth in the organization's Constitution or may be removed under indictment procedures stipulated by Article X of the VSA Constitution.
- B. Resignations shall be considered upon receipt of a letter to the president of the organization in question. If the president is resigning, the resignation letter shall be considered upon receipt to the vice-president of the organization. If both the president and the vice-president are resigning, or the organization does not have a vice-president, the resignation letter shall be forwarded to the VSA Vice President for Activities, or to the remaining governmental structure of the organization.
- C. Any change in the organization's officers must be registered with the VSA Vice President for Activities.

#### **Section 6: Certification**

The VSA Council may certify an organization. Any organization pursuing formal Certification must consult with the VSA Vice President for Activities to discuss the objectives, membership, functions, plans, proposed budget, and other relevant aspects of the organization. The VSA Vice President for Activities may also sit in on an organization's meetings, review sample publications, or observe an organization's functions in order to assess student interest in the organization and its likelihood for long-term successful and responsible campus programming.

#### **Section 7: Procedures for Certification**

- A. In order for an organization to be considered for certification, the following requirements must be met:
  - 1. The group must have a core membership and/or strong support of at least 20 VSA members.
  - 2. The group must show that there is no other already existing organization that duplicates the purpose and needs of their membership.

3. The group must submit a budget proposal to the Vice President for Finance and Vice President for Activities prior to certification. Certified organization must meet with the Finance Committee to discuss their funding within three weeks of becoming certified.
- B. The group must submit a detailed description of their history, the mission statement for the proposed organization, a formal Constitution, a letter requesting formal Certification, and a signed list of at least 20 VSA members who strongly support and/or plan involvement with the organization.
- C. Upon approval of the VSA Vice President for Activities, the request for certification shall be brought to the VSA Executive Board and, if approved, a motion shall be brought to the VSA Council to make the group a Certified Organization. The members of the group shall be advised as to the date the vote shall take place, and shall be asked to appear before the Council in order to answer any questions Council members may have. Both the certification request and the proposed Constitution shall subsequently be presented to the VSA Council for final approval.
- D. Once certified, an organization is required to present a list of its executive board members to the VSA Vice President for Activities, as well as turn in organization reports upon request of the VSA Vice President for Activities.
- E. Certified organizations are expected to abide by the VSA Constitution and the VSA Bylaws.
- F. Certified organizations shall receive a VSA Budget number, into which they may complete financial transactions, in cooperation with the Vice President for Finance. Funding is not guaranteed for any VSA organization.
- G. If a certified organization incurs a debt, it must repay that debt within two academic semesters or its recognition must be revoked. Such organizations may not re-apply for recognition or authorization for at least one calendar year. The statement of purpose shall determine if a group represents a new organization, or an old organization attempting to be re-certified.
- H. A certified organization may reserve tables in the college center, reserve rooms and spaces throughout campus and officially use "Vassar" in its title.
- I. If a group is not certified by the VSA Council at the meeting when the vote is held, the group may request again to be certified in one semester's time.

#### **Section 8: Deficits**

- A. Any deficit incurred by an organization in a semester shall carry over in full and continue to be the responsibility of that organization in subsequent semesters.
- B. The VSA shall not budget organizations to cover past debts.
- C. Organizations that accumulate debts are expected to have eliminated those debts through fundraising two semesters after the debt is incurred.

#### **Section 9: Monetary Responsibility**

- A. Organizations are expected to spend money responsibly.
- B. At any time, the VSA Vice President for Finance and/or the VSA Executive Board may inquire into purchases they deem questionable or excessive. If abuses are found, the

organization and/or individuals in question may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Section 10: Budgeting Eligibility**

No organization shall be eligible for budgeting without formal VSA Certification, having their Constitution on file with the VSA Vice President for Activities, or failing to comply with budgeting procedures.

### **Section 11: Bank Accounts**

- A. No organization funded by the VSA shall hold funds in any bank account.
- B. All organization's funds shall be deposited in, held in, and requisitioned from an account controlled by Vassar College. Any organization refusing to deposit all funds in their VSA account shall forfeit its entire organization's budget to the Organizational Contingency Fund.

### **Section 12: Fundraising**

- A. Fundraising shall be defined as money raised over and above the amount spent to hold the fundraising event.
- B. All organizations must fundraise in order to supplement their semester or yearly budget in a manner the organization deems appropriate and in a responsible manner.
- C. The amount of money that a VSA organization has fundraised, through outside financial assistance or otherwise, must be reported to the VSA through the organization's reports.

