

# VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

## Council Agenda for December 7, 2014

Time: 7:00pm

Location: College Center 223

"There are some things you learn best in calm, and some in storm."-Willa Cather

### 1 Call to Order

Start: 7:02

### 2 Attendance.....Operations

Proxies: Noyes, Socos

### 3 Consensus Agenda

- a. Generation (PreOrg).....\$200/\$200
- b. VCLU (Speakers).....Tabled/\$5000
- c. SJP (PreOrg).....\$90/\$200
- d. VARC (Capital)..... \$119.85/\$119.85
- e. UNICEF (Speakers).....\$3000/\$3000
- f. ViCE Film (Social Consciousness).....\$4000/\$8000
- g. Shiva Theater (Capital).....Tabled/\$7800
- h. Minutes From 11/30/14

President: Does someone want to talk about the judicial board appointment while we wait for Finance?

Jewett: So we interviewed 6 people in person, and one person sent answers in to the questions. Most, if not all, were qualified. The person we chose had really done their research, read through the website, and had concrete ideas about things they'd like to implement moving forward, and was really committed so we went with her as our recommendation.

President: Does anyone have any questions on fund apps? Does anyone object to consensus agenda? Alright we will assume it is passed then.

### 4 Forum on with CCL..... (10 min)

CCL: So , CCL is the Committee on College Life, we are the advisory committee for the president. We make policy recommendations for changes to college regulations or more broadly the student handbook, but primarily college regulations, such as in the past we worked on the transition to a smoke and tobacco free campus and other issues of that kind. The composition of the committee is 6 students and approximately 6 administrators. This includes class reps, as well as Hannah and ... co-chair. We have had 3 meetings, in October, November, and December. Over the course of the first meeting, people discussed the situation of off campus parties and the relationship between the college and the local community, taking a look at what is going to happen with the security audit, and discussed moving the student handbook and college regulations online. It was not highly attended by administration or faculty. In November we looked briefly on the video surveillance policy, what circumstances security or CIS would put security cameras around campus. The idea was to get our feet wet in it. Suggestions were cameras in any place with access control through a card swipe or by hazardous or sensitive material or information, so probably around the two gigantic tanks of natural gas in the middle of campus. Then we went through the Title IX presentation given to all faculty, staff, and

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administration. Julian sat with us, we looked over specific changes this year, related to incapacitation and a number of other things. Worth noting, Julian did think that we are ahead of the curb nationally, obviously he thinks we should do better but where we are at is not behind. In December we had a forum with the committee in charge of the transition to a smoke and tobacco free campus, questions about enforcement, and giving an idea about the timeline, like what plans are. They are giving us the option to discuss what student discipline will look like. They already have a plan in place for faculty, staff, and visitors, but they don't know what they'll do if students violate the policy. We didn't finish that conversation but we started it. An interesting note, basically everyone on campus is banned and can't consume except for in faculty housing, that is a smoke exempt zone. We had a loose discussion about the role of the committee and what admin needs to be doing for campus climate, Chris Roellke was not there. It was under attended by administration, and one administrator has not been at any meetings throughout year. It seems that our membership is interested in making CCL a place that does things, so for example for res life instead of giving an ultimatum, maybe they could pass something through the CCL. And in the future, basically the agenda for the entire rest of the year is on the safety and security management study. It was interesting that there were not a lot of changes to regulations, that is what we are supposed to discuss, one member is the head of the Safety and Security advisory commit, but their prevue is so broad it was impossible for them to be effective, so maybe that is where CCL will come in, like here we'll take some of this stuff.

Main: I thought it was interesting, there is a lack of administration, not in input but in attendance too. The committee can make substantial change on campus specifically in terms of campus climate but it feels like we are not really doing that right now.

CCL: We also discussed scheduling, it might be that they were scheduled without input. For example, next semester is entirely scheduled without us having our schedules in place.

President: You mentioned the changes in sexual assault stuff, incapacitation, what have those changes been, can you talk a little about that?

CCL: I don't quite recall specifics in the policy before, but over my time at Vassar, it has been marketed as that once alcohol is in the picture, it is really not possible for someone to give consent, however, on a legal standard, it is a much grayer picture. What Julian had said is that the policy needs to allow consensual sex, and we need to take into account these sort of things. It determines the question of reasonability versus the amount of a person's ability to answer specific situation questions like the when, where, why, and how. Again our discussion was not a lot of comparison to the pat so I don't really know.

Cushing: I don't know what that means? Doesn't consent have to be sober?

CCL: So the policy describes it as reasonable person standards. That is what our policy is saying now. I think that the change was made this last summer, it was not well covered in orientation.

Cushing: So in the policy consent doesn't have to be sober?

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CCL: So on the books, if a person knows the when, where, why, and how of what they're doing in that moment and they say yes then they can give consent.

President: Do you know why this was changed?

CCL: Our old policy was bizarre in terms of national policy, saying that no one could have sex drunk, when in reality that happens all the time and is often considered consensual.

Cushing: I think consensual is whatever the person deemed it, you can have sex drunk if you think you want to, I just don't understand what a "reasonable person" means?

CCL: The policy as it was before said that even if you had consensual sex when drunk and decided this was a good thing, still technically both individuals would have violated the college's regulations and both would have committed sexual assault.

2018: What defines a reasonable person? How did they come to a conclusion in making this a solid thing when it is such a vague definition?

