

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

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The Constitution of the Vassar Student Association

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THE CONSTITUTION OF THE VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

ARTICLE I – MISSION STATEMENT

The name of the governing organization of the students of Vassar College shall be the Vassar Student Association, hereinafter the VSA. The VSA shall govern all matriculated students of Vassar College. The VSA shall serve, represent, and promote the interests and welfare of the students and their organizations. In particular, acknowledging historical and contemporary societal oppressions, the VSA shall strive to combat injustice and work to end oppression at Vassar College. In the spirit of the long tradition of shared governance, the VSA shall encourage student representation and involvement in college decision-making. The VSA shall represent the opinions of the student body, serving as a communications conduit to the Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Alumnae/i, the local community, and beyond, keeping principles of equity in mind.

ARTICLE II – NON-DISCRIMINATION

SECTION 1: GENERAL TERMS

The VSA shall not discriminate in the administration of its Bylaws, policies and procedures, nor tolerate discrimination or harassment. Discrimination or harassment on the part of any of the VSA's members is not permissible on the basis of, but not limited to, race, color, religion or religious belief, citizenship status, sex, marital status, disability, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ethnicity, military service or affiliation, genetic information, age, and other characteristics protected by law. Additionally, during the period Article II of the VSA Constitution and Bylaws is extant, should state or federal law be enacted to prohibit other forms of discrimination or harassment not listed in the above categories, Article II will be deemed amended to afford protection to such groups. The VSA's non-discrimination Policy shall not limit the rights of any individual to seek remedies available under the college regulations or state or federal law.

SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS

- A. Discrimination is defined, for the purpose of the VSA Constitution and Bylaws, as any decision, act, or failure to act which denies access, benefits, or opportunities to a person's or group's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, privileges, or activities of the VSA, including VSA sponsored or affiliated programs and activities, when such a decision, act, or failure to act is based on, but not limited to, race, color, religion or religious belief, citizenship status, sex, marital status, disability, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ethnicity, military service or affiliation, genetic information, or age.
- B. Discriminatory Harassment is defined, for the purpose of the VSA Constitution and Bylaws, as unwelcome conduct toward a person or group based on, but not limited to, race, color, religion or religious belief, citizenship status, sex, marital status, disability, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ethnicity, military service or affiliation, genetic information, or age, that is sufficiently severe, pervasive and objectionably offensive that it denies, limits, or alters the conditions of, participation in, or benefits derived from the services, privileges, or activities of the VSA, including VSA sponsored or affiliated programs and activities.

ARTICLE III – EXPECTATIONS OF ELECTED AND APPOINTED MEMBERS

SECTION 1: GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

All VSA elected and appointed members are expected to uphold and abide by the VSA Governing Documents and adhere to all Vassar College Regulations. Each VSA elected and appointed member is expected to communicate with and represent their constituents and participate fully in all required meetings and events.

SECTION 2: TERMS OF OFFICE

- A. VSA elected and appointed positions shall have a term of office beginning on May 1st and ending on April 30th of the following academic year, unless stated otherwise.
- B. Those positions elected or appointed after May 1st shall also terminate on April 30th of the following academic year, unless stated otherwise.

ARTICLE IV – THE VSA EXECUTIVE BOARD

SECTION 1: COMPOSITION

The VSA Executive Board shall be chaired by the VSA President and additionally consist of the Vice President, elected Co-Chair of Equity and Inclusion, elected Co-Chair of Residential Affairs, Chair of Academics, Chair of Organizations, and elected Co-Chair of Finance.

SECTION 2: POWER AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The powers and responsibilities of the Executive Board and its respective members shall be as follows:

- A. The Executive Board shall represent the interests of the student body to administrators, faculty, trustees, alumnae/i, and the greater Poughkeepsie community.
- B. The Executive Board shall have the power to make decisions on fund applications, endorsements, and other actions, excluding legislation, when the VSA Senate is not in session between the last meeting at the end of each semester and the first meeting of the following semester.
- C. The Executive Board shall administer the VSA Operating Funds.
- D. The Executive Board, in conjunction with the Board of Elections and Appointments, shall determine how to fill at-large positions on Joint Committees.
- E. The Executive Board shall meet regularly with administrators, faculty, trustees, and other constituencies and maintain confidentiality of these proceedings. The Executive Board shall have the power to make decisions regarding confidential proceedings.