### **Section 13: Outside Financial Assistance**

VSA Organizations may obtain outside financial assistance as part of their fundraising efforts under the following conditions:

- A. Before attempting to obtain outside financial assistance, all VSA organizations must consult with the VSA Vice President for Finance and the Development Office. Advertising contracts made between media organizations and corporate advertisers are subject to review/approval of the VSA Vice President for Finance and the Director of Campus Activities.
- B. Outside financial assistance shall be defined as any contributions or donations of money, services, or equipment by any company/organization outside of the VSA or Vassar College. Business transactions between VSA organizations and outside companies/organizations that result in a profit for VSA organizations are also defined as "outside financial assistance."
- C. If the VSA Vice President for Finance determines that the VSA organization may not be able to uphold its end of the agreement, the contract shall be subject to review by the VSA Council.
- D. All financial assistance shall be a factor in the budgeting process for the semester or year.
- E. Any VSA organization attempting to obtain outside financial assistance must inform its corporate sponsor in writing that a contribution to a VSA organization may or may not be tax deductible.
- F. All solicitations of alumnae/i must be conducted in conjunction with the Development Office.

#### **Section 14: Anticipated Revenue for Programmed Events**

Treasurers must stipulate on their budget request form and in their organization reports all anticipated revenue and expected attendance for all programming planned.

#### **Section 15: Funding and Academic Credit**

The VSA does not fund organizations from which student members may receive academic credit.

#### **Section 16: Reimbursement of Students in a VSA Organization**

No VSA organization, with the exception of the Classes, Resident Halls, and VSA Executive Board, may pay a member of its own constituency for services rendered to that organization.

#### **Section 17: Political Endorsements and Funding**

VSA Organizations must reimburse or pay the College for any services or facilities provided to the organizations for use in connection with political campaigns or campaigns to influence specific legislation.

#### **Section 18: Donations to Off Campus Groups or Organizations**

VSA Organizations cannot donate VSA budgeted funds or items derived from these funds to off-campus organizations; such donations may only occur out of moneys which have been fundraised.

#### **Section 19: Publications**

- A. Student publications—defined as published written documents with editors, not including flyers—must submit Bylaws stipulating the mission and purpose of the publication, the roles of the editor, the process for the inclusion of submissions including, but not limited to, letters to the editor and other responses to published material.
- B. Publications shall enjoy the full right to publish without prior review or editorial control by the VSA Council.
- C. Libel and other forms of defamation will not be tolerated by the VSA.
- D. Publications shall be considered open source, allowing for the copy and redistribution of printed content with proper citation.
- E. Editors in Chief shall assume responsibility for articles published in their respective publication.

#### **Section 20: Organization Review Process**

All VSA Certified organizations shall be reviewed on an annual basis according to the following procedure.

- A. All VSA Certified organizations are under obligation to submit a copy of their organization's Constitution and any Bylaws on a yearly basis, such that:
  1. The updated copy of the organization's Constitution must include names and signatures of all executive members of the organization and any editor(s)-in-chief for any publication associated with that organization.
- B. 50% of organizations shall be reviewed each semester. Each organization shall be designated to either A or B semester. Residence Hall and classes are exempt from this

process.

- C. A leader of the organization shall meet with the VSA Vice President for Activities to discuss the activities of the organization. He/she may request to meet with any member of the organization's executive board or editor(s)-in-chief.
  - 1. If deemed necessary by the VSA Vice President for Activities disciplinary action may be advised at this time. Including a recommendation of no annual budget or de-Certification.
- D. If an organization fails to resubmit a Constitution or meet with the Vice President for Activities for the process by the date set, he/she shall discuss the matter with the Executive Board and disciplinary action shall be recommended to the VSA Council.

