

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Council Agenda for February 9, 2014

Time: 7:00pm

Location: College Center 223

“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” – Maya Angelou

1 Call to Order

Start time – 7:04pm

Roll call – 2106 proxy TAs proxy

2 AttendanceOperations

3 Consent Agenda

a. Generation (Pre Org).....(\$200/\$30)

b. NSO (Community).....(\$4500/\$5650)

c. Habitat (Discretionary).....(\$1855.32/\$1855.32)

d. Miscellany (Discretionary).....(\$0/\$2000)

e. Fly People (Discretionary).....(\$451/\$811)

f. Conference to MEChA\$350

g. Collaboration to Islamic Society\$125

h. Christian Fellowship (Capital).....\$499

i. All College Day (Discretionary).....\$2000

j. Minutes from 2/2/14

Consent agenda considered approved.

4 Forum with Stacy Bingham, Director of the Career Development Office(45 min)

Stacy – director of the career development office since last may. –Been here since 2003, in a variety of different positions... Our peer institutions are struggling with some of the same issues [that we have]. As always the case, some are further ahead and some are further behind. One of the reasons why the director search took two years was that the dean of the college and others here wanted to come together to think about life after Vassar. We had an external review, fall of 2012, a full year ago. Part of my charge is thinking about the suggestions made by that team (in external review).... strategic planning. We offer a lot of the traditional resources you would expect to find in a liberal arts college. I think our bread and butter are one-on-one meetings with students, by scheduled appointment 30-60 minutes or daily drop in's with a councilor. We get to the heart of what might be in a student's mind. When you have a limited staff, it's hard to scale up so we try to offer workshops covering basics- resumes, interviews, networking, etc. We also try to help students connect with potential employers with information sessions. We partner with the alumni. If I had to name one priority area is increased interaction with alumni connecting. We're not specialists in the office, we're all generalist, but knowing Vassar, there's probably someone before you who is doing something you would like to do. We also administer a number of funded internship programs, like IGF. We have the internship grant fund, Tanenbaum and increasingly others. We've been asked to delegate more funds but one of the challenges is in staffing. While we've been very grateful for all the money that has come

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our way, we're starting to feel the affects of [having a smaller] staff. I was pleased that students are also contributing towards funds.

TSs- {unheard question}

Stacy - one of them was our physical space, south main. The office probably looked very similar to twenty years ago. One of the things that they saw was you entered a space and thinking about what it means to be professional in a sad dumpy environment. We don't have great spaces to host employers. Main is a great building but it sometimes doesn't lend itself to have that conducive layout. Certainly something they noted in the past is that we do have offices that seemingly deal with similar things in different geographical locations, like fieldwork. Additional staffing was something they wanted to see additional emphasis on. One of the ways we responded to that speaks to their recommendations- a new website. We can shake our heads really widely in agreement. With any luck we will have a new website by 2014. It was nothing surprising, but I think having the value of having someone from outside [was good]. I think as an institution it's up to us to see what is most important.

Finance - could you speak about on campus recruiting at liberal arts colleges?

Stacy - over the past few years we've probably averaged 20, which is definitely low. At the same time, the whole landscape of on campus recruiting is changing. More are choosing phone or Skype interviews. When you do get on campus employers, they tend to be some of the non-profits, larger health etc. We administered last semester a survey to seniors, and we asked what employers would you like to see here on campus and grad schools. We want to know we're using that list to cross-reference with alumni. I would say there are schools like Vassar who have an even smaller camp recruitment [process] and others doing a [good] job. But it's definitely something that's on my mind. One of the ways that we tried to get students more exposure is by collaborating with the other liberal arts colleges.

Pres. - do you have any plans to talk about collaborating with the fellowship office and fieldwork office?

Stacy - we definitely collaborate. I think that things have been improving in that way ever since we moved. That relationship has strengthened by having reporting structure in place. The fieldwork office reports to the dean of faculty, so for those reasons, it's a little bit harder to think about ways we intersect. It's a matter of having opportunities for regular interaction that currently don't exist.

