

VSA Council Minutes
October 26, 2008

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01PM.

2. Attendance

Proxies: 2011, Raymond, Joss, Noyes.

Absent: Town Houses.

Guests: Andrew Bennett (Student Asst. to the President), Matthew Brock (Misc), Brian Farkas (Misc), Julianne Herts (Misc), Emma Mitchell (Misc), Molly Turpin (Misc), Erika Noll (CHOICE), Jenn Hart (Kick Coke), Reed Dunlea (Kick Coke), Rachel Tetteh, Tanay Tatum, Jared Augenstein (ProHealth), Stephen Cheng (Kick Coke), Mikey Velarde (MEChA, Kick Coke), Anastasia Hardin (MEChA, Kick Coke), Keity Gomez (MEChA, Kick Coke), Erika Noll (CHOICE), Tom Facchine (Kick Coke), Ben Reichman (SAU, Kick Coke), Stephen Cheng (SAU, Kick Coke), Gaelin Monkman-Kotz (SAU, Kick Coke), Robyn Smigel (SAU, Kick Coke), Hannah Webster (SAU, Kick Coke), Hannah Kullberg (Kick Coke, Real Food), Lauren Sutherland (Misc), Katherine Straus (Vassar Greens, Kick Coke), Moey Newbold (Vassar Greens, Kick Coke), Mike Alberti (Kick Coke), Mike Godbe (Kick Coke), Indiana Garcia (MEChA, Kick Coke), Kleaver Cruz (MEChA, Kick Coke), Jazmin Pichardo (MEChA).

3. Consent Agenda

The President presented Council with the consent agenda, which included the adoption of minutes from 10/12/08. No objections were made, and the consent agenda was adopted as presented.

4. Reports

a. Exec Report – Academics

The VP for Academics explained that she has been meeting with various senior officers, discussing the college's need to evaluate pre-major, as well as senior thesis and project advisors. Their goal is to improve advising, though regulating how advisors are evaluated is an important first step.

With the courseload committee, Academics has been exploring the idea of a phase 2:2 for visiting and newly-hired professors. The committee is very dedicated to promoting faculty involvement on campus.

Academics announced that construction on the new science facility, originally due to begin in 2010, has been pushed back for financial reasons. The college is also working to improve CEQs, and seeks to formulate a permanent CEQ for advising.

b. Exec Report - Operations

The VP for Operations announced that VSA Today is still being distributed weekly, and that she is working with CIS to make V-Cash machines available for use with outside vendors. The VPs for Operations and Student Life have also been negotiating with the administration and with local businesses to ensure that such vendors sell products in the College Center on a more frequent basis. Committee reports will resume at the next Council meeting, and CRC will begin tackling Elections Bylaws and

Co-operative Living Bylaws this week. Research on elections is currently underway, and should be completed within the week. Operations will be meeting with Bret Ingerman from CIS to discuss faculty elections processes, and believes this information will help with the selection of a new elections host for the Spring in the near future.

5. Allocation of \$2980 from Speakers/Lectures/Panels to CHOICE

The VP for Finance moved to allocate \$2980 from Speakers/Lectures/Panels to CHOICE for its “I Love Female Orgasm” event. TAs abstained, though all others were in favor, and the motion passed.

6. Allocation of \$600 from Conference Fund to Pro-Health

The VP for Finance moved to allocate \$600 from the Conference Fund to Pro-Health for its FACE AIDS National Fall Forum event. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

7. Allocation of \$474.50 from Hosting Fund to BSU

The VP for Finance moved to allocate \$474.50 from the Hosting Fund to BSU for the Harlems Children Zone Overnight Trip. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

8. Allocation of \$700 from Residences Fund to South Commons

The VP for Finance moved to allocate \$700 from the Residences Fund to SoCo for the SoCo Super Bowl. Jordana Merran, SoCo Programming Director, explained that the original estimate for the stage setup had been quite low, and that \$700 would likely be insufficient; 2009 moved to amend the allocation to \$731.25, explaining that the senior class is very supportive of this event. SoCos abstained, though all others were in favor of this proposed amendment, and the motion passed. Council then voted to allocate \$731.25 to SoCo; SoCo abstained, though all others were in favor, and the motion passed.

9. Decertification of pré-cis

The VP for Activities moved to decertify pré-cis, as it has been inactive this semester and has demonstrated no plans for future activity. No objections were made, and the motion passed.

10. Open Discussion

- 2009 announced that 214 days remained until graduation. He also reminded Council that this year’s all-campus Halloween party will take place Friday in the College Center. Students are encouraged to buy tickets beforehand, as the Class of 2009 and BSU will be tabling all week.
- Reed Dunlea, of Vassar Green Party and the “Kick Coke” Campaign, presented VSA Council with a resolution urging the college to stop selling Coca Cola on campus. He explained that the company has been charged with various human rights violations, and has been specifically linked to the deaths of ten union leaders.

The resolution supports the removal of Coca Cola products from dining areas, and encourages the college to begin offering beverages made by local companies. Reed asserted that there has been “a lot of student support” for the “Kick Coke” plan. He elaborated that six different student organizations have endorsed the resolution, and that “a majority” of students surveyed in last year’s Food Committee survey supported kicking Coke out of Vassar.

2009 spoke in support of the resolution, claiming that it offers “a well-documented and feasible alternative to Coke”. He urged the student body to support the “Kick Coke” campaign’s proposal, as it represents actions and attitudes that are consistent with those of many of Vassar’s peer institutions. SoCo also spoke in favor of the resolution and its human rights focus TAs suggested that a larger sample of the campus be polled before action is taken, as the Food Committee’s survey results represented only 16% of the student body.

Student Life suggested that the administration compromise by offering both Coke *and* local beverages; if students truly prefer these alternatives, he asserted, then Coke will essentially be “kicked out” on its own. Cushing reported that various members of his constituency had recently emailed him and expressed support for a plan of this nature.

2010 expressed a desire to amend the resolution, but the President ruled this out of order. As one Council member was absent and four sent proxies, the President recommended that Council temporarily table the issue until a time when more regularly-voting members are present. TAs moved to table consideration of the resolution and place it on the next meeting’s agenda. She and SoCo urged Council members to forward their constituents relevant literature on the “Kick Coke” initiative, and to try to gauge student responses. Cushing moved to call to question; all were in favor, and the motion passed. No objections were made to tabling the issue, and the resolution will be reconsidered at the next meeting.

11. Adjourn

The meeting concluded at 8:16PM.