### **Section 21: Disciplinary Action**

- A. At any time, the VSA Council may at the recommendation of the VSA Vice President for Activities:
  - 1. Revoke Certification of any VSA Organization.
  - 2. Freeze or revoke the funds of any VSA Organization.
  - 3. Issue an official reprimand or censure of any VSA Organization.
  - 4. Removal of an officer through the proceedings stipulated in Article X.
  - 5. Referral to the Judicial Board for organizational financial improprieties.
  - 6. Referral to the College Regulations Panel for personal financial improprieties.
  - 7. The VSA Council may use the above measures to force compliance with the VSA Audit Committee.
  - 8. The VSA Council may suspend the activity of an organization, including access to funds, approval of programming, tabling, and reservation of rooms.
- B. Grounds for disciplinary action include, but are not limited to:
  - 9. Failure to comply with the Organization Review Process.
  - 10. Non-compliance with VSA Vice President for Activities' or VSA Vice President for Finance's requests, including attending meetings
  - 11. Non-compliance with these Bylaws.
- C. When a motion is made to censure, de-Certify, Fine an organization more than either 5% of its budget or \$100, whichever is less, freeze funds, or revoke funds of an organization or to censure an officer of an organization, the motion shall be referred to the VSA Activities Committee. A referral may be overridden by a 3/4 majority of Council.
  - 12. The Activities Committee shall gather information from the offended party, the organization in question, and any other relevant third-party sources. The Activities Committee shall consult with the VSA Vice President for Operations and the Chair of the Judicial Board. If any member of the Activities Committee has a direct conflict of interest, an alternate from the VSA Council shall be chosen randomly.
  - 13. The Activities Committee shall consider the VSA Constitution, Bylaws and the organization's Constitution and Bylaws, if any. Any alleged infraction of College Regulations shall be referred to the Dean of Students and the College Regulations Panel. This does not preclude action by the VSA Council.
  - 14. In one week's time, the Activities Committee shall make a final report to VSA Council outlining the results of the inquiry and any recommended disciplinary action.

After the Activities Committee makes their report, Council shall deliberate on the issue and vote on any motion recommended by the Activities Committee. Any motion made while deliberating on this issue shall not trigger another referral to the Activities Committee. The Activities Committee may request additional time from the VSA Executive Board before making a report.

15. Appeals may be made to the VSA Judicial Board within one week's time if evidence of procedural errors, lack of due process, or imposition of excessive penalty is presented. The decision of the first appeal is final.

#### **Section 22: Lack of Activity**

- A. If there is no organizational activity for two consecutive semesters, an organization may be de-certified at the discretion of the VSA Executive Board.
- B. If there is no organizational activity for three consecutive semesters, there shall be a mandatory de-certified.
- C. Organizations whose certification is revoked may re-apply for certification under normal procedures.

#### **Section 23: Off-Campus Representation Responsibilities**

Any organization that chooses to travel off-campus overnight, thereby representing the Vassar Student Association and Vassar College by extension, must abide by the articles herein:

- A. In accordance with the policy of the Dean of Students, an Emergency Contact form must be completed and submitted to the VSA VP for Activities a minimum of 2 weeks in advance of the planned trip. Changes to this document may be submitted up to 1 hour before the proposed departure.
- B. The attendees of the trip agree, to the best of their ability, to appropriately represent their organization, the VSA and Vassar College. Infringements of this agreement include, but are not limited to, violations of College regulations, local, state and/or federal laws, lewd or inappropriate behavior, and slanderous or defamatory remarks that jeopardize the integrity of the VSA and/ or the College.
- C. Failure to adhere to these regulations for off-campus travel will be considered a breach of conduct, punishable by censure, and/or a fine equaling up to 10% of the organization's budget. Repeat offenses will be considered a severe breach of conduct, punishable by a fine equaling up to 30% of the organization's budget, censure, and/or decertification. The VSA Council will vote on the appropriate punishment.

### *Article V – Committees*

#### **Section 1: Timing of Elections**

Unless required by position or as determined by VSA Council, all VSA committee representatives shall be elected in the spring elections.

#### **Section 2: Procedure for Disciplinary Actions and the Removal of Representatives**

Disciplinary actions against and removal of committee representatives shall run according to Article X of the VSA Constitution.

### **Section 3: Responsibilities of Student Representatives on Joint Committees**

- A. All representatives shall attend all committee meetings, except under extenuating circumstances.
- B. Each delegation shall report to the VSA Council at Council's discretion.
- C. All delegates must submit a Committee Report to the VSA Vice President for Operations once a semester, unless otherwise noted. The VSA Vice President for Operations may request additional reports if desired.
- D. Each delegation shall report to the VSA Vice President for Operations on any important action or deliberation, and it shall report periodically on general policies and actions within its jurisdiction.

### **Section 4: Committee Rules for Student Committee**

- A. Unless otherwise stated or decided by the committee, all meetings shall be open to members of the VSA.
- B. Each committee shall have an internal Chair unless otherwise specified.
- C. A simple majority of the voting members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.
- D. Decisions shall be reached by a majority vote of the members present.
- E. A committee representative or contact shall maintain a file in the VSA office of all records of committee meetings, recommendations, and actions. The VSA Vice President for Operations shall be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and organization of these files.
- F. Members of the student body have a right request remission to appear at a committee's meetings and to present their views upon the subjects before the committee except when a committee finds it necessary to close meetings for the proper execution of committee business.
- G. Committee may set further rules for themselves if they so desire.