Pres - one thing our council has been interested in is learning about resources in particular for low income students

Stacy - I think it's something we're thinking about too, and when we're sort of evaluating our programs, and what programs will appeal to different pockets. The internship grant funding is

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a big one especially in terms of socio economic status. The IGF is great but it's not enough. There are other schools out there that offer things regardless of [money]. It's something I've been talking more regularly about. We do a good job at taking care of students during the year, but you look at the summer and think “how am I supposed to have an internship when I need to make 3000 dollars?” I think there are pockets of funding that can help. We have a small discretionary fund for interview, I would love to have another one to get students to travel to interviews... just to have more of that money on hand would be great. For the last two years we've done something with the transitions program. I think that anecdotally, it has been really positive. I think just being able to put faces with names is crucial. Those are students that maybe aren't coming with family connections [in ways others have]. Every student sometimes needs to be empowered, but I think sometimes students who don't have someone in that career needs [more].

2014 – you mentioned earlier about projects for seniors, would you mind giving an overview what's to be expected?

Stacy – based on survey results, we designed a program for the seniors. There will be a series of workshops [that will be about different topics]. We have a Vassar alum coming in to talk about [budgeting], a group coming in to talk about how to rent an apartment in New York, the peanut butter guy, and we're doing walk-ins for seniors, a LinkedIn photo booth, and {something else involving alumni}.

Jewett – going back to the recruitment of companies that come... do you know how many science and engineering employers come?

Stacy – very few, I think as that grows, that's an area we can look to expand. There are probably four or five hospitals and labs in New York that are recruiting, and other finance, consulting education, environmental, non-profit little bits of pockets here and there. We have just a small handful of students in engineering. Many other liberal arts schools are also feeding opportunities to databases – liberal arts career network – and that [helps us].

Strong – have you thought about how you could get the word out about [“dress for success” and other programs like that]?

Stacy - it's a small amount of money, which is why it hasn't been widely advertised. We wouldn't be able to meet demand. When we're looking at our partnership with [other previously mentioned departments] {alumni etc.}, that's something a donor can get behind. If we're able to have more discretionary funds, I think we could promote more widely and transparently.

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SL – the class issues alliance, now student class issues alliance, published a pamphlet that had “dress for success” in it. Did you see a rise in people coming? (Stacy’s answer: no) Do resources include fund to travel to interviews? Will lee be here {person SL has previously worked with}? Stacy – it does not [include such funds for traveling], but it’s on my wish list. Lee will be coming on Wednesday the 26th.

Ops – I think that it’s clear there are a lot of great resources that all students can benefit from. But I’d say there are a lot of students that don’t see what they’re going to get out of it. What is your office doing to reach out to students that are otherwise not engaging?

Stacy – I think one of the ways we’ve been successful is through residential programs and some campus groups. So bringing a workshop to a study break or partnering with the house fellows. The programming in the res halls is something we’ve always done. It’s ebbed and flowed. We’re having a good year this year. I think this is a good model year. We received a grant last year to extend the {unheard}. I think these are two ways that I think we’re maybe meeting students. Going back the website, we know it would be the first point of contact for most students. If we can make that an appealing and updated place, we’re going to be helping change the perception students have of the office. It takes time and the best advertisement is word of mouth. As a first line of defense, having an inviting website will help people come over to the office.

Josh – in your experience how do you see social media’s impact? Did VC squared come from your office?

Stacy – LinkedIn I think is becoming this huge place for career networking. We promote it in our office because it’s a great place to find a person’s most up to date information. I think it has a great potential to help students connect with alumni. We know that about 50% of seniors have an account. We encourage students to use it- the free version- to get their resumes up and to have a good headshot taken. There’s a great new feature, which allows you to look at alumni in new ways. It shows you in NY how they break down in terms of industry and who they are and how they’re connected to you. VC squared was an initiative that came forward from enthusiastic alumni. They wanted to help other students be entrepreneurial, it was something that was gaining momentum but started fizzling. Even though it’s on the back burner, we’re seeing more alumni groups forming.

Josh – there was a meet up last year and it was a great networking opportunity

Stacy – there is VCBC, Vassar College Business Council, and there are a couple of other groups. It’s a way that alumni are beginning to network with one another and the next step is to get students [involved]. I think it’s part of the challenge when these groups have events that are ___ for students... sometimes they want more alumni, sometimes they want more students.

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Socos - I read on the website about resources for recent graduates and alumni; I was hoping you could [talk about what kind of resources they have].

Stacy – Our motto is “Vassar for a lifetime,” which means you can always call Vassar in the career development office. 15% [of the people we help are] alumni, from every decade, who will sometimes come back to our office. Most of the work is done through phone, Skype or email- although occasionally they’ll come in. It can be anything from career counseling, students thinking about going to grad school etc. Essentially they have the same services offered to students.

Jewett – is the LinkedIn photo-shoot just for seniors?

