

# VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

## Council Agenda for February 22, 2015

Time: 7:00pm

Location: College Center 223

“When I dare to be powerful- to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.”-Audre Lorde

### 1 Call to Order

Start: 7:03

### 2 Attendance.....Operations

President: Can the at-large members introduce themselves?

At-Large: I'm the student assistant to the President.

At-Large: I'm the News Editor of the Misc.

At-Large: I'm the Social Media Editor of the Misc.

At-Large: I'm the Editor in Chief of the Misc.

At-Large: I'm not on the Misc.

At-Large: I'm a Taurus

At-Large: I'm avoiding my thesis.

### 3 Consensus Agenda

- a. Hype (Collaboration) .....\$1000/\$1000
- b. Improv (Collaboration) .....\$0/\$500
- c. GAAP (Conference).....\$500/\$3150
- d. Forum For Political Philosophy (Speakers).....\$700/\$950
- e. ASA (Capital) ..... \$234.92/\$234.92
- f. Minutes From 2/15/15

Finance: So, Hype wanted to collaborate with ASA to do a workshop, which we thought was cool and unique, so we covered it. They will each be paying additional expenses coming out of this. For Improv, they got no money, because this event was already funded in December under a different org, and multiple orgs can't apply for fund apps for the same event, because that would be inappropriate. So we told them no but that it was a great idea. WVCR needs money for a conference, to send two people to SXSW, which I found somewhat dubious, so we needed more time to discuss, and will make our decision next week. The Forum For Political Philosophy wanted a speaker who is really cool, and they are also screening the film *Singapore with Love*, so if you want more info on that go to the event. They asked for \$400 to bring the speaker in a taxi from JFK, we so told them to go pick up the person or put them on a train, because we don't have that cash. ASA bought more kitchen stuff, cooking stuff, which they keep telling me is critical but I have the secret assumption they are building a kitchen...

Punx didn't show up, so we will deal with that next week.

2017: Did we cover GAAP?

Finance: That was for Dark Matter, who already came last fall. So essentially, what happened was they submitted a fund app to have the VSA be the largest contributor to the event, with some nominal, marginal contributions from other orgs. But QCVC brought them last year. To put this in perspective, the average amount given for this fund is \$900. They got \$3500 which was the second biggest request

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on that fund. That is a huge standard deviation away from the average. That doesn't necessarily mean we can't fund them, but it will need extra scrutiny, since they already came in last September. It was well attended, but we decided given restrictions that it would be more appropriate for us to find a unique speaker. We told GAAP we would be happy to consider an app for someone else.

Main: What about VC Soundsystem?

Finance: They said they needed a...amplifier, and I don't know what that means. For posterity's sake, in order to do our jobs, we need a better understanding of what that is and why we need to pay. So they will submit next week with more information. Even if they can give information at the meeting, it is important to have the idea preserved. I look back on old fund apps for a better idea about what we spend money on, and it would be doing a disservice to future years to hear it from only one lens. That would not be very helpful.

Joss: is The Forum For Political Philosophy a pre-org?

Activities: Yeah, it's a pre-org.

Finance: This year since we decided we have a surplus, we are allowing pre-orgs to apply to the Speakers and to the Collaboration fund.

Activities: Pre-orgs get a standard operating budget, but it is a lot smaller than that of a normal org, so they can also apply for funds.

Finance: The idea is that we want as many voices heard as possible, especially through the Speakers fund, so it is not very good when one individual org is the only one using that fund. The other reason, they spent \$1000 of it first semester, which is also above average, and since there are 150 orgs who also want the opportunity to bring in a speaker, we need to spread the love a little bit.

President: Okay, if no one opposes anything on the consensus agenda, we will assume it passed.

