VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION
Senate Minutes for Dec. 5th, 2021
Time: 2:00PM
Location: New England 105

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Attendance Roll Call** (Name, pronouns, class year, major) (Off-record v. on-record)
   a. Check-in question: If you could have any superpower, what would it be?
   b. Present: Gabi, Ryan, Leslie, Lola, Harman, Ceci, Valeria, Sophie S (Nik’s proxy), Katie, Lauren, Kyle, Jenna, Sophie M., Jason, Bailey, Natalie, Davis, Joe, Julian, Shannon, Brian, Olivia, Elena, Jordan, Addie, Aryn, Faye, Noon, Posie, Janet (misc)
3. **Adoption of the Agenda**
   a. Necessary changes to the agenda made, added SR 21
      i. Agenda adopted
4. **Consent Agenda**
5. **Updates and Announcements**
   a. **Executive Board**
      i. Equity and Inclusion
         1. Went to CIE—talked about employee and faculty resource groups (not affinity groups, similar to student orgs/interest groups)
            a. Sending survey to faculty about equity and inclusion work, and how that should/shouldn’t affect tenure
         2. Went to NAAC—talked about what they want to do about the walkway, gate for the Farm, name change for the Farm
         3. Women in Leadership Development (WiLD)—please sign up for the panel!
         4. SAVP—health and wellness liaisons, please reach out to Leslie, Ryan, or Ceci about this
   ii. Residential Affairs
      1. Dining Committee met with Dean Macheska and Steve Scardina—productive meeting about increasing the quality of food, coffee
         a. Strange pushback to allergen labeling
      2. Had to cancel BoRA—many presidents called out sick
         a. Were going to talk about restructuring House Teams
      3. Sent out Student Conduct Survey
   iii. Health and Wellness
      1. First Aid kits are ready to be picked up for the dorms
      2. Destress Daze went well
      3. Looking forward to Rise event about Group Dynamics and a Mug Painting event
   iv. Organizations
      1. Orgs did not meet this week, doing normal administrative work
a. Onboarding Pre-Orgs and Recertified orgs

2. We had about 220 events this semester, on track to have about 500 by the end of the year

v. Academics
   1. CCP meeting next week, so is Library Committee
   2. Next semester
      a. Fielding a survey about pre-registration, curriculum requirements, intensives, etc.
   3. First Year Rep has not attended any committee meetings

vi. Finance
   1. VSA Operating & Supply Funds
      a. Contact both Ryan and Valeria to access funds for your committee
      b. Limit food spending to $15/person
   2. Ultimate Frisbee situation handled, President’s Office is covering travel cost
      a. VSA is covering 50% of residential cost, registration cost
   3. Went through the Waste Reduction Act, amends how our budget would be spent— SR 18
      a. Bill passed the committee
   4. Working on legislation to let Finance pick their own members (instead of BoEA)— SR 15

vii. Programming and Traditions
   1. Sending a Founder’s Day poll to vote on a theme
      a. Also selecting Founder’s Day chairs this week
   2. NYC shuttle was not even close to full, despite folks asking for it, will run again in the Spring

viii. Operations
   1. Accomplishments
      a. Need to record everything we did semester so we can send it to the Misc
      b. So far we have something for almost every committee
      c. Chairs can also put personal/exec accomplishments, but under their committees
   2. Will bring Bills up later

ix. VSA President
   1. Many meetings got canceled
   2. Inviting alums back to talk about divestment work
      a. Some have responded saying they are interested in coming back

b. Committee Chair Updates
i. First-Year Programs
   1. Lisberma not here, updates:
      a. Met with FYE three times to do Winter Carnival work, also met with Will Rush, held the event on Friday (over 80 people in attendance)
ii. Environmental Action
   1. Met this week: sent out information about sustainability peer educators to Houses, working on proper training, will meet with them once per month to make sure they are on track
   2. Planning a Sustainability Open Forum on December 8 in the Jade Parlor, hopefully there will be food… will talk to Valeria
      a. Will talk about various initiatives in regard to sustainability on campus
      b. Will talk to Lauren about advertising via VSA instagram

iii. Communications
   1. Met with representative from the Judicial Board
   2. We now have Canva Pro
      a. Ask Lauren for the login if you want to use it