CCL: I will pull up the regulations and read them. Give me two seconds. We did discuss at the most recent meeting that CCL should push for more education to get the campus to understand this and what the policy is, since none of us really knew. One faculty member sits on the interpersonal violence panels consistently and said that they have been through that training. I suggested that we do not just send out emails, but have programming around this idea and get people to actually understand, including in orientation, the fact that this has changed since we've been here needs to be put out there. I'll read what the regulations say.

Incapacitation is the state in which you can't make rational, reasonable decisions and lack the capacity for knowing consent, e.g. the who, what, when, where, and how of sexual interactions. This includes sexual activity with someone who one should know to be—or based on the circumstances should reasonably have known to be—mentally or physically incapacitated, by alcohol or other drug use, unconsciousness, or blackout. The question of incapacitation is determined on a case-by-case basis that will include an analysis of whether the accused knew, or a sober, reasonable person in the position of the accused should have known, that the complainant was incapacitated. This policy also covers a person whose incapacity results from mental disability, sleep, involuntary physical restraint, or from ingesting substances or drugs that result in incapacitation. When alcohol or other drugs are being used, a person will be considered to be incapacitated and unable to give effective consent if they cannot fully understand the details of a sexual interaction, the who, what, when, where, why, or how, because they lack the capacity to reasonably understand the situation. Consumption of alcohol or drugs alone is insufficient to establish incapacitation. Possession, use, and/or distribution of any of these substances, including but not limited to, Rohypnol, Ketamine, GHB, Burundanga, etc., is prohibited, and administering one of these drugs to another person is a violation of this policy. More information on these drugs can be found at [www.911rape.org](http://www.911rape.org).

Finance: So, maybe you said this already, but when did the policy change?

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CCL: I assumed over the summer, but I don't think Julian specified. Previously, the other person in that position was not considered, I've gathered that they were not amazing at their job. Julian Williams is in the forefront for that sort of expert, and in his work before he dealt specifically with this kind of law in higher education. I think it was this past summer.

Finance: To preface, given that none of us, at least I didn't, know this has changed, representatives for the CCL don't know when it was changed, it doesn't seem like there was a lot of student input. Can you explain the process changing something like this? If we aren't involved, I assumed the CCL group would be responsible for this.

CCL: Technically Cappy can make any changes, we recommend changes to Cappy, sometimes they are respected and sometimes it never hits our committee. To make a change it has to be because of a federal or state law or it needs to hit our committee, but recently that has fallen to the wayside.

Student Life: Not in defense to the changes made without student input, but for clarification, a lot of policies especially related to title IX are designed so that we will not get sued. Any policy that says the presence of alcohol full stop means sex assault would make for some kind of lawsuit, Given that Vassar is currently being sued by someone who was expelled from here for assault. In theory I am all for student input especially on things directly effecting students, but remember the legal context and why certain people are consulted. Julian has a law degree, others do not.

SoCos: Frankly this makes our policy worse. We definitely need a space for figuring out how to address that. My question for CCL is, it sounds like CCL wants to send out an email to make the policy clear, is there a method where CCL can push to make this change or is it more of accepting what has changed and letting everyone know?

CCL: There are a number of avenues, we can ask Chris to put it back on the agenda, but more likely I think, to be very honest, people who sit on CCL are not a representative group, and it might be more effective for the VSA as a whole to pull up discussion or a letter and make that the opinion of the student body in terms of where the college should move forward. I don't think this group of people will be able get that changed or represent everyone correctly.

President: When did you hear about this?

CCL: November, just in a presentation.

Cushing: One, okay, does this mean that if policy changes happen no one is going to know?

CCL: We brought this up in the following meeting that we need to educate, because this was not publicized. We didn't come to a conclusion. One thing brought up that could be pushed, one administrator talked about when they have to go through orientation to make sure they understand policy they have to go through sort of like the alcohol.edu training and have to read and watch videos and then take a test, so that is a possible way to let students know these changes happen. It is something we could talk about in reorientation.

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Cushing: A case by case process... I wonder if there is still a victim centered approach, is that in the policy, how would you deal case by case if that person was incapacitated or not? Is there a statement on whether this is victim centered or not?

CCL: I don't remember that

Cushing: Third, I think we kind of need to not let this go, because I don't feel comfortable doing that. If CCL can't actually talk about this I would want to talk about this in VSA. I can be the point person for that if you wanted.

Finance: So, as horrified as I am by the current policy as it stands, I don't feel qualified to speak on this manner, because I am not a lawyer and I am not someone who has information surrounding this, but what does concern me is that this seems to be a unilateral platform on the behalf of administration. A lot of times I don't feel I have to know because I trust that there is a process and people are looking out for us, but this is concerning to me that we are supposed to be student leaders but none of us or any of the student body were involved in this process. No one even knew about it. In my experience people would ask me questions unrelated to my position because people look to us as leaders, and I no longer feel comfortable talking about a number of policies that we have no voice in and don't even know what they are. The big issue is that we as a student government don't even know the rules, this calls into question our mandate and our ability to effectively represent the student body. No one is listening to us if a major change happened and none knew about it. Clearly there is a problem with the way CCL is treated in the eyes of administration. I was always under the assumption that even though Cappy, the president's office and the dean's office have the final say, things were run by us, and I don't know why they haven't been, given the atrocious stuff happening this semester, the institution is to blame, and I feel very powerless without being treated like a student leader. It is very disheartening, and I admire Cushing's comment that this is not something to be dropped.

Raymond: A quick note, as far as informing people during freshmen reorientation, that has been planned, and it will not be about stuff like that at all.

Joss: First off, I want to preface by saying I'm not mad at you CCL, thanks for coming in and dealing with this. The policy became effective at the beginning of this school year?

