

VSA Council Minutes

November 1, 2009

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 P.M.

2. Attendance

Proxy: Cushing, Main, Strong.

Late: Town Houses

Absent: Town Students

3. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of the Minutes from 10/25

There were no objections and the agenda passed.

4. Announcements

a. Fines

2011 was fined \$59.70 for failure to attend council.

5. Special Guests:

a. Mike Faba, EMT; Sam Black, EMT

Mr. Black began by giving a rundown of EMS activities during Halloween. This year, EMS had a crew of 9 running during the dance. Last year there were 12 calls--11 intoxication and one trauma. This year there were 16 calls, 4 were unable to go to EMS as they were completely busy and the calls went to the Fire Department. 5 People were sent to the Hospital.

Mr. Faba noted that this was the most EMS calls in one night in the history of EMS. However, he cautioned that his did not represent a change in student behavior, as the number of calls has corresponded with increased awareness of EMS. 8 years ago they were receiving around 50 calls per semester, recently that number has been closer to 160. Mr. Faba noted that people are calling for EMS for a series of lesser injuries, preferring to be safe.

Currently, according to Mr. Faba, the number of EMS calls are currently the same as they were last year, although intoxication calls have actually decreased. There have also been more hospital visits, but less than actually expected with the closing of Baldwin. Currently the Class of 2011 has been responsible for the most hospital visits and as they get older, those numbers have decreased. In addition, the numbers going to Baldwin have, obviously, decreased from 33 to 8.

The President raised concerns that the administration was really concerned with Halloween and that the numbers seemed to show an increase. She wondered what suggestions people may have to bring down the numbers.

Activities blamed the rain, citing the larger number of people who stayed inside drinking. He also noted that, as an EMS, he saw very few serious calls, most were simply concerned students trying to make sure that their friends were alright.

Finance agreed, noting that the largest problems arise from students who pre-game in their rooms and never get out. He felt that the large difference between Founder's Day and Halloween

was that people don't pre-game in their rooms for Founder's Day, instead they spread their drinking out over the whole day.

2010 likened Founder's Day to a marathon, in which people pace themselves. On nights like Halloween they pound back shots of hard liquor in their rooms. She wondered about the use of alternative programming, since people will always drink. Finally, she expressed the opinion that seniors should be allowed to throw parties with kegs on Halloween night, as it would at least get people to drink beer.

Davison agreed that there should be a bigger push for responsible drinking as opposed to an abstinence only policy.

Noyes blamed the cancellation of the bonfire for increased drinking. While they did feed people in Noyes, the cancellation of the bonfire allowed them an extra hour to get drunker than originally intended.

Academics wondered why Halloween had to be a day to get completely "shitfaced." She felt that many of the problems arose from students saying: "it's Halloween, what the heck." She pointed out the health education office has the "puking pumpkin" thing, but that it wasn't enough. She felt that a campus culture change was needed.

Mr. Faba noted that he liked that this was being discussed, however, he cautioned council about the tendency to establish correlation between facts and figures. After looking at data of the past 8 years, he really felt that there was a large amount of randomness to emergency calls. That being said, he felt that the poor weather did nothing to help. In addition, the largest problems come from students who don't eat dinner. They need to get people to eat.

Mat Leonard, VSA assistant, felt that cancellation of the Halloween dance would make the problem worse. While there is a problem with the dance, at least it gets people out of their dorm rooms and into a central location. This keeps them safer and prevents them from drinking further. In addition, he worried that the ads from the health education office helped build up the image that this was a crazy holiday. He wondered why there wasn't safety information year round.

2010 expanded on the idea that the culture needed to be changed, remembering that as a Freshmen entering she heard about Halloween as a big event. She acknowledged that it would take time, and it wouldn't even be better next year, but hopefully over time, the perception could be changed.

Town Houses felt that we needed to encourage people to drink less. She suggested having an open house discussion between Seniors and Freshmen without administrators present. She also mentioned that the safest place for underclassmen to drink is senior housing, as they cannot get enough beer to get wasted anyways. She felt that letting people know the stats could help change the culture. Finally, she wondered if the administration could be a bit more generous with food, as there was not nearly enough to feed the TH's.