4 Forum With The CDO ..... (40 min)

CDO: Hi, I am the director of the CDO as well as the Assistant Dean of Studies. In 2003 I joined the CDO office and have been there all that time. I was appointed director in the Spring of 2013. So I am just coming up on my second year of directing, and I served as interim director in the prior two years when there was faculty changes and there had been an external review. What I thought I would do this evening is give you kind of a State of the Union of the CDO, and tell you about what I see some of our plans including, and then opening up to questions and comments. Sound good? So the effort areas we have really center around student engagement, and giving students more reasons and options to get involved with us early on, from Freshman and Sophomore year on. In the past two years we have been ramping up on class-year specific programming. Something that started four years ago was Freshman Friday, which is a low stress orientation to the CDO to just get people through the door and see that we aren't scary and that they didn't have to have it all figured out. There is candy, and it has been successful with getting new students through the door, which makes it easier for them to come in later.

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Last year we had our debut of Senior Week at the CDO, and that is actually happening next week, so I will give more info about that. Something we are really proud of this year was the launch of a large scale event for Sophomores in collaboration with alumni. There were 152 sophomores and 52 alumni and parent mentors who returned to campus before the start of classes, and over the course of three days, students were able to explore their interests, refine plans, and part of it was industry-focused career conversations led by mentor exports. There were also networking opportunities. We have had overwhelmingly positive feedback, and we plan to fine-tune it for next year, and hopefully serve more students through that program. We definitely want to do it again. What we've realized is that alum mentors are so eager to give back. We would love to create similar programs for students in every class year. I am really happy about how it came out. So next week we are having our Senior Week, and I brought schedules for everybody if you are interested. Essentially, it will be six days of concentrated programming designed to help meet the seniors where they are, because we know anxiety levels this time of year are high, and obviously things are happening for seniors, with the reality of grad school drawing nearer. So we want to make it known that it is never too late to come. Some highlights of the week will be the daily drop-in hours for just seniors, and we will be offering free professional LinkedIn headshots in the Rose Parlor on Monday and Thursday from 2-4pm. There will be workshops practically oriented toward career stuff, but also how to budget after college, how to find an apartment in NYC, and those will be happening tomorrow, here. An external org will actually be coming up to talk about that. This will all culminate in a young alumni panel, at 5pm on Saturday, featuring great advice, and great empanadas. We will be raffling off job-search survival kits. Last year, we engaged over a 3rd of the senior class over the period of six days. I hope to see lots of members there, and also know that although much of this is marketed to seniors, any class year is welcome to attend any program. If you guys have any ideas for junior-specific programming, throw them at me, I am all ears. Sort of the capstone to Senior Week and the Sophomore Career Connections as well is the involvement of alum, and how to make best use of what I often say is Vassar's very best career resource. These programs benefit both students and alumni. Something else that has very much been on my mind, and we have been partnering over the last 19 months as we are really trying to answer this question, is to figure out, as well as in other priority areas, how we can use alumni for mentoring, internships, and funding, because I know they are raising money and I know we need it. The CDO administers in a given year between \$150,000-\$200,000 worth of internship grant funds. Over the past six years, we went from having \$0, maybe seven years, to having a fair amount of money but still not enough. There is great need for the Internship Grant Fund, which is our fund that has least the restrictions and is the most open-ended, and there is always more need than funds available. We were lucky enough to be a beneficiary of the student gift, and this year an anonymous donor gave us \$17,000, and our endowment is between \$35-400,000 each year, but I know students need more. I have been fairly vocal

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about my internship dream at Vassar. I see Vassar adopting the Smith model, which promises one funded summer for every student once over the course of four years. So I've been telling my tales and working closely with my colleagues in the Office of Alumni Affairs, and we are definitely getting closer to being able to actualize that dream. In addition to funding internships, another high priority is needing a discretionary fund for things like interview attire, travel, and financial support with grad school applications. there are so many ways that can impact students. A little money goes a long way for many students. So those are some things I have on my wish list. I am very hopeful that it will be pretty easy to get donors for a lot of different things. Some other priority areas, finding ways to increase engagement with faculty and have better collaboration with them. Ben Lotto in his new position has been working to bridge that gap, and we can also build models off of a successful past, for example the Film Department and CDO collaborated on a career night. So that is definitely on my mind, with faculty. In terms of staffing, like many here at Vassar, we need more support for staffing. We currently have 6.25 FTEs, with an administrative support post-bacc created three years ago, when we were in a dire staffing shortage. We have a fund to continue that for at least the next three years, and it would be great to see that become a more permanent position in the office. I also want to add, seniors, we will be hiring this spring for that position, so spread the good word. We have a good track record of sending them off to grad school when they are done. So I want to start and end with student engagement, and remind you that we really welcome the opportunity for partner events, whether that is with a major committee, as a study break, a special workshop, or to co-sponsor a lecture with a career focus. I am eager to hear your ideas and partner with you. Everybody's big concern when throwing events is, will people come? I think the more the merrier in terms of doing a co-sponsorship.