### **Section 5: Committee Rules for Joint Committee**

- A. Student Delegations to joint committee shall follow the rules of their respective committees.
- B. A committee representative or contact shall maintain a file in the VSA office of all records of committee meetings, recommendations, and actions. The VSA Vice President for Operations shall be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and organization of these files.

### **Section 6: Board of House Presidents (BHP)**

- A. Shall consist of the presidents of the residence halls.
- B. Shall convene at least once a week
- C. Shall select a chair from among its members on its first meeting.
- D. Shall consider issues pertaining to the quality of life of residents.
- E. Shall bring these issues to the attention of the appropriate college committees or

administrators.

#### **Section 7: Food Committee**

- A. Shall be chaired by a student elected at-large and additionally consist of one representative from each dorm, appointed by the dorm president, and a member of the VSA Student Life Committee.
- B. Shall consider issues relating to the quality of food and food services at Vassar College.
- C. Shall work with the Director of Campus Dining to improve the quality and service of food on campus.

#### **Section 8: Founder's Day Committee (FDC)**

- A. Shall be composed of the Founder's Day Co-chairs the VSA Vice President for Activities, one representative from each dorm (appointed by the house president), and other interested members of the VSA.
  - 1. The Co-chairs shall be appointed by the VSA Council before October Break.
  - 2. The Co-chairs shall appoint a treasurer.
  - 3. The Co-chairs shall appoint chairs of all sub-committees as deemed necessary.
- B. FDC shall submit a budget to the VSA Executive Board prior to the completion of the fall semester.
- C. The FDC co-chairs and treasurer shall meet at least once during the A-semester and twice during the B-semester with the VSA Executive Board. The Co-chairs shall report to the VSA Council at least once during the B-semester.
- D. FDC shall coordinate and plan the Founder's Day event.

#### **Section 9: Serenading Committee**

- A. Shall be composed of the Vice President for Activities, the four members of the Senior Class Executive Board, and an administrator from the Campus Activities Office to act as an advisor.
  - 1. Shall be chaired by the President of the Senior Class.
  - 2. The treasurer of the Senior Class shall serve as treasurer.
- B. All members shall attend the VSA fall conference.
- C. Shall submit a budget to the VSA Vice President for Finance by the first day of classes.
- D. Shall meet with the VSA Executive Board before the event.
- E. Shall coordinate and plan the serenading event.
- F. Shall report to the VSA Council upon completion of events.

#### **Section 10: Student Delegation to the Arlington Special Events Committee**

Shall consist of a member of the VSA Activities Committee and the VSA Vice President for Activities.

#### **Section 11: Student Delegation to the Campus-Community Advisory Committee**

Shall consist of two students, the VSA Vice President for Operations one elected at-large.

#### **Section 12: Student Delegation to the Campus Investor Responsibility Committee**

Shall consist of the VSA VP for Finance and two students elected at large.

**Section 13: Student Delegation to the Campus Life Resource Group**

Shall consist of at least one member of the VSA Student Life Committee.

**Section 14: Student Delegation to the Campus Master Planning Committee**

Shall consist of six students, two members of the VSA Council and one representative from each class elected at-large.

**Section 15: Student Delegation to the Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid**

Shall consist of one representative from each class elected at-large and the VSA Vice President for Operations.

**Section 16: Student Delegation to the Committee on College Life**

Shall consist of six students, the VSA President, the VSA Vice President for Student Life, and one elected from each Class.

**Section 17: Student Delegation to the Committee on Academic Technologies**

Shall consist of two students, one member of the VSA Council and one elected at-large.

**Section 18: Student Delegation to the Committee on Curricular Policies**

Shall be chaired by the Vice President for Academics, and additionally consist of 5 students representing the 4 curricular divisions of Arts, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Social Sciences, Natural Science, and the Independent, Multi-disciplinary Studies, or interdepartmental studies. Members shall not be absent without an excuse from the Vice President for Academics for more than one meeting per semester.

**Section 19: Student Delegation to the Committee on Inclusion and Excellence**

Shall consist of three students, the VSA Vice President for Student Life and two elected at-large, who will both serve two-year terms.

**Section 20: Student Delegation to the Council on Alumnae/I Student Advancement**

Shall consist of the Vice President for Operations, the Vice President of each class, and two students appointed at large in the spring.