Stacy – we know it’ll appeal to other students... everybody can come take advantage of that.

Pres – thank you so much for coming in!

Stacy – thank you for having me!

5 Executive Board Reports

a. Student Life(7 min)

SL – They’re short and good updates. Gender-neutral bathrooms- we’ve gotten to the point where phase 1 is almost complete- identifying the gendered bathrooms and securing signs to converting bathrooms. That has gone to Bob W. to order the signs and he is working with building and grounds to approve. I got one of the signs [and am making a couple adjustments]. Hopefully, in the next month we’ll see the signs on campus. If there’s an interest for temporary signs, we can ask them for that. Phase 2 – I’ll be in communication with them, which would be identifying where we’ll need to do more reconstruction on campus. The whole purpose [is for] blueprints to include gender-neutral bathrooms. Does anyone have any questions?

Royal – do we have any idea what the sign is going to look like?

SL – yes, we’ve been communicating with the administration. We want to steer clear of the gendered icons that are prevalent. Right now we still have the traditional man and woman icon. There are a lot of icons out there and we really don’t like these that much. They trivialize the significance of the bathroom. We encouraged them is to use the terminology for gender-neutral bathrooms and a wheel chair where applicable. This will be in dorms and academic buildings. We’re going to be having a gender-neutral bathroom forum on Feb 19 Wednesday, in Rocky 300, where myself [and others] will answer questions, such as why the school decided to move in this directions. All are welcome 5:30-6:30 pm, and if it goes over, it shouldn’t be a problem.

Jewett- can you send a blurb out to us about the forum?

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SL – absolutely, I think one form LGBTQ will also be sent out later in the week... We talked last week about getting the SAVP chart to post it in places where students will see them. If everyone who represents a house or TAs, THs, SoCos could get them from my office sometime this week, I should have them tomorrow. If those could be put up on the house bulletin boards and laundry rooms. And TAs, I’m not sure what the best way is. Will email work? I’ve also been going through programs with Elizabeth Shrock {sp.}, training in the Title Nine program. There’s a team of people going through training in a SAVP sub-committee who can answer questions. The travel home fund and everything regarding accessible resources is going to through SCIA, but I also don’t want it to be a very student process [when they are already very much looking into this]. I don’t want to take credit for that, even though we’re both working towards the same goal. I’m going to [try to bring them to a council meeting].

b. Academics(7 min)

Academics – the NY times in the retreat, the NY times collects data on how much was used, we’ve consistently picked up over 90 percent of papers. Administration has showed interest in continuing the process. Academics has an idea for the 24 hour space in the library, which is currently not open for Fridays and Saturdays. I talked to Mariam and the head librarian, so the study space is actually going to be open. It’ll happen in two weeks. The head librarian’s on vacation, and when she comes back, some things need to be handled. The newsletter will be out 100-150 copies first. We’ll see if we need more. Students ____ applications have been emailed to the campus at large. Applications open on the 10th and close on the 24th. Please send the emails out. The major fair is 1-4 30th of March or 5th of April. More details follow soon. Student feedback for the ___ project will go into force for 2019 or 2020. Professor Edwards is coming to academics tomorrow and she’s going to give us surveys, then on 23rd to council.

Finance- you’re amazing and you do a great job

Aca- that’s the most important update, just kidding

6 Approval of Pre-Organizations.....Activities (10 min)

Act – the activities committee received about 22 applications. These in front of you are the ones we feel comfortable with and would like to see as pre-orgs this semester.

Pres- we’ll do it like the consent agenda. If you have a concern for one, we can remove it. Does anyone have a pre org they’re concerned about? (Nay) All in favor of approving pre-orgs – all in favor.

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Finance – just a reminder in order to receive funding for an event, they must apply 3 Sundays before event. 100\$ 1st semester and 200\$ second.

7 Organization Debt Amendment.....Activities & Operations (10 min)

Act- amendment from way back when. This amendment is to prevent orgs from being ____ immediately... Saying they will need to face disciplinary action as we feel is appropriate.

Pres – we’ve already presented it once so now we can vote... All in favor and motion passes.

Raymond – [a different] amendment we talked about in ops. We’ve been talking about election eligibilities since the special election. This amendment makes it so anyone in res life in elected position cannot be in a vsa elected position except for joint committee positions. The reason we did this is because we feel we should be opening up positions so more people can hold them instead of the same people.

Pres – well bring this up again next week.