Lathrop encouraged people to spread things out and let people drink over a longer period. Halloween night Lathrop held an event where people could get their costumes photographed in the basement. It started the night earlier, and got people out of their rooms.

Main agreed that parties in senior housing would be great. She also noted that Main has a specific problem as students realize security is occupied at the dance and throw huge parties in the dorm.

Activities felt that they had a lot more work to do in attracting responsible drinking and

promoting healthy drinking.

b. Act Out

A representative from Act Out reported that on October 11th, they brought a large group down to DC for a protest rally. Over 300,000 people attended the rally with some really exciting speakers. They said thanks.

6. Committee Report

a. Committee on College Life

Nate Silver, student rep to CCL, announced that CCL had met twice. CCL has 4 sub-committees: Security Advisory, Cyberbullying/Cyberethrics, transportation, and student conduct. This past meeting they abandoned structure to have a frank talk about campus climate. According to Mr. Silver the most accurate moment of the meeting was Melinda Guthrey pronounced campus morale across the college to be low. They are also looking into the student conduct process as well as looking towards removing car traffic on campus.

Student Life wondered if there was a way to show appreciation for the current workers and what they want to do in the future. Academics wondered if CCL had a plan to move forward in regards to morale or were they still stagnate. Mr. Silver felt that, yes, they were. CCL is an advisory group to the President and that while nothing earth shattering arose, it was good to hear from a lot of people. One of the unintended consequences of layoffs was increased competition among the workers.

Raymond felt that there was a general cry on campus for senior officers to show some form of sacrifice to show that they are not puppet masters. He wondered if there were any recommendations. Mr. Silver cautioned against using the phrase "general cry," saying it is hard to know what people think when 3,000 people do not say a word. Operations chimed in to note that the exec board had been pressing the administration to make shared sacrifice. Currently they all give to the annual fund and have maintained that they don't want a pay-cut due to competition. Currently Cappy gives a large amount of her income to the fund, but she wants that to remain private, as it is a private gift. In addition, 3 of them will be teaching classes next semester, which is rare for administrators.

Main asked if we could send out a survey to gauge student opinion, Operations informed her that the upcoming VSA survey would do just that.

7. Exec Reports

a. Finance Report

According to the VP for Finance, the VSA is still in good financial health. He passed around a sheet with the current amounts in special purpose funds, noting that they cannot spend more than 60% of these funds in the first semester. He also announced that some of the purchasing kinks were being worked out.

2010 wondered how the VSA was doing in comparison to last year. Finance felt that they were doing well at keeping their goal of saving money.

TH's wondered what the hosting fund was for. Finance informed her that it was for holding non annual events on campus in which people are brought on campus.

b. Activities Report

Activities congratulated everyone on Halloween and the great events that have occurred this year. The next two weeks are jammed packed with programming, but he has been careful about not overbooking. If people didn't get their event approved, it had to do with overbooking. Recently they sent out the org reports, 19 didn't come back. They will be looking at the orgs and trying to determine why they didn't get the form in on time.

2012 wondered if we were looking to decertify orgs. Activities responded that while they were not actively looking to decertify, they were keeping an eye out for underperforming orgs.

8. Censure and Fining of Frisbee

Activities made a motion to censure Frisbee and fine them \$3,000 for their poor performance and their gross neglect to be responsible and abide by the rules. The President raised concerns that this reflected horribly on the school and its students, and that if they were a different organization, they would be decertified. She wondered if the captains of the team actually had a point and encouraged them to rethink their roles. An adult figure to police the students would be unwanted and unneeded if they would just take some responsibility.

Nate Mandell, a captain, tried to argue that this was a minor incident. As the captain present, he acknowledged that he should have stopped them. However, the money missing would really take away their ability to act this semester. He then apologized, saying it would not happen again. Nate then attempted to argue that their public perception was completely different from everything else.