**Section 21: Student Delegation to the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Advisory Committee**

Shall consist of two students, a member of the VSA Council and one elected at large.

**Section 22: Student Delegation to the Library Committee**

Shall consist of the VSA Vice President for Academics and one member of the VSA Council.

**Section 23: Student Delegation to the Orientation Committee**

Shall consist of the President and Vice President of the freshman class, and at least one member of

the VSA Student Life Committee.

**Section 24: Student Delegation to the Priorities and Planning Committee**

Shall consist of two students, the VSA President and an additional member of the VSA Executive Board to be chosen by the VSA President.

**Section 25: Student Delegation to the Sustainability Committee**

Shall consist of the Sustainability Interns and one students elected at-large

**Section 27: Student Delegation to the Student Wellness Advisory Committee**

Shall consist of two members of the delegation to the Committee on College Life.

**Section 28: Other Committees**

*Article VI - Elections*

**Section 1: The Board of Elections**

- A. The Board of Elections shall have two Co-Chairs. One Chair shall be a VSA Council member who will be a senior during his or her term on Council. One Chair shall be appointed at large. Both Chairs shall serve for a term of a full academic year. The outgoing VSA Council shall appoint the Board of Elections for the following year after Convocation.
- B. Shall conduct and oversee all elections and referendums through reasonable interpretations of the VSA Constitution and VSA Bylaws.
- C. After consulting with the Vice President for Operations, the Board of Elections shall present to the VSA Council for approval dates and times of filing, meetings, campaigning, debates, elections, posting of results, and any other appropriate information to the election process. All other decisions of the Board of Elections shall be made independently, subject to the appeals process.
- D. The Board of Elections must publicize all elections, including descriptions and requirements of vacant positions and dates and times of filing, meetings, campaigning, debates, elections, posting of results, and any other appropriate information to the election process.
- E. The Board of Elections Chairs shall, at the conclusion of the election process, report to the VSA Council all results of the election and any changes to the applicable sections of the VSA Bylaws that he/she feels are appropriate.
- F. The outgoing Board of Elections shall train the incoming appointed Board of Elections prior to the completion of the academic year.
- G. The Board of Elections shall consist of four individuals, open to the entire campus, to be appointed by the elections chairs and the VSA Vice President for Operations, with approval from Council, for a term of a full academic year. They cannot be running in any election occurring during their semester term of office. Their job is to assist the Elections Chairs with all campus elections and referendums.

## Section 2: Scheduling and Announcement

- A. Voting shall take place during one 48-hour voting period. The method or methods employed for voting shall be determined and announced by the Board of Elections.
- B. Each election process shall consist of a two-week filing period for General Elections ending on the seventh day before which the voting period begins. Each election process shall consist of an open campaigning period that begins at the start of the filing period and concludes at the beginning of the voting period.
  - i. No VSA member shall campaign for a position without first successfully filing for candidacy through the Standard Filing Form described below in Section 3(a) and fulfilling one of the prerequisites listed in Section 3(b).
- C. In the event that no one files for a position, no election for that position shall be held, and it shall instead be declared vacant by the Elections Chairs until future elections or appointments.
- D. The Elections Chairs shall provide reasonable and timely means for off-campus voting, and shall advertise such means prior to the voting period to any students unable to vote on campus.
- E. Special elections shall be conducted by the Board of Elections pending the receipt of a valid Constitutional referendum or recall petition and shall occur prior to the next all-campus election with a twenty-four notice of the new election.
- F. In the event that an elected official resigns or is removed from his/her position, the VSA Council shall decide whether to fill that position by election through a Special Election or appointment. For an appointment, the official notice and application information must be advertised to the relevant constituency. The appointment process shall be conducted by the VSA Appointments Committee, as stated in Article I of these Bylaws.
- G. A list of all positions included in the election shall be presented to the VSA Council before the beginning of the election process including the dates for filing, meetings, campaigning, debates, and elections.

## Section 3: Filing

- A. During the period designated for filing, any qualified VSA member may file for candidacy under the guidelines announced by the Board of Elections Chairs. To be considered a 'candidate' for the official ballot, a VSA member must file for a position by completing the Standard Filing Form.
  - i. The Standard Filing Form shall include the potential candidate's:
    - § Name as it will appear on the ballot
    - § Class year and campus (or off-campus) residence
    - § Position being sought
    - § Description of the issues facing that position, and the candidate's opinion of them. This will serve as the candidate statement.
    - § Verification that s/he has read Article VI of the VSA Bylaws.
  - ii. The Standard Filing Form must be submitted to VP of Operations before the end of the filing period to be considered a 'candidate' for the official ballot. The VP of

Operations (or his/her impartial designee) must review these forms within 24 hours of submission.

iii. Should a Standard Filing Form be rejected, a notification must be sent to the potential candidate within 24 hours of the form's submission. An explanation must be presented with the reasons for rejection, and rejected forms may be resubmitted with revisions until the end of the filing period.