Strong: First, thank you for the Sophomore Career Connections program, it was amazingly helpful. Also, a lot of different people have asked me as a result of that program why the Internship Grant Fund closes so early when a lot of people don't find out about internships until late May.

CDO: So the fund closes when funds are depleted. We have tried a variety of different models. In past years we allowed students to apply when they had just had applications in versus an internship already secured. It was increasingly difficult to keep in contact with these students, because not everyone is great at keeping in touch, and some students needed different budgets for different applications, so last year we moved to the model of needing an internship secured at the time of applying. I know it is tricky. Last year, the timing was similar. The fund opened in February and students could submit if they were ready, but we don't start reviewing them until Spring Break time. From there, there is a 2-3 week turnaround, and last year our funds were depleted in mid-May. So it is not necessarily that the application closes early, and we are trying to stretch those funds because we know good applications come in late. I hope that helps clear things up. It is usually open and rolling for around two months.

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Academics: In terms of collaboration, can you speak some on what your office's work with Fieldwork and the Fellowships Office looks like? CCP has been talking about field work, and more generally experiential learning and what that looks like at Vassar, and are rethinking that. So can you speak of the current state, and where you see those relationships moving?

CDO: So the Fellowships Office and Pre-Health advising, both are part of the Dean of Studies cluster, but Field Work as everybody knows is not. That is under the realm of the Dean of Faculty, and with the past director just recently starting his retirement, there are opportunities to think about where that would be best situated here at Vassar. The conversation has been coming up. We have been in conversations with the college, faculty, and Dean of Studies around the notion of experiential learning being more broadly defined. We have come to a place where eventually we want greater transparency between the work done in each of those offices. In my dream world, many related offices with similar services would be co-located, so that they are easier to physically navigate, and would be sharing a database. Also, to have things not so clearly defined as internship versus fieldwork. So we are navigating the ways in how that fits here, and we were able to participate in the search for the new interim director of Fieldwork, which has been a great step forward in bridging that gap. We have great faith in the selected interim, and think collaboration can be done in that area.

At-large: Can graduating seniors still apply to the grant fund?

CDO: Historically, it was was underclassman only, but one stipulation of the 2014 Student Gift was that seniors would have to be eligible for funding. We still have some of that money left over, so there is some limited funding for seniors applying for unpaid post-grad internships.

Operations: I have a question and a comment. The question, I attended some grad school sessions and was wondering how that process looks for you. Do they come to you, or do you reach out? And my comment, as a junior I've found that Vassar doesn't have a large grad school-going culture, it is not a thing. So if there could be junior programming focused on that, if you are thinking of going straight to grad school, because it is hard to figure out where to go.

Student Life: I want to directly respond, in terms of working on that, it could be as simple as creating study groups for big grad school tests, for example I would love an LSATS study group, or a GRE type of thing, MCAT type of thing. Would that be out of your office? In terms of connecting people interested in the same opportunities.

CDO: Currently that is in the hands of the LTRC, with Karen Getter facilitating practice exams, but that is not the same community building that you just proposed. We post them all on the CDO calendar. I don't know when they are off the top of my head. They are sporadic, and usually on Wednesdays in the late afternoon. But that is a great idea. There is also a Pre-Law listserv. That would be a great opportunity for faculty as well, because they can provide key advising when it comes to grad programs. We handle Pre-Law, so there are different potential homes for that kind of programming. I