8 Appointment of Jewett Vice President Operations (5 min)

Ops – (finance exits) there was only one applicant for the vp position... we met with them. We came to the decision that we would not at this time like to recommend appointing anyone to fill the position. “7 deadly sins” is coming up soon and if we’re unable to appoint a person now, the function for vp has been diminished. Jewett seemed to believe the house team [was doing well]. There’s nothing wrong with the applicant but we didn’t feel as a committee he would be particular excited to work on large event planning. We’re closing the position.

9 Appointment of 2016 Secretary Operations (5 min)

Ops – we interviewed both. We are recommending Crystal Taylor. She Skyped in, and she has experience with understanding the vsa. She seemed to have a good understanding of the responsibilities of a secretary and other things other than just note-taking. She had a great a response {where she spoke about how} she was going to balance her own personal beliefs and represent her constituency. We thought the other person was fantastic, but they would need more training for the job.

Pres – recommendation to appoint Crystal Taylor to be a 2016 secretary. All in favor {except for Strong and Finance who are not in the room}.

10 Conversation about VSA Audit Operations (15 min)

Ops – I know that a lot of you are interested in the audit. Just to introduce where we’re at, toward the beginning of the year, and as time went by, it’s a complicated messy thing that involved dealing with different people. Also the enthusiasm for the project has been great from the council, but not outside of council. But then, between the special elections, losing people who were involved in the project and basically the non stop appointments we’ve done, it’s been difficult to get it on track. I want to hear ideas that people have for what things they would like

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to see come from an audit, ideas for what they want to see happen, and time frames they would like to have it for.

TS – given the fact that the audit is a big project and has taken a while, would it be valuable to do smaller things we can do as a council, smaller audit where we can constructively and actively be improving ourselves? ... Looking at the relation between the students and vsa...

TAs – I’m wondering what direction Ops was looking at taking it last semester

Ops – the initial committee was formed and since it’s a committee with the goal to look at diversity on campus and how we’re dealing with it or not dealing with it, it wasn’t the perfect body. Then work with the previous vp for student life, we made progress at building a committee that was diverse where people were different. We found a professor who has done many audits. Then the vp for sl changed and all that work collapsed including conversations with this professor. We went through this period of unclear communication. Now this semester we’re trying to rebuild and figure out a direction

Ths- something that worries me is I was wondering if there was a timeline or a way in which we can make sure concerns we have as a council are brought up next year.

Ops – I don’t have an answer to that question but I agree it’s extraordinarily important.

Joss- I know a lot of money was going into this, so what happens to the money?

Ops - generously the dean of college office has pledged to give us money when we needed it. As vsa, we would [also contribute... it would combine to \$15,000 which is fantastic. It’s money that was pledged not that exists, so we don’t have any money.

Lathrop – I know you said that the conversations with the external auditor fell through. I was wondering where that was going to go, if you’re going to find another person. It seems like a large component, and if we can’t address that, I feel like we can’t address any of the audit.

Ops – that’s kind of where I’m at, but if the idea of getting an external auditor is something interesting, I think... we just scared him, he felt we weren’t organized. But we can talk with him seeing if we could rework our relationship with him. There are also other resources and other professors [who know about audits].

Lathrop – you mentioned it was a popular field of research. Is this something a professor would like to do?

Ops – we’ve been looking for professors here, but the value of an external auditor is that they’re looking at a new thing. The benefit of a professor is that they know what is going on

Jewett- I’m in favor of us trying to do more things. Since it’s the students’ money we’re spending on this, for an external auditor, I feel we should ask the campus if they would like to do this than just start changing within rather than going to an external person and spend money

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Ops – it was meant to be a direct response to students’ claims, but we can never get too much student response.

Davison – what are the kinds of ideas for the restructuring of vsark as a body. Is this something we’re going to scrap? If there are ideas, how can we build it as a body so it can last?

Ops – this kind of idea has come up, that would hopefully be the building off point. Then once we have interested people in a room, that idea of organizing ourselves isn’t that hard. We just need to bridge the gap of getting interested people.

SL – we also need to make sure this continues next year if we’re not guaranteed to be here next year... I was going to ask if we could just say ideal things we would hope to get out of this audit.

Ops - we just want to hear thoughts. Thoughts are great.

TS – I think it’s important to consider not what we want, but providing more platforms for students to voice what they would like to get out of the audit. Maybe that would be a nice way at going about this, seeing what would be needed.