CCL: The only thing I can track back, every year at the beginning of the year in my experience, since I check links on our website, they usually put a date. I can check the last time that it was updated.

Actually this doesn't have a date. At the beginning of the year they did discuss changes but the changes didn't make it into the print copy of the Student Handbook, but they are online.

Finance: So the copy given to all students has the incorrect policy in it...

CCL: That's why we discussed moving it all online.

President: They also presented to us changes that have been made, but those were purely that Julian was going to oversee this, but no mention of changing standards of what would now constitute being incapacitated.

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Joss: Do the people who make changes and the people who dish out punishments know that the freshmen are being presented throughout the year, in speeches, letters, flyers, orientation, that consent can't be given under influence of alcohol?

CCL: I would venture to guess no. I think when he makes these changes he assumes the college structure teaches that properly, he isn't a rep of reslife and the person supposed to rep reslife hasn't showed up in any of the meetings.

Finance: How many administrators are on this committee?

CCL: It includes the Dean of the College, the Dean of Students, the intern to..., each class rep, faculty representatives, the VP of Student Life, the board of house presidents person, another faculty person, the assistant dean of the college campus life..., campus activities. 13 people.

Finance: Is there published attendance?

CCL: The committee meetings are technically closed, we haven't discussed, it used to be that there were minutes but they were confidential unless otherwise decided, I can email and ask about it.

Finance: In your experience, can you tell us who has not been coming?

CCL: Jane Parker of Athletics and Physical Education, and D.B. Brown. They haven't come at all.

Finance: So they were also not involved in the decision making process.

CCL: I do want to say that scheduling was a disaster, so it could not be his fault.

President: We as an exec board are meeting with Chris Roellke tomorrow, so we will be talking about this in addition to everything else. Hopefully he will offer clarity about what happened and why it happened, and basically what the hell happened. I'll be sure to update you all, unfortunately this is our last meeting of the year, but I will be sure to send an email letting everyone know how we can move forward. I agree, I don't think we should just leave this. People definitely need to know about this.

### 5 Forum with ViCE..... (10 min)

ViCE: So yeah, we've done a lot this semester, we've done pretty much at least one event per week, my favorites were the student music's Halloween showcase, students signed up and embodied artists that they wanted to be and performed their songs in the Shiva, from film I really enjoyed the screening of *Chef*, there was a ton of food there it was awesome. NoViCE and ViCE jazz collab'd 2 times, really good shows, they finished the last one of semester last night. Special Events had our Fall Fest, very successful, there were rides and stuff to buy on the library lawn. We had serenading, which was under attended. It is worth noting that that was because of the location change and weather. Looking to the future, we are thinking of maybe making it smaller, because it is not really ever going to be well attended unless it is at Ballantine. Next semester, a lot of stuff is coming, we don't want to say names because it is our policy not to, but there is a speaker coming in February, and also a really good screening in February. I would ask that the misc not post it, because there is a section of vice whose job is publicity, and our policy, your taking away their entire job by posting. So we can't tell you. So there's a screening and a large

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speaker in the month of February. And we also have, since we decided not to have a big fall concert, we are using funds and having a pretty large spring concert with a possible collab with Chris Roellke. We are thinking there might be an art fest in the day which will transition to a concert at night. It should be really exciting.

President: I know a lot focus has been on music and concerts, to moving to general campus events, any talk about that next semester?

ViCE: One part of the committee is special events, and they are spending a lot of money coming up, the other chair of special events is Sarah King, she's been abroad, and one thing she really wanted to make happen was the silent disco, possibly towards the end of the semester. Music events are more expensive, so we can't do as much, but we want to have little things, like bringing Instagram dogs, but that is really expensive, but we will try to bring dogs. On a Finance note, there is an antagonism between music expenses versus doing other events, and what ViCE has found in the past, certain acts bring a lot of people, and the talent cost is rising, so in order to make successful events in the realm music, the cost of business is really high. We want to respond to what students want in terms of big artists and budgeting overall.

Operations: My favorite was the hypnotist last year.

ViCE: That could possibly be a thing. One thing looking forward that we would like input on, whether next year, probably next year, getting input on bigger acts to bring through ViCE music. We found this year, we are known for putting on events geared toward the entire student body, and our GB is really into music, so they'll talk about a DJ who no one outside that room has ever heard of, so we are trying to decide if we want polling or focus groups, or something, so it would be really helpful to have you guys as representatives of campus get input in the future.

6 Forum with CAFA..... (10 min)

Operations: They are not here.

President: So CAFA is not here. This is the committee on admissions and financial aid. We will move on then.

7 Executive Board Reports

a. Student Life.....(7 min)

Student Life: A lot of stuff will come up in the campus climate updates, as you all know campus climate is part of the Student Life position. Too much is happening there to give updates. A few things. First, Charlotte the SAVP Coordinator started working. She's cool, she has enough background in data collection and analysis so the transition into the campus climate survey has gone smoothly. The survey is pretty much done, we started with a template from the consortium of colleges we are a part of, so we are working with that, and trying to make our version better than those at peer institutions while still being able to compare data. All that we have left to do is one, check legally what questions can and cannot be answered about perpetrators. This is supposed to be anonymous, but if