B. Candidates that have submitted their Standard Filing Form may only begin campaigning, as defined in Section 5(a) of this article, after one of the following two conditions have been met:

i. The candidate has presented him/herself to the VSA Office with a copy of Article VI of the VSA Bylaws, and signs a statement prepared by the VP of Operations verifying that s/he has read that article.

· Extra copies of Article VI must be available at the VSA Office.

ii. The candidate has attended the mandatory candidates' meeting described in Section 2(d) of this article.

C. For any given VSA Office, no two or more students may run jointly.

D. A candidate's meeting shall be scheduled and publicized by the Board of Elections after the filing period has ended, but before the campaigning period has begun. At this meeting, the Elections Chairs shall review the applicable sections of the VSA Bylaws and VSA Constitution, answer any questions, and discuss campaigning spending limits. Candidates are responsible for knowing all relevant campaigning and elections information discussed at this meeting.

i. An invitation to file for candidacy for an elected position must be distributed to all VSA members twice in the first week of the filing period, and at least three times in the week second week. The Standard Filing Form, directions for submitting it, and information on the prerequisites to campaigning [see Section 3(b)] must be included in or attached to the invitation.

E. All candidates must attend this candidate's meeting; if they are unable to attend, they must send a proxy and alert the Elections Chairs on who their proxy will be before the meeting by emailing vsaelections@vassar.edu or calling the VSA Office no later than one half-hour before the meeting. Candidates who do not attend the meeting or send a proxy shall be disqualified, except in the case of emergency. Attendance shall be defined as the continued presence of a candidate or proxy from the point in the meeting when the candidate's name is called to the point in the meeting when the Chairs officially adjourn. If a candidate is unhappy with the decision of the Board of Elections in such a case, he/she may appeal that decision to the Chair of the Judicial Board.

#### **Section 4: Eligibility**

No student may run for or hold any VSA Office of which he or she is not an eligible constituent, as stipulated by Article IX, Section 3 of the VSA Constitution. Offices with a class prerequisite may only be sought by students expecting to become a member of that class in the following academic year. Offices with a residence prerequisite may only be sought by students with certification from the Office of Residential Life that they shall be assigned to that residence in the

following academic year.

### **Section 5: Campaigning**

- A. Campaigning shall consist of solicitation of votes by a candidate or his/her representative, and the display of posters and other campaign materials promoting the candidacy of a VSA member. All campaigning shall occur within the period announced by the Board of Elections and/or the Operations Committee. All acceptable forms of campaigning initiatives are herein defined and must conform to College Regulations.
- B. All members of the VSA shall refrain from actions that might dishonestly or unfairly affect the election.
  - 1. An invitation to file for candidacy for an elected position must be distributed to all VSA members twice in the first week of the filing period, and at least three times in the week second week. The Standard Filing Form, directions for submitting it, and information on the prerequisites to campaigning [see Section 3(b)] must be included in or attached to the invitation.
- C. No VSA member shall use rights and privileges of his/her positions, elected or appointed, to promote any candidate including him/herself.
- D. Each candidate's campaign expenses for each position sought shall not exceed: \$45 for Executive Board positions; \$35 for campus wide positions; and \$25 for House positions.
  - 1. It is the responsibility of the candidate to account for all campaign expenses. If a candidate is unable to afford materials, the VSA Vice President for Operations shall arrange for the funds to be provided.
- E. The following methods of communication are at the disposal of candidates:
  - 1. Internet
    - a. The Board of Elections will provide a space for an online candidate statement. This statement, which will appear besides voting ballots, shall be the candidates' primary method for communicating their goals and ideas for the position sought.
    - b. Candidates may use the Internet to campaign, so long such solicitations adhere to all other regulations herein defined.
    - c. General messages to remind people to vote, without reference to a specific candidate, may continue to be communicated electronically throughout the voting period.
  - 2. Posters
    - a. A poster is a fixed installation not to exceed 11" x 17" x 1" inches. No other hanging attachments may be distributed from posters. House Officer candidates may display two posters inside that residence, two posters in ACDC and two posters in the College Center for a total of six. All other candidates may display two posters in ACDC, two posters in the College Center, and two posters in each residence area.
- F. Excepting door-to-door campaigning, no form of mass unsolicited communication shall be allowed including, but not limited to, mass flyering and impersonal or recipient-suppressed electronic messages.
- G. No campaign shall make use of any stamped or unstamped mail, radio, television, public

address systems, or advertisements in publications.