2015 – with this, we have a chicken or the egg problem. If you want to know what the students think, we either misinterpret when we hear students or if we bring an auditor we will have data but... at this point I think it was clear last year that the student body as a whole wants this. I think we as a council should probably commit to this again

THs- it would be great if we had a forum or a big campus wide thing, especially what they want to see.

Raymond – I agree with THs. In October and Nov when we tabled, what were the results for that?

Ops – the most popular answer was that vsa was racist, but it was done at the beginning of the year so maybe perceptions have changed. We still have all of them, so we can look at them. We got pretty non-functional answers. I mean, to me, the most useful ones were the ones who showed a misunderstanding of what the vsa does. It’s a problem.

Pres – another thing someone mentioned is that when we’re doing elections, communication to student body, trying to use that as a source for feedback. Asking questions, communicating anyway with the student body. People don’t usually respond to my emails but that’s okay.

Jewett- an idea, is there any way that at the ending of pre-reg there can be a box for that?

Pres – I think the faculty would revoke

Acad – we can ask, but I will tell you that ask banner technology is ancient and delicate. What’s the harm in asking; they say no to so many things.

Ops – something doable – need mike to confirm - we can put it on budget applications

THs – I’m wondering if getting the administration help can foster some dialogue with students.

Ops – that’s something we can talk about

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Davision – when we do decide to restructure vsark, we should try to involve some people that feel marginalized and not represented by vsa... [people who feel] that their voice is not significant in this council.

Open Discussion

SL – I missed an update, we met with Cappy the other day, and we asked about the possibility of making some vsa work study positions. Cappy didn't say no. If we could show it is a student eligible work student positions for exec, different than the head of vice or any other org, should be an exec position, we do have a change. If we have students that are interested ____.

Davision – can ____ for other positions

SL – I think student-fellows is a budgeting issue but there is interest in that. A lot of reasons for fall out are because of the time commitment, too much. I would definitely be willing to have that conversation with Louis

Pres- we talked about how they're going to be serving food at late night at the Deece, starting this weekend, there will be three weekend trial period, where you can go to the Deece and order hot food. You can order wings or French fries. It'll be from 10/11-2, Thursday Friday Saturday of this weekend and 2 others. If that does go well, that'll be something we implement. I'll be sending out more information.

2014 – my favorite movie is “Alien” with the run time of 117 min... if I saw this movie till graduation, I would have seen it 1,287 times till then. In other news, 100 nights is this weekend, Saturday night, food and cocktails and fancy stuff in alumni 8-10. Then 11-2 the Villiard room party a couple of senior council members have drafted a letter to dean Dunbar about commencement costs and alleviating costs. Stephanie George...

Stephanie – Estello and I... the idea is to make commencement affordable, either by subsidizing or waiving costs. We've talked to Luis Inoa and he seems excited.

2014- The letter is going to go around, you can sign it to endorse it.

2015- the 2015 class council for Valentines Day... we have cans of Crush, you can send someone a crush. You should all do this... if you pay \$1 for a can [to be sent anonymously, but the person receiving the can can pay \$1 to find out who you are], you can send it anonymously for \$2 [without the receiver being able to pay a dollar to find out who sent the Crush]. All proceeds go to a local domestic violence charity.

Raymond- I know you guys had a seven sisters Skype thing... are there plans to have a spring conference?

Pres- they can't all afford to go, but there are communications for different projects. There are three committees- one is activities, one if public relations, and another is alumni outreach. If everyone wants to do anything with that, let me know.

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Raymond – student bill of rights, we had a meeting on Saturday, speaking for Cushing and myself, and there was a disappointing turn out. We were especially disappointing because we gave the space for people to come and they didn’t... we would like for people to come this Sat 2 at UpC.

Jewett – for activities, when is the activities fair?

Act – this Saturday 11-2 in the Villiard room. There will be posters up. Thank you to Strong and Cushing for the amendments brought forth. Thank you to Ben.

Main – for acti., how many pre-orgs applied to table?

Act – about 7 of them , existing pre-orgs, and all new pre-orgs have a spot.

Main - were there any pre-orgs that were rejected to table?

Act – we preordered 40 tables and the others, we set them aside, so we actually have 12 spots left, so houses can table.

Royal – wanted to congratulate Joss for battle of bands

SL – the Vassar devils are doing their annual Valentinagrams 5\$, wake up friends from 5-8 o’clock. We’ll be tabling in the retreat.

Jewett – motion to adjourn, all in favor.

End time: 8:30