Noyes wondered if a fine and censure would be double punishment, not realizing that a censure is a joke that just requires a letter of apology. Who wrote these bylaws anyway?

Academics appreciates what they do for the school as well as understand that they need money. However, as was just pointed out, censures do not mean a thing. One of the captains responded that in the past their relationship with the VSA has been better and attempted to explain the events of last spring. The President reminded her that we are not here to try them for last year. This time they are focusing on the 20 students that were written up.

Activities reminded frisbee that they had apologized before to no avail. This time they want proof for these things. If the money is taken away, then they can apply for things later. Operations reminded them that this was one of the most lenient punishments that could have gone through.

2010 and Jewett felt that if this money was for Savannah they had not problem with taking it away. Jewett noted that a lot of people were upset with Frisbee and wanted blood.

TH's amended the fine to \$1,500. After much discussion about supplemental and things like that, the motion failed.

The motion came to a vote, TH's were opposed, all else were in favor and frisbee was fined \$3,000.

9. Allocation of \$900 from Council Discretionary to Main

Finance moved to allocate \$900 dollars to Main for the production of Clue.

Nate Silver back again as director, assuaged council's previous fears about rights by announcing that he has been in conversation with Paramount and had basically been given the go-ahead. Frankly, Paramount had bigger fish to fry.

Activities agreed that there was no reason to not go ahead, they can hold Paramount accountable if something comes up.

Main reminded council about their commitment to alternative programming and pointed out that this was a perfect example.

Noyes thanked Mr. Silver for looking into the rights issue, but wondered why the play was so expensive. Mr. Silver responded that they are putting on a period piece, period pieces require costumes. Costumes are expensive, especially for 14 characters. However B&G did give them an awesome lead pipe.

Academics wondered just how much fun this was going to be and how big the audience was. Mr. Silver responded that he wasn't sure, the audience moves with the cast, so hopefully a few hundred will see it in total. This is a great alternative program, especially at the 11 o'clock time.

2010 asked about participation of the drama department. Mr. Silver informed her that they were helping by giving some props, but no money.

The motion passed with none opposed.

10. Allocation of \$1850 from Speakers, Lecturers to FPT

Finance moved to allocate \$1850 to FPT.

According to the president of FPT, each semester they attempt to put on a speaker and this event usually draws way more than their normal gatherings. Academics wondered where the \$1,000 speaker fee came from. She was told that this was the cheapest speaker they could find.

Activities spoke to the credentials of the speaker, an expert in their field, and he felt that the money was well spent.

THs felt that \$750 was a large amount for dinner. Finance clarified that they were only paying for half the food.

2010 wondered why FPT spent \$70 on food at every meeting. She was told that they usually had dinners to attract faculty. Activities cautioned them against using student money on faculty.

The motion came to a vote. Strong abstained. All else were in favor.

11. Majors' Committee Memorandum

Academics made a motion to pass a memorandum about Majors Committees. This would be a good way of clarifying some guidelines. 2012 noted that these were just guidelines. 2011 breaking from his normal policy of libertarianism and lack overhead, wondered if there was a way to force people to follow these guidelines if they were ignored.

2010 wanted to make a majors committee for Computer Science, but being a senior, had no time. Poor seniors.

12. Open Discussion

2010 said that there are 6 months and 22 days left. She also noted, on a down note, that she didn't have fun at Halloween, but hoped that everyone did. There were no fire alarms. that was good. Main won the costume contest.

Operations noted that TS resigned and declared the position open.

2011 wondered what other ways there were to check up on orgs beyond org reports. Activities informed him of a complex spy network that watches each org. He was kidding (or was he...)

QCVC awkwardly arrived for a party that had been denied by exec. They were throwing a party and wanted to rent sound equipment that could be gained for free. It was also determined that the sound system would work in UpC. Despite this they somehow managed to get \$250. Finance and Joss opposed.

13. Adjourn

The meeting drew to an eventual close at 9:34