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the college has more than a certain amount of information about a sexual assault, they are legally required to investigate. So if on the anonymous survey, someone reports that an Asian American, Native American junior has committed sexual assault, that is probably enough information that the college is legally required to look into it. We are trying to balance that, and we need to figure out the implications. We have also crafted questions about stalking and interpersonal violence, which is taking longer because peer institutions are not asking these questions. We figured that maybe we can get student buy-in and hype to get good data to see what actually happens on campus, so hit me up if you want to see the draft or something, or work with me on this. I am reaching out to student groups over winter break, and we want to have focus groups tell us what they think. Second, is anyone van certified and free tomorrow between 12-2pm? Cool, the VSA is renting 2 vans to help VSU go another protest. I can only drive one, but we have 2, but I can only drive one at a time. Third, there was supposed to be something attached to the agenda that was never sent to us, a letter from DB Brown, which contained an apology and stated a change of policy in regard to Boilerplate. Basically what happened, DB Brown is not part of the Title IX process. He is not legally allowed to know details, all he is allowed to know is if there is a no contact order, because that goes through his office. He knows selective bits, and he behaved insensitively in one of his check-ins about alcohol, so he was going to send an apology to us, in writing, and that if someone is a complainant, they would not have to go to any check-ins with him during the process of the investigation. If for some reason they did, there would be the option of having a SARC person present, even if it was not explicitly about sexual assault. So that's something. This is a very busy time, but I am looking forward to receiving the letter. He chose to go through the VSA, because most students don't totally understand the structure of the college and that DB has nothing to do with Title IX, but it would make him look like he was trying to weasel his way out if he says that, so it should be coming from us. I was hoping it would be in this week. We are going to meet in the coming week about faculty training, with the intention to refine faculty training requirements put forward in the CIE last year. My committee met this past Sunday to talk about Metcalf, and the recommendation of the Student Life committee that 4 things happen. One, secure a post-doc position for at least another year, have another full time employee, and have more hours for the person who prescribes drugs because the wait is really long, and that the college insure another practitioner, because things slow down when they all have to go to one person. The next thing, campus climate conversations have been held but not through the committee structure. Lastly, what we as VSA can do to help campus activists, so I'm sure all of us care about representing people, and I've been thinking about how we can better serve those populations, and the easiest thing we can do is provide resources. The valuable resource we have is information specific about the structure of the college. Because of the people in my class, we couldn't stop talking about..., so the professor let me draw a diagram of the offices and where all of these names go in this matrix, and that can be a really helpful thing, like knowing that Bob Walton does early retirement, and that if you are pissed about the science



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building... and that Roellke is DB's boss, or that Julian Williams' work is informed by legal obligations, not so much what we as college put on him. He works for the law more than for us. So sharing that info, a lot of time we talk about why isn't the college disseminating info, but I'm beginning to think that that is one of the best things we can do, use the knowledge we have to better focus that, and better enable those people. It is hard to change a system if we don't have all have information about how it works. Instead of demanding the college to do forums, we should be making a better effort go out into our community of people, who we are supposed to be representing, and empowering those people with the information we have.

2015: I agree that we have a role is disseminating information, we should play a larger role in that, we should make sure the information we disseminate is uniform, but I have no experience in this field and would like guidance in terms of disseminating information.

Student Life: So this sounds super boring, but reading parts of handbook, because that information is pretty much everything people need to know, and no one reads it. The version online is correct. You can use that. Often we talk about activism and we pretend we are not in classes and that these are people are friends with, even if it is just you as a person, be like, hey, when's your next meeting, I have information folks may want to use, stuff like that.

President: Any specific questions?

b. Finance.....(7 min)

Finance: So i'm going to go through the consensus agenda. Generation asked for \$200 to buy materials for them to make crafts at a retirement home. VCLU asked for \$5000 dollars to bring in a Vassar Alum, who was the speech writer for the second Bush administration, and even though he is a Vassar alum he is still asking for a high fee. Since they had zero options for co-sponsoring, we ask to them to find them, so that was tabled. SJP wanted \$200 for, pre-orgs are entitled to operating budgets, so we gave \$90 because the semester is over, so we aren't giving them a budget for a full semester. VARC asked for \$119.85, for cat heating bowls. It is for water bowls for feral cats that heat so the water doesn't freeze over. UNICEF asked for \$3000 to bring a speaker on sex trafficking, and that was approved. ViCE Film asked for \$8000, I thought that that was too much and that they were underestimating, so we gave them \$4000 and said they can work on that. The Shiva didn't submit a fund app but they did give me a proposal, \$8000 to buy new equipment, so we are going to consider that next week. A note on next week, there is a terrible procedural practice that we have to meet on Wednesday, which also means that we have to end a week before study week, which is very unreasonable to ask someone in the end of November what they will be doing in February, so we decided we will meet this Wednesday, and the way it will be approved, the consensus will be emailed to everyone, and if anyone would like to come discuss you are welcome to come and then we will go ahead and approve it so it is an easier process. If you have any issues with that bring it up now or at the end. Other updates, the 3 audits, all of them should be completed, the ViCE one is wrapping up,

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and what will come out of those is a 1-page report of the org that will be presented to council next semester. The idea is that they spend a lot of money and everyone here should be very aware of what they've spending it on in case your constituencies are interested. There will be more next semester. Hip Hop 101 will be one of them. This semester was WVKR, ViCE, and the Misc, and the ViCE audit will be yearlong. I am closing the finance office on wed, after the committee meeting, and I will continue to approve reimbursement requests and direct pay sporadically. I will be closing email on Friday. If you have stuff you have not been reimbursed for, or if you need to send a check, do that before the end of this week. Try to get in touch with me. So, the committee this semester worked very well with the new structure, I'm happy with how it worked, and if people are interested in joining you can if you are a council member. The SIRC meeting is Tuesday to discuss divestment, I will send out an email with an update on that.

