

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Council Agenda for November 2, 2014

Time: 7:00pm

Location: College Center 223

“Whatever you are, be a good one”- Abraham Lincoln

1 Call to Order

Start: 7:03

2 Attendance Operations

3 Consensus Agenda

- a. SJP (Collaboration)..... \$400/\$393.75
- b. Vassar Chess Club (Capital)..... \$199.75/\$199.75
- c. LiNK (Speakers)..... \$200 less contributions from other orgs/\$200
- d. Hip Hop 101 (Budget Approval).....Approved
- e. QCVC (Collaboration)..... \$900/\$1000
- f. VISA (Collaboration)..... \$417/\$592
- g. Act Out (Conference)..... Tabled
- h. Hype (Discretionary)..... \$500.64/\$500.64
- i. Minutes From 10/26/14

Finance: Going through, first fund app for SJP was to put on a performance, they requested that amount of money and we gave them \$400 because that made more sense. They are bringing in people to put on a show. Chess club needed chess boards, chess pieces, and chess clocks. LiNK wanted to bring a speaker but haven't heard back yet. Presumably they will get funding from other sources. Hip Hop 101 submitted a budget approval. Just so you know, whenever an org wants to spend more than \$5,000 on a single event we need to approve it, and we did. VISA was to take people, they are collaborating with the outing club, taking international students and their host families on a hiking trip. We tabled Act Out. Basically a bunch of orgs want to go to a conference in Denver, and they all wanted to submit fund apps. We don't send people from different orgs to the same conference, so we are waiting to get a joint fund app and we will deal with that when it comes in. Hype needed to buy clothing for a performance. Does anyone remember QCVC? It was for a music performance including student performances and it is going to be really cool.

President: Does anyone object? We will assume it is passed.

4 Forum with Interdisciplinary Arts CoordinatorAriel Nererson (30 min)

President: Unfortunately, she had a last minute thing she told us about this morning, so we will reschedule.

5 Executive Board Reports

- a. Academics.....(7 min)

Academics: We are hosting an event every year, every year since last year. We host a peer advising diner during fall pre-registration. It lets students get information on what classes to take and what to major in. We are hoping it will be on Monday, November 10th, at 6:30pm in UpC. There will be lots of food, if you are a peer advisor I will be emailing you, if you are not a peer advisor and are a junior

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or senior sign up because we need more people. I mentioned a goal this year is to look at and rethink how much information we give students about courses, so in an effort to do so we are working towards creating a syllabus archive. We are also working with a student outside of academics, who had a meeting with Cappy, and Cappy said that we should do this. So we will be working with that. Students and professors can submit all past syllabi, they will be online somewhere, so everyone can see and use them. Lastly, the newsletter, we have decided to make it a yearlong affair. There will be something in the fall, a preview, excerpted, and much more rough around the edges, that will come out still. We will try to get a lot more submissions for the spring and it will be pretty great. If you want to be in the fall preview, submit to me by November 10th. The theme is vision in case you forgot.

b. President.....(7 min)

President: Not much has been happening, most stuff has been shared through other members. There is a list. I met with trustees a few weeks ago, the most important news is probably that Meryl Streep has resigned as a trustee. She had too many movies and couldn't come for another year. They are looking a lot at Vassar Post-Grad, and want to create better CDO options, and recognize that we don't do a lot to support grads after they graduate, so that is their focus. They are excited about the interdisciplinary arts program, and talked a lot about the trailer. It will be used for art, performances, possibly graffiti. It will be movable, it moves around. It is really great, apparently people can go in and watch the performances. They've also been talking about financial aid, there was talk about the story in the NY Times about Vassar being very accessible, but they and also talked about how to make it more accessible once students are here. There are conversations about what it means to bring students to campus and then support them when they are here. Next, Cappy's fund for dialogues, you got an email about it, I'm going to send an email in a few days about the requirements. If you know anyone, definitely something you should look into if you have ideas. There is a conversation around campus planning, they brought a man in who will come to council next week. He's been looking at campus master planning, including buildings, grounds, architecture, but also how the campus can be used, how to use space more effectively. That is the big conversation on the circuit this year. Lastly, the Seven Sisters conference is this weekend, Operations is going, so that is happening and hopefully we will get good ideas out of that.

6 Assorted Appointments Operations (20 min)

Operations: BOEA met today to interview people for the safety and security advisory council, and also for the Class of 2016 Vice President. For council, we interviewed 6 candidates, and decided on Abi Kohn and Anveshi Guha. Anveshi organized a forum about racial profiling and that is the whole reason the council now exists, so that was a strong reason. For the other student we chose, she is a sophomore, and she had lots of ideas for creating dialogue, and was involved in student labor dialogues last year.

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Finance: Can you tell us who makes up the council?

