

# VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

## Council Agenda for November 17, 2013

Time: 7:00pm

Location: College Center 204

“Teamwork makes the dream work” – John C. Maxwell

- 1 Call to Order
- 2 Attendance .....Operations
- 3 Consent Agenda
  - a. Hunger Action – Collab.....(\$400/\$400)
  - b. MEChA – Community.....(\$500/\$500)
  - c. Quidditch – Collab.....(\$800/\$900)
  - d. Poder Latino – Soc Consc.....(\$1100/\$1300)
  - e. vCash machines - Capital.....(\$9000/\$9000)
  - f. Preorg to Generation ..... \$30
  - g. Minutes from 11/10/2013
- 4 Executive Board Reports
  - a. Student Life.....(7 min)

Student life – meeting about gender neutral bathrooms- looking to move certain gender neutral bathrooms in other places (some are in the basement). Also, meeting with Luz from Alana center. Students with financial aid don’t always have money to go home [for breaks]. Sometimes, they [the school] hand out loans. Even is student work over the summer, they can’t always meet their contribution. Regarding all campus email from response team- we gave a concrete number of incidents reported and I was hoping there could be some feedback.

Jewett- Sander’s physics is being renovated; maybe they can have it [gender neutral bathrooms] there?

Student life- that is definitely a conversation that is going to be had with the faculty
  - b. Academics .....(7 min)

~Academics- Noyes with highest participation, Strong then Joss with highest participation [for House Brewer Cup points on last event]. Shout out to Academics for doing a wonderful job. 120 under classmen went, food lasted for most people. About 55 peer advisers. Currently working on the newsletter – theme is food. Faculty from the English, American culture, chem., and other departments are participating. There are also student pieces, and the misc. will help with the layout. Regarding proposal that talks about textbooks and how students buy their books. Meeting on Friday with students, if have any thoughts or feelings, come. Vassar alumni, vp for new york times (not anymore since July) but she has contacts has been helping with the NY Times project. NY Times is not doing subscriptions the ways [certain colleges] want to be done.
- 5 Discussion re: BIRT ..... Student Life (30 min)

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Student life- only student rep. on response team. BIRT meets within twenty-four hours after an incident. Typically, house teams would like to deal with the situation on their own, but the question has come up whether the student body as a whole should be unified. BIRT meets monthly.

Strong- Strong has had a few incidences. My one concern is I think maybe looking into that factor that things can happen in between these meetings.

SL- when a biased incident is reported, we meet within 24 hours.

Jewett - how does it work with the latest email? Some of my constituents talk to me about it. One of the quotes was “don’t be bitches” and they asked how that was a biased incident. I mean, if they can provide some context to these themes, especially since not everyone on campus views it as a bad term, it would help.

TA- are there any talks about getting more than one student rep [on BIRT]?

SL- it’s not something that has been talked about, but it is important. There’s also the issue of confidentiality.

Davison - I think without knowing the context, we don’t know how to appropriately approach our constituency. I was ill prepared on how to answer them.

2016 - I think there needs to be more to reach out to the greater community. All of the issues we deal with as a campus don’t only affect houses. When there’s a biased incidence on one house, it poisons our entire community. Our public spaces are public to everyone. If something happens in one house, it wasn’t necessarily committed by someone from that house.

Cushing - maybe it would be great if they sent a campus wide email every time something happens instead of in bulks.

SL- a concern is that sometimes students will complain about how many emails get sent. We would also give a lot of attention to the individuals who committed [these incidents].

2014 - I was wondering if you could talk about say anything.

SL - when it comes to say anything, a student can still report [the incident]. Until a student actually reports that, we cant say anything about it in BIRT.

2017- if some person approaches [BIRT], how does BIRT react to that?

SL - typically there is some sort of outreach done, the individual can come to a BIRT meeting, but they have someone to represent them there already.

Pres.- what does BIRT consider when they’re thinking about how to respond? What kind of outreach is done to those people who are affected by it?

SL - if it happens in the house, the house advisor is there to talk about it, and there’s the same process for one individual. When there’s an attack against a community, the Alana director is consulted as to what kind of response would be appropriate. There isn’t an overall overarching

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thing.

Finance- can you speak to what other schools do?

SL - no sorry.

Royal - can you speak to the pros and cons about sending out an email.

SL- pro, we do want to be transparent and more often than not, the student body isn't aware of the incidents. Even if it comes down to an individual attack, the community, as a whole, should know about it. A con is that not everyone wants to hear about this. What the admin considers a slur may not be the same for a student.