8 Updates and Conversation on Campus Issues .....President (20 min)

President: Obviously, last week was very heated, on a number of different fronts there are issues, and before we start I encourage you all to utilize resources on campus, Metcalf, Cares, TLC, and many more. Take advantage of those and informal resources like professors, friends, administrators, people you feel comfortable talking to. This can trigger a lot, so get the support you need. Do you want to start with updates?

Operations: So I had a Google hangout with the Seven Sisters, to get ideas about things we could be doing. Some things I gleaned from that, I think it would be good if administrators held a space for healing like last fall. It was in this room, and gave people a chance to talk about feelings and help administration make an action plan, which could be really helpful. The VSA can provide resources to orgs, for example renting vans for VSU. They suggested a memorandum, to outline issues and make clear recommendations, or be using our position to support various groups already working on these issues. One thing Bryn Mawr is doing, they hold a hot topic forum after council, and they advertise it, some topics have been race and mental health. They bring in students to facilitate, it is sponsored by student government and shows they care. People here talk about how we don't talk about big issues on the council floor so that is a way to do that. We already have diversity training for administration, faculty, and students. Mount Holyoke and Bryn Mawr have a position in house teams, a community diversity assistant, and reslife has talked about adding something like that. Also pushing for orientation focused on social justice and identity. At Smith the entire orientation is social justice themed.

Administration likes to copy other schools.

Student Life: We are not meeting again in the Student Life committee for the rest of the year, so we were wondering how we as the VSA can better engage. I don't mean marching with people, I mean using our position to support people, so I am curious what you folks think that ought to look like.

President: I also want to say, I've been meeting with administration, alumni, trustees and faculty, all different parties, to talk about these issues. There are different solutions, and clear recommendations

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are coming out from administration tomorrow or Tuesday. They will share the list with me but I don't have it, so I don't want to misspeak, If I get it before it comes out I will let you all know. It will be clear short term stuff to implement almost immediately, so that coming back things will look different and clear things will have been changed. Hopefully the short term will be addressed while we look for longer term solutions. If any of you have ideas you can bring them to me, because I talk with them almost every day. We are really looking for clear solutions and ideas, they want input, so any kind of suggestions are helpful. More concrete things are coming in the near future.

TAs: If any of us does want to support different actions, rallies, and events coming up, given our position on council, it is easy to forget we carry with us a level of privilege that others don't have and that none of us can really, I can speak only for myself, don't forget that when we enter a shared space, as somebody who is being invited into that space, you are there as a person who is an ally or whatever you want to call it, don't forget to step up and then step back.

Finance: I'm sure people will disagree, but what we need to be doing is reestablishing our lines of communication to the powers that be. We are failing our constituencies, one being about disseminating appropriate information to advocate on their behalf. Short fallings come from a combination of systemic issues, at this school there are a lot of sometimes procedures, sometimes something will go to the VSA but not always, which is ridiculous. Things need a categorical procedure where students understand who to go to when they are upset about them, and I think we dropped the ball this semester. We are only realizing now that we are not able to hold people responsible for these issues because we don't understand the college's structures well enough to see where we fit in with them. To be honest, a lot of that is administrations fault for not engaging us in dialogues, but we need to stop focusing on things that don't matter. The fact that the sexual assault policy changed and was disseminated incorrectly and we haven't done anything about that, we need to think where our priorities are. I'm not saying things we do aren't important. I think a lot of people would be horrified to know the limited amount of information we have in this room. Every student on campus is represented by multiple people in this room. I don't think we are doing a good enough job. Things that need to be done in the immediate future, exec needs to bring up that our lines of communication are failing, and readdress CCL's mandate, with each procedure, who is supposed to be involved and who is failing to be represented, and I think we should issue an apology. I am horrified at our level of misrepresentation, I think we have done students a great injustice, and we need to apologize for being so underprepared.

Student Life: Do you think a BIRT forum would be productive? One problem with BIRT is that things only go through if they are reported, so I can say, hey we should talk about this, solutions are being tossed around. I think people on it are probably the best people on campus to deal with this, and it would be better to see it utilized. It is heartbreaking to hear students say, who am I supposed to go to... giving students false hope because it is not connected to student conduct.... act as a mediator to communicate, but it is not a punitive body. If we had a forum, do you think it would blow up in our

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face, would there be too much hostility? I am honestly asking. Any forum with administrators right now have the potential to get unproductive really fast. Is this something worth pursuing? Is this something students would want? Do they need it? or what?

Strong: I think we definitely need it, but I don't think this is the appropriate time. With everybody going into finals, this is a tense situation, and it might be what we need but not necessarily what people want, and we have to respect both. It could definitely very beneficial, but maybe do it at the beginning of next semester.

TAs: I think reaching out to different groups and feeling out what they want us to do, if groups feel this would be a good space for getting something done then yeah. I don't know which groups might or might not be interested.

Student Life: This wouldn't be a VSA thing, it would be a BIRT thing.

At-large: I disagree with Strong. I think it is a good thing for right now. It is going to be very stressful for a lot of people going into finals with all of this on their mind. It would be a way to find out resources if they need to report, and help relieve some stress.

Joss: I feel like since this is the end of the semester something should be done now. It is really frustrating that this is something we have to consider, because we all have to be locked in our little cells, while they throw a bunch of papers at us.

Activities: For the people this is affecting most it doesn't just get pushed off until next semester, even with exams. It is affecting the way pressured moments go anyway. Maybe it should cross over to next semester, maybe have a forum now, and maybe over break form a quick how-to sheet, if this happens these are the steps, and have that given out next semester, to say we didn't forget that these things are happening, instead of saying we talked in December and now we are done.