Operations: There are 6 members, 4 are faculty/administrators, and 2 student reps. For 2016 there was one applicant, Kathryn Marshall, she has lots of experience and lots of ideas, and we think she can jump in and fit well with the 2016 class council.

2015: Can you talk about why you didn't choose Brian Kube?

Operations: We kind of felt like he didn't really understand what the function of committee was going to be. We asked all candidates about racial profiling, and he didn't really have any ideas and didn't understand that that was a lot of the reason why the council was created.

President: Any other questions?

2017: This was appointments by BOEA, right? Is there a reason why they are not on the consensus agenda?

Operations: They are, this is separate. This is a separate consensus agenda.

President: So does anyone object to this consensus agenda? Alright, it is assume passed.

7 Open Discussion

Finance: Two announcements. First Noa Meyer, Vassar Grad from 1996 is coming to campus this Tuesday to speak about her life and career. The event is sponsored by the VSA and co-sponsored by a lot of other orgs. She is from Goldman Sachs, and runs one of their charitable programs, the 10,000 Women Program. It is the largest program in world focused on economically empowering women, giving them access to management training and capital. One of the largest issues in the developing world is women trying to get loans. She is one of the most prominent Vassar grads alive right now. You should all come, it is Tuesday at 6pm in Rocky 200. There are blue posters around, the talk is about the power of women. Second, I'm growing concerned about the state of security on this campus. Especially with regards to the fact that most people don't understand their role and power. Maybe the best way to address this is to go to the safety and security advisory council, but I do think it is our job to talk about these issues. One concern is that they are posted outside of rooms instead of patrolling. I understand that during certain times security needs to be heightened, but when that stuff is happening the students should be informed, students should know their rights, for example if they can go in room a unannounced, if they have to knock, most people don't know and when they are in those situations they are scared. I don't think that is a good thing, so it should be discussed at some point.

President: We will bring them to a forum, we usually do.

At-Large: Students can actually request for security guards to sit outside of their rooms if they feel unsafe. I am not sure if the instance was that, but that could be something that is going on.

Finance: For some context, one was posted outside my room that was not requested, it was very bizarre. They were there for a half an hour, and I am not under the impression that they are allowed to do that.

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Main: One, shout out to the senior class! Awesome Halloween. Two, shout out to security and B&G for keeping main safe, there was zero damage.

Joss: I was just going to ask if anyone wants any ice cream. If you want any I'll send it over, especially you guys across the room because we've been passing it around.

Operations: Anyone going to the Seven Sisters Conference, stay a few minutes after.

Student Life: Once again, thanks to 2015 and the senior class council for a wonderful event. Two, there is a large stack of posters in front of me. This is an embarrassing confession, Julian Williams' name is spelled wrong, so it is up to peoples discretion if they want to use the old ones or get the new ones. It is not a good mistake, but all the information is correct. If you would like to have some on Student Fellow doors, I have yet to get them stamped for bulletin boards yet, but if you want to give to your Student Fellows, I would encourage you to. This is what the Student Life committee has been up to, more or less.

Cushing: I actually put an S on all of mine. Also, amazing poster, thank you for that. Two things, one, Cushing is hosting an event on December 5th, it is an open art space, any kind of art submissions are welcome, so can you please tell your people whoever they are to submit art to anyone on Cushing house team, that is allowed. We want to get them going from now so there are many submissions. Second, two of the student fellows on my house team were really concerned that there wasn't enough EMS members on Halloween. They tried to call EMS and they took a long time to get there. Also, one of the fellowees didn't want the whole EMS thing with the police and entire crew. The Student Fellow went to the CRC desk to find any member of EMS to take care of this very drunk student. Security couldn't find anyone, so they sent a security member, and the student acted not drunk for five minutes, security told us the student was fine, and left. I wanted you to all know that that is a concern, that the number of people wasn't enough.

Student Life: We all owe EMS a huge goddamn thank you, they are a student org, these are our peers. They sacrifice time, energy, weekends, nighttimes, and are never thanked by anyone. I understand why there aren't long lines of people joining. I would never give up my weekends to help someone that wasn't my friend, so I can see why that is an issue.

At-Large: In the past at the end of Halloweekend, usually the VSA tells the stats. Do any of you have those?

Student Life: It would be me but I don't have those stats.

2015: I don't have the exact numbers, but it was a normal Halloween.

President: We can definitely ask.

Finance: I completely agree with Cushing and Student Life, EMS does not get enough praise from the student body, but at the same time yes, it is volunteer position, but if it were not fulfilled by students it would be fulfilled by the school, and if it is not adequate we should reevaluate how we do it. The

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school is really dropping the ball, this is not a paid job. If a student has to wait, or doesn't get it at all, we need to reevaluate how to do this. We have all gone through alcohol training, and that is obviously an extremely dangerous situation. Even if the student's life isn't in danger, it is very scary and stressful for you and everyone around you.