Raymond - in my house team we've tried to talk about this as they've come up, but we didn't get an official all campus email until this one and it had all been hearsay till then. We should be aware of them, especially the house presidents. We have the power to set the atmosphere.

2015- I was wondering if it may be possible with this question of transparency, to maybe, at student life or council, every time something happens, we could state what happened so we know.

SL - one of the issues is confidentiality, but I can ask the chair if he can be done [comfortably].

2016 - this is something we've been discussing in depth in our class council. I think this is definitely a conversation we should be having in council. The problem was that none of the house reps knew what was going on until they were brought up. I think other houses would like to hear about how to frame these kinds of responses.

2017- how does BIRT deal with the fact that accountability is almost impossible?

SL - instead of trying to focus on one individual event, we would like to act proactively and address what leads to these incidences. I think the focus has been not so much finding who's responsible and more about how do we move forward in a community where these incidences don't occur.

Pres- the incidences are being investigated, that's not BIRT's responsibility.

TA- In what capacity?

Pres- Poughkeepsie police, and security. If you feel like your house or group has responded positively if you could speak to that.

Main - we invited members of BIRT, Alana center, invited everyone to the PR and discussed the nature of the incident, broke up into small groups. We spoke about how we feel about it and how each one of us can better ourselves as members of the community.

Strong - the things that have all been directed to strong, we called an on house mandatory meeting. Everyone had to be there and we discussed what it was to live in strong what gender graffiti meant to strong. We worked in small groups and those people (previously named people) we came back and discussed different issues in gender language and specifically strong. We discussed how we could discuss this in a wider way.

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2017- I feel like it was a very needed discussion (referring to strong) I appreciate that happening, but the general sentiment among freshman I guess, everything that happens is not effective. The freshmen will complain about it and they don't understand that it's needed and how serious what happens is. It's not coming across effectively.

Strong- I know that house team makes a lot of effort into it, but we definitely heard a lot of freshmen didn't think that was a big of a deal. I think there is a lot of people that.

Main - our house team discussed that by not responding to it, we almost send a message that it is something we tolerate. By taking, we send a message that we don't tolerate it.

Jewett - are other members of the Vassar community allowed to go?

SL - I think that comes down to members of the house team and the house, and what they're going for. I knew there were other students there (at main discussion) who wanted to be present for the discussion.

Raymond - I kind of like to pose a question, Raymond hasn't had many r any as far as I know biased incidences. I haven't heard about them. Is there a way to engage the community proactively instead of reactively?

SL- I think Jewett did a race and space discussion. It comes down to if the house team wants to do something about it. I think there are a lot of student and orgs that do a lot of work to talk about race gender and identity as a whole. It's a matter of us attending these discussions.

Cushing - my house teams is sort of discussing the history of biased incidences in hope of education the freshmen. They seemed largely responsive to that.

2016 - I think it's really important that we use our position as student leaders to let them know about resources available to them. I think its important that we promote that, just like sending out emails and social consciousness, making sure everyone know the resources available to them.

Finance - in terms of social consciousness funds, it creates more flexibility in terms of the timeline. If something happen s in your dorm, and you need funds, that's what the fund is for.

Pres.- when these things happen, we don't have to reinvent the wheel. There are already discussions going no about this. There are resources on campus we all want to help. Language is hurtful and we all want to help. Thank for this discussion.

- 6 Discussion of Smoking Ban Implementation Task Force...Operations, Activities (20 minutes)  
-Ops. Most of y'all know there was a ban last year. The timeline is by July 2015. So right now there is a smoking ban "smoke free tobacco free task force" essentially the implementation task force. 2016 activities, myself are in it as well as others. There are many representatives. Essentially what we were hoping to talk a little bit about today was just kind of what we as students see as actions we should be taking to our constituents, what resources we think is

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necessary to present. This is something we're probably going to have to address this coming year.

Pres. – are you looking for feedback?

2015- I have a lot of thoughts on this topic. Every time that we talk about smoking ban and passing as a resolution, in talking about this I think it's important that the student voice actually be respected. What happened last year wasn't really cool in terms of how it was pushed through.

Ops I have that conversation but I also want to mention that that's not the purpose of the conversations on this floor. What we need to be discussing is that there will be a ban in place by 2015 and what we need to make the transition easier.

Davison – is this is an open task force or are students allowed to be at meetings and contribute?

Ops- basically it's closed but if you felt you had something you had to present, they would be very open to that.

Socos- first I think we need to be clear about the enforcement. We have the rule that you need to stand fifty feet away from a building. No one really knew what the consequences were. I think it's important we make the resources available to quit smoking if they're interested in doing.