President: To respond directly, administration is willing to do these sort of things, there is a cafe, a space of healing, and administrators will not be in attendance, so it is a space where people can heal. From there, they are looking for solutions, concrete things, like a BIRT forum. I will definitely bring that feedback.

2018: I like the idea of how-to sheets. Maybe we need a place, a website, for how-to everything, where you can just click on something in just one screen and it gives directions of everything, so if students don't know something, it is all in one place so they'll know. There are so many different places to find information, you need to find information on where to find other information, and it is so confusing. So to have one place, a how-to anything, that just gives directions, would be super helpful for every student.

Student Life: I think that is dope, each committee should build their section, and we could put it all together probably before spring break with the help of the webmaster. One thing, I am not trying to pick on anyone, we do an active disservice by using the phrase "the administration". In a way it makes no sense. If we are in a position where we can name names, this office is doing this, this person is doing

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this, by framing it as the administration, we one, gloss over people who are administrators at Vassar whose politics are pretty good, and ignore efforts of any administrators working on make progress, and give students a bad model for dialogue. People don't seem to have anything against Wendy, the director of Metcalf, so saying administration doesn't want more counselors at Metcalf is incorrect, Wendy wants more counselors at Metcalf. If we are talking about offices, let's not just say administration.

2017: I'm not saying anybody is completely doing this, but we should be careful in assuming that the anger and frustration comes from people who don't understand the school's structure, because in several cases people understand it well enough to know that it is not working, so telling students how the structure works doesn't resolve frustration if they know that the system isn't doing anything. I do think, conversation in a forum with certain administration, in a forum with BIRT, I do think that could be very valuable, but we should also keep in mind that a forum and telling people about structure isn't going to solve problems with administration because that is at a deeper level than not understanding the finer points of a flow chart.

2015: Two points. First of all we need to recognize our own role in this, we are supposed to be representing the student body, so we have a different role than being just angry students, especially when we speak of administration and the system because we are the system, we need to start taking responsibility for anything that has happened. We played role in this semester, maybe we didn't safeguard our role in the system, but we should be moving forward with the way we disseminate info to the student body. The problem with forums, people who are already interested attend, not necessarily the people who need the information. The way we disseminate is really important. Recent issues have been very upsetting especially because people aren't really intentionally trying to make things difficult for any other person, whether it is the people making rules or us or students. This may be naive, but I feel like we have a homogenous standpoint considering the rest of the country, we have unique Vassar things, and nobody wants to see sexual assault, or racial profiling, administrators, Cappy, dean Roellke, and everyone included. When we address these things in council we need to try to work and solve recent holes in the system, because if the student body is not being represented, otherwise I don't know what we are doing here, I'm sorry.

Cushing: After all of these things, I talked to a lot of people considered administrators, my House Advisor, Luis, and a lot of them are kind of hurt that we refer to administration as a whole. My House Advisor suggested that we refer to them as the leadership, or senior administrators, the dean of the college and the president. I have spoken to Luis and Anders, and a really important thing, I spoke to a lot of professors, and faculty is not being respected in this college, but could be, and the women's studies department is willing to hold a talk, about what should be done especially with gender politics, to students and talk to administration and be a bridge because there is a huge gap between us and administration, and faculty wants to fill that gap. Although senior administrators don't listen to us, they do kind of respect that faculty is getting angry as well. We should appreciate that faculty is open to

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talking about these issues, and maybe try to bridge the gap through faculty. Another thing, we do talk about taking action a lot, but I still don't know what this action is, I do not know, I do understand we need forums, but that is all conversation, and conversation has been happening for such a long time, and we continue having conversations, but they don't lead to anything. I know this is not in our hands, but what is this action is my concern, right now we are brainstorming, but there is still nothing. I understand things happen in small steps, but this isn't leading anywhere in my mind, and I want to know if anyone has any idea what a concrete action looks like.

President: These are all good points, and when talking in exec, every person in this room, the Misc is separate but has done great job, every person was elected to be a leader, and needs to feel an inherent sense of responsibility to be doing something. Maybe I'm not seeing it, but there is a lot of talk here, and then everyone is going home, as far as I know. I hold every person responsible, if you're not concretely doing something then don't sit and say no one else is doing anything. There is stuff that can be done, and we need to start feeling a real responsibility to do something. It is incredibly hypocritical, and it isn't going to get anything done. It is easy to point where other people are fucking up, but we all need to stop pointing fingers. We were all elected, and we have a level of privilege, so let's actually start thinking of solutions and not thinking that your job is to plan a dorm event, you got more than just a room privilege for this job.

At-large: I really like idea, you guys need to act. I would as a student like to point out, before the VSA, which is a highly privileged place, I'm not saying that you don't care about these issues, but it might be important to be talking to student groups and student leaders and administrators whose job it is to be trained, and actually talk with them before taking these actions. You do have a great sense about what the VSA can do, but one of the best forms of leadership is talking to students first instead of another top-down approach. I want to make sure that whatever actions you are taking are not just one thing, one committee, one tokenized person get to these solutions. My experience is that what happens quite often, the VSA gets sick and tired of just talking, but don't really ask students or trained individuals if the actions are healthy to the population or productive. So make sure, especially in the most tense years I've seen, that actions are well considered and timed. I am concerned that it is not necessarily about the time but also the quality. So, step back, too.

President: To clarify, I meant to reach out to students, to think critically, and to figure out ways of supporting students more. Supporting students and figuring out who is doing meaningful action and assisting them.