iv. Athletics
   1. Working on getting athletic events through What’s Up VC, just need to fill out a form
   2. Coordinating potential Half-Time shows with performance groups

v. Student Labor
   1. Starting drafting informative posts and emails about worker’s rights and sick leave info

vi. Community Affairs
   1. Worked with Education 380 about community-college relationships
      a. Reaching out to Lisa Kaul to put these ideas into action
      b. Working on a publicity instagram
         i. Ryan—why do you want your own Instagram?
         ii. Sophie—specifically to advertise events in POK, not on campus, could possibly send it to the VSA Instagram, but it would be good to have them compiled in one place, instead of dispersed among other events

c. Senator Updates
   i. Class of 2025
      1. Sent out email to class year before Thanksgiving
   ii. Class of 2024
      1. No updates
   iii. Class of 2023
      1. Constituent’s Dinner—working with Valeria to get catering, purpose: to get to know the new Senators replacing Joe and Julian
      2. Time capsule is being sealed at this dinner
   iv. Class of 2022
      1. No updates

6. Constituent Concerns
   a. Class of 2025
      i. Food waste in the Deece—self-serve stations so that we can serve ourselves the right amount of food, so we don’t waste
1. Also, to-go containers so we can eat the rest of our food at a later time
2. Ryan—refer to Dining Committee

7. New Business
   a. SR. 18 Waste Reduction Act
      i. Updates language about how VSA money can be spent: plastic bags and styrofoam products would be prohibited
         1. Bailey—what about garbage bags?
            a. Writing an exemption for garbage bags
         2. Aryn—what if a restaurant gives you a plastic bag with the food?
            a. Probably not intended like this. More about actually purchasing plastic bags for something.
   
   ii. PASSED

b. SR. 19 A Recommendation to Remove Sanctioning Parameters for the Stud…
   i. Brian—Does not change how administration rules, but changes how they sanction
      1. Constituent concern about punishments being too harsh, so allows admin to go under the minimum sanction
         a. Julian—Changes mandatory minimum to a *recommended* mandatory minimum, so they can use discretion when context is known
      2. Concerns:
         a. Gabi—Dean Alamo recently sent out a survey about student conduct. Could this be in conjunction with the results of that survey?
         b. Lola—if we don’t know the minimums, how do we vote to terminate them? Could we make this info public?
         c. Harman—example?
            i. Julian—Distribution of drugs has a mandatory minimum of Suspension, and a ’maximum’ of Expulsion

   ii. Roll Call Vote:
      1. Ryan—Yes
      2. Leslie—Yes
      3. Lola—No
      4. Harman—Yes
      5. Ceci—Yes
      6. Val—Yes
      7. Nik (proxy)—Abstain
      8. Katie—Yes
      9. Lauren—Yes
      10. Kyle—yes
      11. Jenna—yes
      12. Sophie—Yes
      13. Jason—yes
      14. Bailey—yes
15. Natalie— Yes
16. Davis — Yes
17. Joe — Yes
18. Julian— Yes
19. Brian— Yes
20. Olivia— Yes
21. Elena — Yes
22. Jordan— yes
23. Addie— yes
24. Faye— yes
25. Posie— yes
26. Noon— yes

iii. PASSED

c.  
   SR.11 Recommendation for a VSA Vote on Board of Trustees
   i. Student body overwhelmingly voted that VSA pres should have a vote on the Board of Trustees

ii. PASSED

d.  
   SR.15 Amending the Membership Guidelines of the Finance Committee
   i. Julian—at Valeria’s request, gives Finance the power to pick their own committee members
   ii. Valeria—I want more representation, and I want people who are consistent. BoEA isn’t giving us that.

iii. PASSED

e.  
   SR.16-1 The Revised Senate Structure Act
   i. Julian/Joe—Allows for more collaboration, codifying committees meeting jointly, provides proper recognition for certain positions, will streamline the legislative process, allows for the making of subcommittees
      1. Larger committees are headed by elected officials, Senators head subcommittees
         a. All elections still BoEA certified
   ii. Have had extensive conversations with bodies that would be affected by these changes
      1. Will have a sustainability and E&I rep in every committee so these topics are not talked about in isolation
   iii. We have 15 committee chairs, that’s more than comparable bodies at other colleges, and it’s less effective
   iv. Concerns:
      1. Gabi—when would this take effect? I think we should get input from the student body before we do this
         a. Next fall; primary authors of the Bill will not be here next semester to disseminate this information
         b. Could just pass and then hold a town hall
      2. Leslie—what relevant groups have been talked to?
         a. Finance, E&I, Ops
3. Katie—Would be valuable to talk to people [student body] about this. Would students get to choose who the subcommittee chairs are?
   a. This sort of falls into what happened with college planning Senators, which wasn’t great
   b. Ryan—you can still be on committees you aren’t assigned to