SECTION 3: SUCCESSION OF POWERS

- A. Should any Executive Board member be absent, incapacitated, or leave office, their duties, responsibilities, and powers shall be temporarily assumed by the VSA President. The Board of Elections and Appointments will fill any permanent vacancies.
- B. Should the VSA President be absent or incapacitated, the duties, responsibilities, and powers shall temporarily be assumed by the Vice President, elected Co-Chair of Equity and Inclusion, elected Co-Chair of Residential Affairs, Chair of Academics, Chair of Organizations, and Chair of Finance, in that order, until the President's return.
- C. Should the VSA President leave office, the Vice President shall succeed them. The further order of succession is specified in the VSA Policies.

SECTION 4: COMPENSATION

- A. Each member of the Executive Board shall receive pay up to the amount specified by the Office of Student Financial Services for a student in their class year, regardless of the member's work-study eligibility.
- B. Members of the Executive Board shall submit timesheets in accordance with Office of Student Financial Services policies. Said timesheets shall be approved by a non-student employee of the college.
- C. Members of the Executive Board may only record hours for performing tasks specific to their positions or to the VSA Executive Board.
- D. The Judicial Board shall have the jurisdiction to investigate any claims of impropriety or misreporting of hours worked.

ARTICLE V – THE VSA SENATE

SECTION 1: COMPOSITION

Voting members of the VSA Senate shall include: President, Vice President, Co-Chairs of Equity and Inclusion, Co-Chairs of Residential Affairs, Chair of Academics, Chair of Organizations, elected Chair of Finance, Chair of Planning, Chair of Health and Wellness, Chair of Programming, College Planning Senators, and Class Senators. The VSA Senate shall be chaired by the VSA President, who shall only vote in the event of a tie.

ARTICLE VI – CLASS REPRESENTATION

SECTION 1: VSA SENATE REPRESENTATION

- A. Each Class shall elect from their respective constituencies a Senator for Student Affairs, Senator for Activities, and Senator for Strategic Planning.
- B. Each Senator shall sit on at least two committees within their respective Board and represent their Class on the VSA Senate.

SECTION 2: SENIOR CLASS COUNCIL

- A. The Senior Class Council shall be composed of the Senior Class Senators for Student Affairs, Activities and Strategic Planning; the two Senior Class Gift Co-Chairs; the Presidents of the Town Houses, Terrace Apartments and South Commons; and a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer elected at-large from the senior class.
 - a. The Senior Class President may appoint at-large senior students as members of Senior Class Council.
 - b. If the President of the Town Houses, Terrace Apartments, or South Commons is not a senior, a senior among that Apartment Area's Officers shall sit on Senior Class Council. If no officer is a senior, one shall be appointed by the Board of Elections and Appointments from the constituency.
- B. The Executive Board of Senior Class Council shall be chaired by the Senior Class President and composed of the Senior Class President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.
- C. The Senior Class Council shall be responsible for organizing class events, Senior Week programming, and the Daisy Chain.

ARTICLE VII – HOUSE TEAMS AND RESIDENTIAL REPRESENTATION

SECTION 1: COMPOSITION

- A. Each House shall elect a President, Programming Director, Secretary, and Treasurer. A First-Year Representative shall be elected by the first year class in each house. These shall be the House Officers.
- B. The South Commons, Terrace Apartments, Town Houses, and Towns Students shall each elect a President, Programming Director, and Treasurer. These shall be the Apartment Area Officers
- C. The co-operative housing options shall collectively elect a President and Treasurer.
- D. In the event that there are no elected or appointed members of the residence to serve on the Board of Residential Affairs, the VSA Senate shall have the power to rescind their allocated budget for the year.

SECTION 2: FUNCTIONS

- A. Residential Leadership shall represent the views of their respective residences to the Board of Residential Affairs, Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Alumnae/i, and the local community and beyond.
- B. House Teams shall plan residential events and activities.

ARTICLE VIII – THE BOARDS AND COMMITTEES OF THE VSA

SECTION 1: COMPOSITION

- A. The VSA shall have the following boards that report directly to the VSA Senate: Board of Strategic Planning, Board of Student Affairs, Board of Activities, and Board of Residential Affairs.
- B. The VSA shall have the following committees: Operations Committee, Planning Committee, Equity and Inclusion Committee, Academics Committee, Health and Wellness Committee, First Year Programs Committee, Organizations Committee, Finance Committee, Programming Committee, and Traditions Committee.
- C. The VSA shall have the following autonomous boards that shall function independently with advising from the President and Vice President: Board of Elections and Appointments and Judicial Board.