Academics. We often have conversations that will get to this point, and then don't delineate, students are expressing frustration, and in all of this I have yet to see any concrete things. The article from SART and the Misc, that was the first list of any concrete things I had seen so far. So can we use this space now, since we are meeting with Chris tomorrow, to make a list of things we could possibly do. For example, in my division, we want to reopen the idea of a social consciousness requirement, so I am

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going to read scholarly research, and advocate and encourage faculty to start introducing classes by doing pronouns. So if we went around and you said things you want to see done, can we do that? Can you all say things?

President: Okay. Let's all go around. Everyone.

Cushing: I have some things, but would like it if you came back to me.

Davison: Pass.

Main: One of my high school teachers, a sexual education teacher, I thought it might be good if we brought him back. We were hearing things at orientation, and it wasn't great on that front. He's really good at what he does, and we might collab with CHOICE on that.

Jewett: I'll pass for now.

2017: Whenever there are decisions that Cappy and Chris are making that effect the campus climate, such as with sexual assault victims, we need to set up some way to cut out the middleman, and facilitate them talking directly to affected students in an environment where things are not yelled from one end of the Villard room to another. Maybe like, rather than having one of us in a one on one, someone more directly affected by these things.

Noyes: Pass.

2018: I was just thinking, we need to be communicating with administration better. What I've seen, no matter what type of situation, whether it is you guys or the VSA as a whole recommending something or students yelling and crying, action hasn't been taken, or they are not listening, and I want to see them actually listening to us, and communicate what they are going to do rather than giving a vague answer. I want to ask them to hear us. Also, I want to see money being spent in better places. It is going to ridiculous places, while Metcalf is going under. So much money is going in very interesting places, orgs request ridiculous amounts of money, to buy things they don't really need, \$200 goes to an org, when it could go to Metcalf, so I don't really understand how money works but it could be spent better.

Lathrop: I liked what Logan said about a social consciousness requirement, obviously that would have to be developed very carefully, into the academic fabric of this school, because that is what we come here for, and is something everyone has to go through.

Finance: We have lost our seat at the table, I don't know when it happened but it did, and all the sudden big changes are being made with no student input. The problem isn't necessarily the structure of the VSA, but that we have this structure that certain administration refuses to work with, where things have been unilateral without consulting the student body. We are supposed to be the representatives of students, groups, houses, anything involving interests, and there is obviously this miscommunication. What I would like to see, when substantial changes are made, someone asks us, if not ask us or ask another student org or structure, what they think. I know this is an idealistic thing to say, but anytime there are changes in the handbook, it should have to be through a process that we understand. If it goes through CCL, then it always does. I want to say, what is really scary to me,

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because I think 2017 had an excellent point, that people understand the structure and are upset, but a large majority doesn't understand the rules, and this effects students behaviors. If none of us knew what constituted sexual assault, think about what other people don't know. It is terrifying. How does that effect the way people act? Every time I think I'm in violation of something I pick up the student handbook and it turns out that that was updated and no one told us. It is not systemic, there are a lot of really stupid mistakes. I think not publicizing student handbooks is a stupid thing to do, so a thing I want to change, I want to see that one on the table.

Activities: Sometimes I'm concerned, along the lines of faculty and students on student problems, also in terms of faculty, students don't know ways to deal, or the steps to take, who to reach out to, for example when there is problematic language from faculty, a professor says something, who do you talk to about inappropriate behavior?

President: These are all good points. In the short term, we should have a clear explanation of why the policy changed, what it is, and some kind of explanation about what happened, we, everyone involved dropped the ball. I also think we need to address issues on language in classes, pronouns at the start of the semester, and need to start advocating more effectively. Our seat has been lost.

Operations: Something on my mind after the Margolis Healy forum on Tuesday, is the amount of pain for students of color on this campus. I am definitely affected by it too. One of those things, if some of us get hurt we all hurt. We are not diverse in this room, and my issue is wrangling how to deal with this as a student leader while also as a student. Something I'd like to see, somehow, at new student orientation, to teach people how to treat their fellow students properly, and have a tectonic shift on this campus.

Student: Something I can do is give updates every time I am in this room. The gender neutral bathroom committee is still changing, an apology from DB is coming, we are driving students to and from protests, I have been sitting on a faculty training subcommittee. What I would like to see personally is a culture of kindness on campus and one thing, to be able to quote political theorists, revolution is most important... but I am really sick of how we treat each other. This is one of the only jobs on campus where it is an acceptable thing to shame peers for not solving racism, which is a fucked dynamic, and saying the VSA should be more involved in things, I feel like that is dangerous ground for me. What it comes down to is that this is an extracurricular activity. We are full time students, and that ought to be our priority.

2015: ... be as representative of the student body as we should be by having forums with the ALANA center.

At-Large: In terms of being involved in organizing protests, it is frustrating. There are professors who want to get involved, but they are not coordinating with student activists. They have better leveraging but to not have them override, some swoop in and say we are professors, we have power, which is great and can help, but we need more coordination effort, and meetings between those two activist groups.



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TAs: In Student Life at the start of the semester, in committee, we reached out to many identity based orgs, and I think maintaining a clear constant line of action with those orgs is absolutely vital. I can speak for my own self, reaching out to students, if not the #1 priority of everyone in this room, everyone on council, it should be. I don't want to call anyone out, it is not my place to, but this is not an extracurricular thing, this is student voice channeled through us, and if we write that off, why the fuck are we sitting here then? Personally I know of one action, the Vassar Transparency Coalition, will be pushing initially just for transparency in schools investments, but from my view, many of the issues with race, gender, sexual assault, interpersonal violence, center around things not being clear, so the VTC is going to be expecting the VSA to endorse its call for transparency across the board. We can definitely endorse something real and profound and put pressure on people who can make change.