Jewett- what does this mean? What's the rule of the security?

Ops – the purpose, when we say that it's going to be a smoke free campus, we mean that in the entire area, there will be no smoking of cigarettes.

Jewett- how do we accommodate students who do smoke? Vassar is all inclusive. Is there going to be something in the admissions about smoking and will that play a role in that? If that happens, I feel like we're turning away people who want to come here.

Pres.- looking at peer institutions who have done this, that doesn't mean you can't go off campus. That does not make it a question for the application. That contributes to why it wasn't in place immediately.

Finance – I would like to keep seeing little places to put the cigarette buds in.

Pres- implicit in that comment is that there may not be an immediate cessation of smoking and this would help the environment.

2016; we're using the time now until the smoke free-ness goes into affect to prepare. The first phase is the education phase. We're making an effort to educate everyone on what the rules are. In our student handbook it says smoking within fifty feet of the building is banned. We're trying to make it easier for people to follow those rules, putting up signs and buying fancier receptacles as opposed to the plastic ones that are being removed. Then the next discussion we've been having is about what resources students will need as we approach the date of smoke

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free-ness. I think this is a very important conversation we will be having. I think this is where we could use the feedback as to what we think the students need.

Beth – if an outside individual is smoking on campus, what role would security have on asking them not to smoke?

Ops - that’s almost definitely a question you would need to ask security about. They don’t have that much they can do because they don’t have legal jurisdiction.

Beth – are smoke free, e-cigarettes part of that band?

Ops - those that have nicotine would be acceptable as far as I know.

2014- I would like to highlight the possibility of discussing why there is smoking culture and unpack what that would do to take them away. I know this has come up a couple times, but the idea of buying into the cessation tools, when they’re not the ones themselves who have decided to stop smoking.

Ops – so far I think every student has advocated for the students to be free. They would be free for students, faculty, and staff.

2015 – in terms of sanctions, I know last year people floated fines, if that comes up, I think that’s important.

Noyes- I think in terms for the class of 2016, since we applied to Vassar knowing it was a campus for people who can smoke, how does that play out in terms that it won’t be on the same terms we applied to?

2016- it’s unfortunate but things change while you’re here. We can’t pretend that we guarantee a standstill.

THS, I think going forward is important, just ways to work together rather than go apart.

TAs I really appreciated what SoCos said the role of security. Maybe in the spring we can chalk out what a 50 feet radius looks like. I like to call it chalk it out.

Ops = that’s already part of the permanent receptacles and it will be clearly marked what 50 feet is.

Town students, I think it’s important to reflect on how we view Poughkeepsie at large. We’re demarcating a clear smoking not smoking. I feel a little uncomfortable and see how this may have implications for Vassar Poughkeepsie relationship.

SL – I wonder to what extent workers have been spoken to. I’m wondering has there been any discussion of gaging what workers want or need.

Ops there is a representative and may of the people that are on committee would be considered staff rather than admin. it’s definitely trying to figure out how to do this in a way that is universally respectful to all..

SL- if or when marijuana is illegalized, is there any discussion on how the campus deals with that? Would it be morally ok to require students to go off campus to take medicine?

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2015 – that question was brought up last year, and the answer was “we’ll cross that bridge when we get there.

Pres.- thank you for participating, if you have any further thoughts, please talk to one of these three lovely human beings.

7 Amendment re: Seconds for Motions..... Operations (10 min)

Ops- last week we passed an amendment to the special meeting rules saying that we didn’t think it was necessary for members at large to have seconds on their motions. And then Raymond astutely recognized that we also have these in our bylaws. This is something we may also want to strike this from our bylaws. Article 11, pg. 7, I recommend we suspend the bylaw, so we can vote on it now since we voted on this principle last week. I’m going to ask that we suspend this conversation on this amendment. So I move to suspend article 11 of the vsa bylaws. Motion passes.

TA- the line reads “may” or not must, so does that means we don’t have to?

Ops we still have to suspend them.

Motion passes

Ops- moves to adopt the amendment 28-4 concerning at large members’ motions. Motion passes.

Pres. – move to an amendment regarding debt free services

8 Amendment re: Debt Repayment for Certified Organizations..... Activities (10 min)

Activities= speaks about how an org’s unpaid debt can lead to it being revoked.

Strong – as it currently says, if an org is in more, its status is revoked. We want to change it to if their debt is not fundraised within two semesters, they would meet with activities and finance

Finance- first off I would like to change debt to deficit. A lot o ways orgs deal with it is that they use their next year’s budget to eat into it. I would be interested in changing that language to say they have to be responsible in some ways.