4. Harman—Something like this requires a lot more time to read through. Passing it through one Senate meeting seems rushed. We will get backlash, as we have in past years for smaller decisions. This needed about 3-4 meetings to talk through.
   a. Julian—Ryan gave notice on Thursday for everyone to review the Bill.

5. Noon—So are several committees now meeting at the same time? Will we have time to address all concerns?
   a. Joe—we will have one large committee, but under that committee there are subcommittees for specific issue areas, run by Senators

6. Brian—I read the whole bill, we restructure so much, this is more of a continuation. I think this is a good step to be a more efficient body.

7. Davis—I wanted to express my support. We have a problem with committees not having enough to do.

8. Bailey—[technical difficulties, admin intern missed the first part]
   If we pass the Bill before we have a town hall, we are not going to avoid any problems with backlash. We also can’t guarantee that someone will be interested in every issue enough to be a subcommittee chair.
   a. Julian—to clarify, we are not putting anyone in a subcommittee seat that they don’t want to be in, and all of these subcommittees are guided by student concerns

9. Ryan—cutting off debate at 3:30pm

10. Valeria—Julian and Joe have done a lot of research on this, and they did talk to Finance about this restructuring. I am very supportive of this system. We need to repair the VSA’s relationships with students. This gives us more accountability. We need to make sure that people are putting in the work. We should tell the student body that this is something we are considering.

11. Jason—Language issue on page 3. I think we should hold off on passing this, and have more conversation about it. Especially if we are cutting off debate at 3:30. Also why are we appointing financial affairs and chair of finance?
   a. Julian—We opted for appointment because it allows Finance to continue to work without intervention from students who don’t know how finance committee works/running on things that finance committee can’t do.
b. Valeria—if we don’t have someone with ample experience in Finance, then we don’t have efficiency.

12. Joe—concerned about getting credit
   a. Ryan—hard to pass a bill when senators are on a different continent

13. Elena—is there a limit to subcommittees? Also why is FYE under academic affairs?
   a. Julian/Joe—No. We can also reevaluate the current subcommittees if we need to. Academic affairs seemed like the best place to put it, for programming and academic concerns.
   b. Ryan—first years are closer to the admissions process

14. Leslie—we have to take this through the entire Senate, we have to make sure everyone is informed about this. I don’t feel like I was properly informed about the merging of my own committee and position. I don’t think we should be passing this now, contingent on anything. I do think this plan has a lot of merit, but we need more time.

15. Gabi—I have also been having conversations about this, and I like this structuring. My only issue is with transparency and making sure the student body knows what’s happening. I feel we should hold off on passing this until everyone knows what’s in the Bill.

16. Davis—I feel like delaying this Bill will bog this down, and we will eventually run up into elections for next year. I feel that if we don’t pass this Bill, we won’t pass this Bill. We are the ones on campus who know most about this process, and we are elected to represent our constituents and their best interests.

17. Harman—The Bill makes sense and they put a lot of work in, but there have been a lot of changes to this Bill since I was talked to. I also don’t feel comfortable passing this without student input, so I would like to table this until later. Rushing this does not make sense to me.
   a. Julian—we definitely spoke about this in academics committee, and it was more than an informal discussion.

18. Lola—I am concerned with the amount of responsibility we would be giving to these new chairs. It would be a lot of work for one person to do. Concerned about House Presidents assigned to the Student Affairs committee, and how they are chosen. I don’t think you are going to get a broad enough opinion about residential affairs on campus.

