

VSA Council Minutes
November 18, 2007

I. Call to Order

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

2. Attendance

Guests: Mike Alvarez (SWAC), Michelle Cantos (DEC and CCL), Shira Collando (DOC Intern), Brian Farkas (Miscellany News), Kyle Giunta (Assistant to the President), Adam Greenberg (CIRC), Garrett King (CIRC), Kristin Lee (RLAC), Acacia O'Connor (Miscellany News), Sam Rosen-Amy (Miscellany News), Chao Song (ASA), Lauren Sutherland (Miscellany News), Jessica Linden Swienckowski (CCL), Jason Wu (ASA).

3. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Minutes from November 11

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

4. Reports

a.1. Investor Responsibility

- Two meetings this year
- New leader of CIRC
- Trustee Investor Responsibility Committee
- Possibility of writing newsletter
- Discussed relationship with TIRC
- Socially responsible endowment
- A lot of members of the two organizations are alumni
- Students may not be vocal, but are still interested
- Making recommendations for Darfur
- Based on analysis on what companies invested in the country
- Why person is new chair of committee – Steve stepped down and Alison took over, leader organizes meeting times, leads discussion
- Do not initiate resolutions
- Vassar holds shares of stocks? Vast majority are in co-label funds
- Up to managers whether they want to divest

a.2. Committee on College Life

- Meeting on Oct 10
- Attendance issues, a little fair-to-low for past few meetings
- Not giving agendas or reminders
- Scheduled at noon, no one could attend
- Rescheduling of a lot of meetings
- Only two more meetings scheduled for rest of the year
- Student voices being heard, being solicited a lot
- Talking about adding issues to agenda, including adding dangerous relationships in Regulations Book, modified last year because of sexual abuse
- Talking about class sizes at Vassar, increasing or decreasing
- Dorm renovations, talking about effect on House Teams and relations with House Fellows, gender-neutral housing
- Whether dorm identity should be maintained

- Security talked about procedures about entering students rooms, talking about posting policies
- ResLife, Davison
- Renovations of Alumni House and THs

b.1. Student Wellness Advisory Committee

- Focusing on Freshmen wellness
- Vassar ranked very high in anxiety, insomnia, depression
- Stress-busting classes, fitness classes
- Greater emphasis of linking stress with freshmen
- Talking about a freshmen mandatory class about stress
- Talking about smaller more intimate areas for socializing, second/third floor of DC is not adequate
- In contact with Metcalf? Services available
- Main suggested better study spaces
- Possibly using the AULA as a social space; president gave background history of AULA
- Talking about how best to prevent alcohol use among freshmen
- BVHP currently discussing increase of alternative programming

b.2. Drug and Alcohol Committee

- End of January for Dean of College about changes for next year
- Talking about promoting awareness of consequences of alcohol use
- Changes in Alcohol EDU
- Having a program during orientation
- Use of salvia on campus
- Main questioned whether Alcohol EDU is right for a campus like Vassar
- Discussion of number of EMS calls, Cushing suggested that the number of students sent to Arlington Hospital would be more accurate

c. Residential Life Advisory

- Co-ops in the THs
- Don't think they would really work with atmosphere of the THs, getting students' input through survey
- Working on proposal for gender-neutral housing, discussion of New York state laws
- ResLife Committee makes decision? No one is quite sure

d. Orientation Committee

- Meet every other Friday at 8:45am
- Attendance is strong
- Really different next year, arriving on Wednesday and classes will begin the following Tuesday
- Balance programs, social programming, academic advising
- Didn't work having so many other students on campus when Student Leader training began
- Activities discussed the issue of changes in student leader fall training, and how that affects changes in Orientation
- Changes in Brewer Games

e. Exec Report (Student Life)

- December 5 bidders will be on campus
- Choosing 5 students to serve on panel for asking bidders questions, having bidders ask questions

- Going ahead with the THs
- Taking field trips to campuses where the companies operate
- Blueprints have been made for THs, interchangeable regardless of co-op status
- Guidelines for construction hours of new THs

f. Exec Report (Academics)

- Dean of Faculty search committee
- As of now, it's both an internal and external search
- Know very little
- Start is very slow because there's very little known about what students' role should be in the search
- Meeting after Thanksgiving
- 2-2
- Discussions have been with CCP and Student representatives
- General research has been conducted
- 2-2 study group
- Going to meet once every two weeks
- What we want to do with Major committees and student representatives
- Student input – regularize with what's been going on with all the different parties that gather input, very little has been written down
- Very few responses
- Student input on teaching and tenure
- Meeting with Ron Sharp
- Supposed to be joint task force
- Various proposals on how to get student input, nothing has been done yet
- If it gets pushed back this year, it could be three to four years before anything is decided
- Someone suggested soliciting alumni input
- Conversations about differences in staffing disparities between departments
(Main)

5. Allocation of \$1150 from Conference to Act Out!

Finance moved to allocate \$1150 from the Conference Fund to Act Out. THs abstained from the vote, all else of Council voted in favor of the application, and the motion passed.

6. Allocation of \$1106 from Speaker's Fund to ASA

Finance moved to allocate \$1106 from the Speaker's Fund to Asian Students Alliance. All of Council voted in favor of the application, and the motion passed.

7. Decertification of Alive

Activities moved to decertify Alive. Only Cushing voted not in favor of the decertification, and the motion passed.

8. Freeze Activity of The Listening Center

Activities moved to suspend the activity of the Listening Center. The Listening Center has stopped meeting, and has failed to submit any of their necessary reports to Activities. By freezing the organization's activity, Activities hopes to encourage them to begin participation again. If such events do not occur, the group will be decertified at the next VSA meeting. All of Council voted in favor of the suspension, and the motion passed.

9. Open Discussion

- 2008 announced that 189 days remain until commencement.
- The President expressed appreciation for Council members sending out emails to their constituents about taking the VSA survey.
- Student Life announced that Babycakes will hopefully open next week.
- Activities announced that the events for the coming week are listed on the back of the VSA Agenda, and will be for every coming week.
- Davison reported that Harvest Ball happened last night, was successful, and helped raise money for Katrina victims.
- Main reported about the successful formation of the Board of House Vice Presidents, and that they elected the Main VP to be chair of the board.
- Academics wished a happy birthday to Nate Silver on behalf of Council, and all of Council sang the Happy Birthday song to him.

10. Adjourn

The meeting concluded at 8:46pm.