Pres.- this amendment will get tabled until next week to work the language.

Davison – I agree with what finance since in the sense that since they’re allocated a budget, the parties involved should work out the means by which they work out the deficit.

2016 – if section 23 article 8, is that about what action occurs or what will occur.

Finance- it says they can be decertified, a whole slew of ways, one of them includes fines.

Main – Is there a time period in which they should be how much time are they given to fundraise the definitely away? (Strong replies- 2 semesters). What about 30,000 in debt?

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Finance- I think it's all at the discretion of finance cp. But I think it's a good point that. Some orgs rely heavily on fundraising and some don't raise as much as anticipated.

Strong- I the reason [for this ammendment] is not to hurt orgs, at the moment it says they (constitution) will be decertified, we're trying to make it so that we have other options.

2015- internal references in docs are risky. I think instead of specifying what article, we should say required by the bylaws.

2016- for future reference, can I ask, that if they're going to sight something, they quote it?

Ops – so, first off things like the way we are going to sign this are things we can hammer out In committee.

Pres. – this amendment will be tabled to activities and finance and brought back next week.

### 9 Amendment re: Preliminary Organization Event Requirements..... Activities (10 min)

Activities- in the bylaws it says that there was some confusion what can be classified as an actual event. We decided that general body meetings didn't constitute as an event. An event can be anything but not your general weekly thing.

Noyes – we think this will encourage orgs to reach out to the greater community.

Activities- we think that having at least one event will gather people.

Jewett – the fact that we're saying that they have to hold events as the same nature of orgs.

There needs to be a statement in there about budget limits.

Strong- to speak to Jewett's point, I think we should clarify that. More that they basically have to have the greater community, not just the usual group.

Main – I'm wondering what kind of assistance pre-orgs have in creating these events. So basically, they're on their hands and knees trying

Noyes- activities has made this so every pre org committee has to 2 reps. Activities helps them have meeting spaces and resourcing them.

Activities- there are also designated pre org.

Pres. – I think that any sort of vaguely public event would still count as an event, doesn't need to be a giant dance. It could be a discussion.

Raymond- were there considerations about making this a requirement per semesters?

Davison – I think e can agree that it would be good to have them any time within the org's lifetime. They would be able to see if they have some longevity or not.

Noyes- to speak to that, January 1<sup>st</sup> is when the amendment goes into effect.

### 10 Open Discussion

2014 – a couple of weeks ago, I got my second tattoo; it took 20 min. I could get 13,536 of the same tattoo or every person of the senior class could get 21 [until graduation]. That was

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probably the most complex math I’ve done in a while. 99 nights is coming out of December 6<sup>th</sup> in the aula. It’s a chance for seniors to gather with cheese and wine and other snacks to present the senior gift.

2016 – I want to congratulate Jewett and the house team. I abstain a lot. You only have to abstain if you have a personal conflict. That is a lie; everyone has a right to abstain. In particular, I abstain when I don’t agree with the process. Don Marsalus’s email. The email made me upset because I think the school should do everything in its power to make sure hunters don’t come into our space. There should never be any threat of hunters coming in. there are cameras more needs to be done to prevent that from happening.

Activities- for current pre orgs, I and activities committees, that we suspend the current bylaws. I move to suspend the current bylaw so that way for semester pre-orgs can have just one event this semester says opposed to two.

Socos- do we need to do that if...

Activities- Oh yes, forget this then.

Strong – this Saturday 10-2 blacklight ball. Black light, like classy day glow but not. In the aula. Cushing- it was my boyfriend [insert name] who caught the hunter on camera.

Activities, speaking as Stephanie, next Saturday is my senior recital, at 4 at skinner please be there.

2015 – 2015 and 17 are doing a joint mug night as tradition suggests, going to be this coming Saturday. It’s awesome because after you leave the blacklight mug, you’ll be here. The theme is chrome. Not the browser, the shiny one.

Finance – taking off my fiancé hat, I am also the manager of the Student leader space, Shiva. If any of your orgs or houses want, the Shiva is available. Anything that is remotely related to something about the Shiva rave is out of my hand. All weekends before spring break. I know the deadline passed, but we still have openings.

Main – there will be 20 glow sticks.

Casey – we’re actually going to buy 100, class council.

Joss - I want to congratulate myself this weekend

SL – Happy Birthday to 2016, and Strong.

Ops. motion to adjourn. Motion passes.