- H. No unsubstantiated or misrepresentative claims, slander, libel, bribery, blackmail or profanity shall be allowed.
- I. After the campaigning period is over, no elections-related posters are permitted by anyone except the Board of Elections.
- J. Any candidate found to be in violation of the VSA Constitution or VSA Bylaws related to elections may be reprimanded or disqualified by the Board of Elections Chairs and/or the Operations Committee. A disqualified candidate shall not be considered a valid write-in candidate.
  - 1. A candidate who has been disqualified must remove all campaign materials within 24 hours of disqualification unless the candidate appeals the decision to the Judicial Board.
  - 2. If the Judicial Board affirms disqualification, the candidate must remove all campaigning materials within 24 hours of the Judicial Board ruling.
  - 3. The disqualification of a candidate may only be made public at the discretion of the candidate.

#### **Section 6: Voting Forms**

- A. All General Elections ballots shall allow voters to vote in the order of their preferences for up to and including the number of candidates running for any given position. These ballots shall include the names of each candidate in random order and a space or instructions for abstention. An unopposed race shall include the name of the candidate, a space for "no," and a space or instruction for abstention.
- B. Any student who will not have access to a voting form on the day of voting must contact the Elections Chairs at least 72 hours prior to the start of voting. The Elections Chairs shall provide an absentee voting form to these students prior no less than 24 hours prior to the start of voting. To be considered valid, each absentee form must contain the voting student's Vassar ID number and full name, and must be submitted to the Elections Chairs prior to the end of voting.

#### **Section 7: Voting**

- A. Only VSA members who pay the Student Activities Fee may vote. Exceptions shall be made for previously enrolled students on leave at the time of the election process who intend to be enrolled during the following semester. Exceptions shall also be made for students not paying the Student Activities Fee due to disability status.
- B. With the exception of the Spring Residence Elections, students may only vote in elections for which they are a constituent on the particular election day.
- C. During Spring Residence Elections, students may only vote for the residences of which they shall be a constituent the following academic year.
- D. Voting periods shall be publicized at least 72 hours in advance.
- E. No Board of Elections official may influence any voter or engage in any other activity that may unfairly affect the election.
- F. The Board of Elections Chairs must verify eligibility of voters and monitor voting to assure that no person votes more than once or engage in any other elections impropriety.

- G. Once the voting period has begun, the ballot may not be altered in any way.

### **Section 8: Designation of Winners**

- A. In tabulating votes, any blank ballot or ballot indicating an ineligible or disqualified candidate shall be considered an abstention. Any ballot from which the voter's preference cannot be determined shall be counted as a questionable ballot.
- B. To be declared the winner of any election for which there will be only one declared winner, the winning candidate must receive more than 50% of the votes cast by the relevant constituency, not including abstentions. In the event that no candidate in an election between more than two candidates receives more than 50% of the votes cast by the relevant constituency, a Ranked Choice Election shall be held among the candidates.
- C. In any election where there is more than one winner, the winners shall be chosen from the candidates receiving the highest number of votes until the number of winners corresponds to the number of positions being elected.
- D. In the event that any winning candidate is disqualified for violation of these Bylaws, a Run-Off shall take place using the same voting data collected from the election in which the candidate in question was a member. The disqualified candidate may not be considered in this Run-Off election, however, those ballots listing said candidate as a preference will be counted toward their next listed preference. If there is only one candidate remaining in the race, then the remaining candidate will be declared the winner.
- E. In the event that aforementioned circumstances necessitate Ranked Choice Voting, the following procedures shall be carried out,
  - 1. For a single winner election, the candidate receiving the least number of votes shall be eliminated from the race and the second preference votes cast on all ballots for which s/he was a first preference shall be distributed among the remaining candidates. If at this time, the candidate with the most votes has received over 50% s/he shall be declared a winner. Otherwise, this process shall be repeated until a candidate garners over 50% of the vote. In the event of a tie between two candidates, in which each candidate has received 50% of the total vote, excluding abstentions, the candidates shall be required to come before the VSA Council for a question and answer period, after which the VSA Council existing during the election shall cast the deciding votes with everyone voting but the VSA President, who shall cast the deciding vote in the case of a tie.
  - 2. For a multiple winner election, the same system shall be followed as above, with the slight modifications necessary due to the extra candidates. This system shall follow the traditional Ranked Choice Voting method for these types of elections until there is the correct number of candidates desired holding enough votes.
- F. In a referendum vote, the article shall be deemed to have passed if a simple majority of the VSA has voted in favor of the article, not including abstentions.
- G. Should the number of questionable ballots, previously defined, exceed the margin of victory, then that election shall be declared invalid and be repeated either along with subsequent elections or in a Special Election.
- H. The Board of Elections Chairs shall post and publicize all results within 24 hours of the end of the voting period. Individuals, including candidates, shall not be notified of results