Jewett: I like the idea of creating a how-to type website, because I think yes information is out there, but it is intimidating to sort through the entire handbook, as leaders I don't know what the deal is. If someone asks me a random question I might not know the answer. What we could do, if we all worked on that, we would also gain a better understanding of how things work.

Joss: I want an immediate explanation about why the sexual assault policy changed, and to put pressure on administration to address whether or not sexual assault investigations have been under the new or old policy. I also think we need to be better at housing trans students, mandating training, and more info on BIRT in orientation, how to report bias incidents, and what should be reported.

At-large: Speaking as the outgoing editor of the Misc, this isn't a plug for the Misc, though we have a similar goal to VSA, in that it also serves to represent the voice of students. We recently put out our last issue last week, but we will still be posting online to cover events, putting out letters, and we encourage you to use the Misc as a vehicle and communicate to students about what you are thinking about and working on even if it doesn't make it to the council floor.

President: Yes, and you have been fantastic, I know how hard that is, so way to go.

Activities: Things that have been expressed is the lack of people of color on our council. I am in an ALANA center leadership circle, which meets every other week, and we all meet again anyway for an ALANA fest thing, and being in the leadership circle, a conversation we have had, there isn't a lot of people who know exactly what's going on from our council, so reaching out would be a very good thing to do. There are policies identity orgs are unaware of, and if I weren't there, it wouldn't be communicated.

2018: I personally wanted to go and reach out to the ALANA center and sit in on some meetings, but I felt uncomfortable, I didn't want to make anyone uncomfortable, and I didn't know how to present myself in an appropriate way. So I guess what I'm asking is if we were to reach out, how to do that appropriately.

Activities: The concern you should have is not whether your uncomfortable, but whether they're okay with having you in space created for themselves. ALANA center orgs do want allies, we wouldn't be able

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to survive without them, and we want lots of people to be there to help us, so I feel like, if you ask, and you show genuine interest, and worked to understand dialogues but know your place of privilege, or not try to take lead and stay in your lane, you're welcome, but not a lot of people try to be in those spaces. As long as you prepare...

2015: We had a conversation with trustees about this, how to facilitate without overstepping, and simply being there and not trying to control in any way. Someone suggested understanding your privilege, knowing information before you sit, and not spending the entire time bringing you up to date, speaking up when you see a clear and direct way in aiding the conversation without redirecting it, are ways you should expect to feel uncomfortable, and learn how POC feel uncomfortable in almost all-white environments.

Cushing: I wanted to ask a few things. I do remember some talk about BIRT, would it be possible to create a BIRT database to talk about how we have been responding historically, and giving examples of how we are responding, because saying this is how you can do it is kind of confusing, and also a database for feedback. It can be done online, a lot of stuff has been on Facebook, we love writing things down online, and using the internet is very helpful and lots of voices can be expressed through the internet. Talking about earlier, where the college's endowment is spent for, and making that information more accessible, rather than inaccessible where people who only know about finance understand. I don't know where that money is going, it is a lot of money. We have a lot of money as the VSA, and we do a lot of work with bathrooms, and vans, but maybe about accessibility, we can allocate a budget for that, this is how much we have, I don't know how to do that, but I guess I would be willing to give money from our budgets. Also, having a clear definition of consent. I always thought, and in CARES we think, that informed consent is sober and verbal, and I didn't know we had another one. Whether this is coming from administrators, or NY state law, or title IX advocates, Julian, one definition needs to be emailed to the student body. We definitely need that.

2017: About orientation, I think there should be a great to push for, I had a brief conversation with DB Brown, something that orientation is missing that is causing confusion, words that everyone talking about them knows what they mean, racism, privilege, but there is no vocabulary 101 seminar where freshman are told, when you hear racism we are not talking about what it says in the Webster dictionary, because it is not that, people hear racist and privilege without understanding the definition, and get turned off for the rest of the situation. I remember when doing the identity wheel, it became quickly apparent, that no two people were using the same idea of what privilege was. Something like that would get a lot of the students on the same page and might make more listen.

Ferry: This goes towards academics, it needs to be clear what you can do in the classroom setting when a professor is disenfranchising. Someone who got tenure ages ago, what do you do if your sociology professor throws out the idea of black privilege? That needs to be kind of laid out, whoever deals with

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professors, needs to know who in the department don't even know their own subject matter and make students feel like they're not learning and fighting for their own identity.

At-large: It is important, and something I hear so often, that we talk about problems, and that we need changes with administration, but the other thing, while a huge number of students are very upset, a lot of problems we are having are inter-student issues, and nobody is calling out other students, or educating other students. But I also think back and vaguely remember orientation, so there needs to be more done to help students all four years. This is not an administrative problem but a problem with students not checking themselves at all. While we need to do a lot in challenging upper level administrators, you all as student leaders also need to lead students in ways to take care of other students, because a huge amount comes from students mistreating each other. We are mishandling what students are doing to each other.

President: What we often forget, last year in the library, it started because another student called security, and no one talks about that. I appreciate everyone's efforts.

### 9 Open Discussion

TAs: Wordsmiths has an amazing poetry grand slam, shout out to all the poets for sharing their work and their souls, and a big shout out to the five people who made it to the team.

Main: Big props to Cushing and the greens for an awesome event, we appreciated it.

Student Life: Motion to adjourn.

End: 9:13