Ferry: From what I've heard from someone on EMS, they tried a dif system this Halloween to see if this is more efficient, to try not to have everyone go to check on a call. The person I talked to thought it was working well, but they might just want that to be true.

2017: When they were here talking to us during operations this past week, Kelly and Anders indicated they would like a quick reply on the....(not understandable)... Should we talk about it at all now?

Operations: Student Life and I are meeting with Luis and Kelly Grab tomorrow.

Student Life: The next step is to be more house-team centric. We are not sure of the format, but it is looking like the logical next step is reaching out to house team members to see what is up, and I also like the idea of asking previous members of house team, or doing a delay. Opinions in late October, early November may be fairly different than someone who has done a full year on house team, so that made sense.

Operations: To add on, I am personally in favor to try to get Res Life to not make changes for next year because right now they are really rushed.

Student Life: If you are wondering about what we are talking about, because we haven't actually said it, there was an ultimatum that came out of student concerns. The choice they gave the VSA was that either house officer positions would continue having no contracts but no room privileges, or house officers get assigned nice singles intentionally placed but also have to sign a contract around the 3B's. It came out of students frustrated with house teams and conversations that happen every year in every house.

Finance: For the two options, was there any discussion, were we involved in how the two options were formulated? Was there a discussion with any student involvement?

Student Life: The options came out of a conversation with Student Life and Operations, which came out of individual Student Fellows complaining to house advisors. So it was formed by a conversation, but a lot of the push was coming from the House Advisor side, about people who meet with them, mainly a lot of Student Fellow disappointment. We were involved, and we think Res Life will be receptive to a push of the ultimatum to another year. House teams look a lot different from when they started, we are still in a trial period, so they are trying to see if house teams work.

Finance: Do you have information on who would enforce contracts?

Operations: So, that was a big question my committee had. Res Life is imagining this, not as a contract per say, but a set of expectations, within that, Res Life is enforcing them. There will not be a blanket

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punishment, it is the same thing as what happens now with Student Fellows. They have a conversation with House Advisors, they are not immediately removed or kicked out.

Finance: Would Res Life have authority to unseat house team members?

At-large: Speaking as an HSA, we have been talking about this a lot. I'll try and clarify. It wouldn't be contract, but a set of behavioral agreements, and Res Life would not have any authority to fire, because there wouldn't be any, in the status quo now aren't any expectations, job expectations, therefore Res Life has some authority, but in the new status quo that is kind of hovering, Res Life still has no authority to fire. It would be a conversation with the house advisor, an educational experience, rather than dissonance among house team officers and student fellows.

Student Life: Would this mean Res Life can fire people who are technically VSA officers? I am thinking this is not the case. Penalties are probably not as harsh for secretaries as for student fellows, but the idea behind the expectations is to stop the sharp divide in house team structure, and make a more emotionally healthy experience.

Finance: What worries me about this conversation is that everything is vague, as in it could be learning experience, this isn't concrete enough for me to have a decision, were we to vote on this in the near future. Authority given to Res Life to have any kind of consequence for someone voted onto council is concerning. Considering we don't have these rules for any other orgs, like members of exec boards can't hookup with freshmen in their org, not to say that I don't think there are special instances on house teams, but in terms of a VSA org, it makes me uncomfortable for Res Life to have that authority. It needs to be discussed with the greater council.

At-large: Because of all this, Res Life also sees that this is all up in the air, so I think they will be receptive to pushing the decision back a year. I completely understand a lot of the concerns. It is a give and take. There is a lot of in-the-norm stuff house teams do. Student Fellows, HSAs, HFIs don't need to help with programming, the expectation is very vague in the contract, to help and support house team, but in no way do they have to support programming, but it is a norm that they do help even if they are not obligated. Res Life is coming from wanting a balanced relationship with VSA-contracted and Res Life contracted members.

Student Life: Everyone in the room is on the same page at where we are at, we are saying the issue was brought to Student Life and Operations, we are going to speak more with Res Life, reach out to current house teams, and are strongly considering pushing back any decision. Again, your opinion of house team in October will be different than in May, the theme comes up in every house every year. If this system is constantly changing, and it burns you out, and makes them not like this place, we need to think about how to make it better. We are having an intentional analysis of a system that involves many of our students, and we are going to reach out to those students.

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Activities: So completely unrelated, I got a lot of feedback from general students, and a lot really enjoyed the programming. Good job and thanks for keeping your constituents safe, providing food, and thanks for coming to the carnival, and also take a cupcake if there are anymore left.

President: On that note, you are going home!

Student Life: Take posters!

End: 7:48