19. Joe—We voted last year to have a constitutional commission, by electronic poll, and the student body had no say in that. I find it wild that we want to do that now, even when we don’t have to. If the only thing that people are concerned about is transparency, I don’t know why we can’t put this to a vote in the student body.
   a. Amendment: Contingent on holding a student body vote
i. No Objection

20. Julian—it’s frustrating that you all think you need more time to communicate with your constituents. We are elected officials, and it's impossible to communicate on every decision. I urge the Senate to make their best judgment both as a Senator and as a student. If we vote no, we cannot bring it back.

v. Roll Call on Voting on the Bill Now:

1. Ryan: Yes
2. Leslie: No
3. Lola: No
4. Harman: No
5. Ceci: No
6. Valeria: Yes
7. Nik: Yes
8. Katie: No
9. Lauren: No
10. Kyle: Yes
11. Jenna: No
12. Sophie: Yes
13. Jason: No
14. Bailey: No
15. Natalie: No
16. Davis: Yes
17. Joe: Yes
18. Julian: Yes
19. Shannon: No
20. Brian: Yes
21. Olivia: Yes
22. Elena: no
23. Jordan: No
24. Addie: No
25. Aryn: No
26. Faye: Yes
27. Noon: No
28. Posie: Yes

29. 12 Yes, 16 No—Tabled

f. SR.16-2 Fair Compensation and Responsive Accountability Act
   i. Not discussed

g. SR.17 House Team Pay Subsidy Act
   i. Joe—this bill will pay House Team an additional $250 for the Spring Semester; House Teams were surveyed, presidents and other officers are working 8-10 hours a week and only making $250 a year right now. Many House Team members said fair compensation would be $3000. This money would come out of the VSA budget. Has been cosponsored by Chair of Residential Affairs, Senators, Division Reps for Student Labor.
   ii. Concerns:
1. Valeria—this can come from our contingency fund (costs we did not plan on). But I will say, if we were to vote yes on this, even though this is a one time payment, this would set a precedent that students can be paid through the student activities fees. This should really be covered by ResLife. This is completely within the discretion of ResLife as it is.
   a. Joe—i’m really not worried about org presidents trying to get paid through the VSA. Also, I think this is a perfectly fair interim solution until we can work something out with ResLife.
   b. Julian—working on paying them half and half with ResLife, because they have responsibilities to both of us.
   c. Brian—if we have the money, we should do this, which leads to more dedicated students, better programming.

2. Harman—we would need to advertise this as a one-time bonus otherwise next year they may be upset they don’t get this extra money.
   a. Lola—they will always get $250 per semester from now on from ResLife. It’s not like they won’t be paid next year.

3. Katie—I know there is also talk about restructuring House Team in general, so how would this be adjusted for that?
   a. Lola—working on solidifying the exact roles on House Team so we can move towards making the positions work-study or stipended

4. Valeria—My recommendation is to say no, because the money is there but you don’t know the different funds we would have to deal with, etc.
   a. Julian—this would send a message to admin that we are actively trying to work with them

5. Katie—why didn’t this go through Finance Committee?
   a. Joe—Ops was after Finance, and we were deciding on whether or not it should go through Finance.
   b. Valeria—I also wanted to talk to Michelle Ransom about this. I would eventually like this to go to my committee.

6. Leslie—I don’t know if we are at a good place to vote on this.

iii. Roll Call
1. Ryan: yes
2. Leslie: No
3. Lola: Yes
4. Harman: yes
5. Ceci: No
6. Valeria: No
7. Nik: yes
8. Katie: yes
9. Lauren: No
10. Kyle: yes
11. Jenna: No  
12. Sophie: No  
13. Jason: No  
14. Bailey: No  
15. Natalie: Yes  
16. Davis: Yes  
17. Joe: Yes  
18. Julian: Yes  
19. Shannon: Yes  
20. Brian: yes  
21. Olivia: Yes  
22. Elena: No  
23. Jordan: No  
24. Addie: No  
25. Aryn: Yes  
26. Faye: Yes  
27. Noon: yes  
28. Posie: Yes  
29. 17 Yes, 11 No—PASSED

h. SR 21 Ammendment to Expedite Legislation
   i. Davis—discrepancy in the bylaws about who can bring forward legislation. Wording mistake, so it conflicts with the constitution. This bill fixes that.
      1. Ryan—any Senator can move to amend the bylaws or introduce a statement.
   ii. Questions
      1. Harman—is this anything being introduced?
         a. Ryan—no, just statements and amendments, but not resolutions or bills
   iii. PASSED
      i. Athletics Appointment Amendment (changing one word)
      i. Approved

8. Speakers List
9. Adjournment
   a. Adjourned: 4:05pm