until such results are publicly available.

- I. Write in votes shall not be counted if they do not refer to an eligible member of the VSA.
- J. In the event that any House Officer position has not been filled in a House during the Spring Elections, the Appointments Committee will meet to review applications and appoint individuals to those positions. The Committee will inform eligible candidates of the open position and explain the application procedure. The Committee will then meet several days later, to allow interested applicants time to fill out the application form. If there are no applicants, or if the Committee cannot select an appropriate individual, the position will remain open until the following school year, when the process will repeat.

### **Section 9: Appeals**

- A. Any VSA member may protest any questionable action by another VSA member related to the election process to the Board of Elections Chairs. Any VSA member may appeal any official decision or posting of results by the Board of Elections Chairs back to the Board of Elections Chairs within 24 hours of the official decision or posting of results, unless extenuating circumstances deem otherwise as decided by the Board of Elections Chairs.
- B. The Board of Elections Chairs must render a decision on any request 24 hours of the receipt of the defendant's petition. Such notice shall be given by phone, e-mail, and written notice to be placed in the student's campus mailbox.
- C. Any candidate may appeal an official act or decision of the Board of Elections Chairs directly relevant to his or her candidacy, to the Judicial Board Chair(s) within 24 hours of the official act or decision of the Board of Elections Chairs on the grounds that the Board of Elections Chairs violated or failed to reasonably enforce the VSA Constitution or VSA Bylaws, or that there existed an appearance of irregularity or impropriety related to the official result of the election.
- D. The Judicial Board must hear and render a decision within 24 hours of the appeal unless extenuating circumstances deem otherwise. Such notice shall be given by phone, e-mail, and written notice to be placed in the student's campus mailbox. All proceedings shall take place in accordance with Article VIII of the Constitution.
- E. The decision of the appeal shall be final and binding on all elections.

### **Section 10: Emergency Procedure**

- A. In the event of extenuating circumstances, the Board of Elections, in concurrence with the VSA Executive Board, may recommend suspension of any section or subsection of this article of the VSA Bylaws, excluding Sections 1 and 4 of this article.
- B. Each section or subsection to be suspended must be explicitly stated.
- C. The length of time for the suspension must be stated.
- D. The VSA Council may substitute any procedure or rules it deems necessary in place of the suspended sections and/or subsections.
  - 1. This may include, but is not limited to, the use of paper ballots, shortened voting times, or alternative formats for voting.
- E. A two-thirds majority of the VSA Council is necessary to suspend any section and/or subsection of this article.

## *Article VII – The Judicial Board*

### **Section 1: Format for Judicial Board Hearings**

- A. Both the respondent(s) and the complainant(s) may be assisted in any aspects of their respective cases, including seeking another student for representation, except current members of the Judicial Board.
- B. Hearing procedures:
  - 1. Call the meeting to order.
  - 2. Introduce the judicial officers, respondent(s), and complainant(s).
  - 3. Explain the format for the hearing and the rights of the respondent(s) and complainant(s).
  - 4. State the charge citing the relevant section(s) of the Constitution and/or Bylaws.
  - 5. Respondent shall plead either guilty or not guilty.
  - 6. Complainant shall state his/her case, presenting all evidence and witnesses. The defense may cross-examine witnesses.
  - 7. Questions, if any, from the judicial officers.
  - 8. Respondent shall state his/her case, presenting all evidence and witnesses. The Complainant may cross-examine witnesses.
  - 9. Questions, if any, from the judicial officers.
  - 10. Complainant(s) shall make closing statements.
  - 11. Respondent(s) shall make closing statements.
  - 12. Additional questions, if any, of either party from the judicial officers.
  - 13. Adjournment.
- C. The Chair of the Judicial Board, with majority consent of Judicial Board members, may set time limits upon presentation of evidence, questioning and cross-examination of witnesses, and closing statements as deemed appropriate.