SECTION 2: THE BOARD OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

- A. The Board of Strategic Planning shall consist of the Vice President, Chair of Strategic Planning, and College Planning Senators.
- B. The Vice President shall chair the Board of Strategic Planning.
- C. The Board shall oversee the Operations Committee, Planning Committee, and their respective members.

SECTION 3: THE BOARD OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

- A. The Board of Student Affairs shall consist of the Co-Chairs of Equity and Inclusion, Chair of Academics, Chair of Health and Wellness, Chair of First Year Programs, and Judicial Board Chair.
- B. The Board shall be chaired by either or both the elected Co-Chair of Equity and Inclusion and Chair of Academics.
- C. The Board shall oversee the Equity and Inclusion Committee, Academics Committee, Health and Wellness Committee, First Year Programs Committee, and their respective members.

SECTION 4: THE BOARD OF ACTIVITIES

- A. The Board of Activities shall consist of the Chair of Organizations, Co-Chairs of Finance, Chair of Programming, Co-Chairs of Traditions, a representative from the ViCE Executive Board, a representative from the Board of Residential Affairs, and members of the Campus Activities Office.
- B. The Board shall be chaired by either the Chair of Organizations or elected Co-Chair of Finance.
- C. The Board shall oversee the Organizations Committee, Finance Committee, Programming Committee, Traditions Committee, ViCE, and their respective members.

SECTION 5: THE BOARD OF RESIDENTIAL AFFAIRS

- A. The Board of Residential Affairs shall be consist of the elected Co-Chair of Residential Affairs, the Presidents of the nine residential Houses, and the Presidents of the South Commons, Terrace Apartments, Town Houses, Town Students and Cooperative Housing.
- B. The Board shall be chaired by the elected Co-Chair of Residential Affairs and an internally selected Co-Chair.
- C. The Board shall oversee House Teams and offices specified in the VSA Bylaws.

ARTICLE IX – THE JUDICIAL BOARD

SECTION 1: COMPOSITION

The Judicial Board shall be consist of a chair, elected at large by the student body, who shall also sit as a representative on the Committee on College Life, and 16 members with 4 elected from each class year.

SECTION 2: JURISDICTION AND POWERS

- A. The jurisdiction of the Judicial Board shall extend to all cases arising under the VSA Constitution, the VSA Bylaws, and under any social regulations or other rules established by the VSA Senate, including:
 - a. Cases concerning the compliance of VSA policy and legislation with the VSA Constitution and VSA Bylaws.
 - b. Impeachment hearings after indictment by the VSA Senate.
 - c. Cases involving a breach of agreement reached through mediation as stipulated in Article XII of the VSA Bylaws.
- B. Judicial Board members shall sit on the Academic Panel, College Regulations Panel, and the Student Conduct Panel, as set forth by the college regulations. The Judicial Board Chair shall be responsible for organizing participation on these bodies.
- C. The Judicial Board shall have access to every VSA resource, file, or any other material deemed necessary to the effective execution of any Judicial Board investigation.

ARTICLE X – VSA BYLAWS

The VSA shall establish Bylaws that include procedural mechanisms necessary for the function of the VSA. The VSA may further establish additional Bylaws following amendment procedures laid out in the Constitution.

ARTICLE XI – VSA POLICIES

The VSA Senate, Boards, and Committees shall establish, maintain, and publicize their own Policies that describe the group's mission, composition, and practices. These Policies must be reviewed and approved by majority vote of the appropriate body at the start of each academic year, and may be amended during the year by majority vote, excluding the VSA Senate, whose Policies shall be set by the Operations Committee.

ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENTS

- A. Any student may propose amendments to the VSA Constitution or Bylaws to the VSA Senate. The student proposing an amendment must submit it to the Vice President for review prior to the Senate meeting.
- B. A two-thirds majority vote of the VSA Senate is required to amend the Constitution or Bylaws. A vote must take place at least one week after the amendment is introduced.
- C. Following an amendment, the Vice President must notify the entire student body of the change, and the number of signatures necessary for a referendum, via posting, as well as providing one to any student upon request. The amendment stands if a period of two weeks passes, and a written objection is not presented to the VSA Executive Board.

ARTICLE XIII – RATIFICATION

This shall be the only Constitution governing the students of Vassar College. This Constitution shall become effective on May 1st, 2016 upon ratification of a majority of voting members of the VSA Council, and approval of the Faculty and President of Vassar College, as set forth in the Governance.