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would love to talk more. Regarding the question about the process of how grad schools contact us about coming to campus, it does tend to be reactive rather than proactive, due to staff size. When they contact us, we usually say "Great, when would you like to come?" and that we are happy to advertise. A better model is when alum co-present with someone from the admissions group from that school. Given the luxury of additional resources to devote to that, that would be the model I would try to pursue, to find where grad students from Vassar go in mass and invite more schools proactively, and also faculty to collaborate where that makes sense. Just an anecdote, the numbers of students going directly to grad school is shrinking a little bit each year. We just finished a massive data collection in 2014 and the outcomes look like, that was definitely one of the trends. We have a pretty good knowledge rate, meaning we know what 85% of the Class of 2014 is doing post-grad. Another priority area is having better outcomes data and presenting that back out to our constituents. We recently got access to a source of data that answers this question, and we have been guestimating that the number of students who go off to grad school, the majority go off, but we don't know what percentage that looks like. We are certain it is greater than 50%, 60%, but beyond that we are not sure. Through a tool provided by the Student Data Clearing House, we will have a better sense of US-based education which could be pretty cool.

President: My first question is, what is the relationship between your office and the Pre-Health and Fellowships office? What is that connection like?

CDO: We are both talking to students about life beyond Vassar, whether that be a job, graduate study, medical school, internships and beyond. Some opportunities administered out of the CDO are beginning to look more like fellowships. So, we, obviously we are both working on an advising model, but Pre-Health is different because she is sort of a solo shop and we have staff counselors who are generalists trained to answer a lot of different questions. There is a lot of referring back and forth. Is Lisa is meeting with a student who thinks they want Pre-Health but isn't sure, she will send them our way to talk to a counselor and do assessments. There is lots of cross-referring. We also share the same database, VCLink. That happened about three years ago. Both Vassar and national fellowship opportunities go to her office and into VCLink. We put all intern/job/post-grad opportunities. We want to make it a more seamless space for people to check out, to make navigating back and forth easier.

President: How long is the CDO a resource we can use? For example, I am currently applying to grad schools, so if I don't get in I will need to find a job. So how long is the CDO somewhere students can go to? Months? 30 years?

CDO: Absolutely. Vassar for Lifetime is our motto. We work with students two months out, two years, and twenty years. We do a fair amount of work with alumni. There tends to be alumni five years out or

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less, contacting us when applying to grad school or making their first transition in jobs, internships, or something else. We do work over Skype or phone, as well as email consultations.

Student Life: Like Strong, I want to say thank you. I used your resume packet and it was wonderful. I am a really big fan of the packet. What I have a question about, is if there is any programming that exists currently in terms of how to do skills valuable for nonprofits, like grant writing. At Vassar it seems like there is a big desire to work for nonprofits, and grant writing is something I really want mentorship on.

CDO: Great question. There are lots of options for more skills-based mentorship. It is just a question of staff and resources. But these things may be possible in the future, so we need ideas for now.

Another big one students always ask for is Excel training, and the use of basic office business tools. That is a fantastic idea. Somebody many moons ago worked with someone at the local library and brought in a speaker for grant writing. It was easy to pull together, and the local library still is a resource for grant writing. As well, we have our own in-house grant writing folks who could share knowledge with students. That is something I would be happy to follow up on.

President: I know one thing students have a big focus on improving is on-campus recruiting. What steps are you taking for that? Because Vassar seems like an ideal place to get recruits, so why do we have a lower percentage than other peer institutions?

CDO: So the process by which employers conduct info sessions and on campus interviews? That has been, all liberal arts schools in general have historically struggled. Vassar falls in the middle pack in terms of employers coming to campus. It is interesting, the landscape is changing dramatically, especially towards nonprofits. Recruit budgets have been cut, and so many no longer do so. I have seen uptake in Skype initial interviews, and that is why we have a designated space in the CDO for video and phone interviews. That is a priority area, and a way to think of overhauling, and has very much to do with utilizing the alumni network. An area particular for this type of thing is investment banks, and this is not a place where people are coming to recruit for that in traditional ways, but will come via alum interviewers. The extent to which we can devote resources to those kinds of alliances with alum in positions where they are willing to come back to interview would be really great. We would definitely like to see that area, grow, build, and do more. I will say, Vassar is a member of SLAC, a group of eleven colleges, peer institutions. So with the notion that sometimes it is harder to attract on-campus recruiters, we will do the group-based consortia group activities. We are always on top of that list, in terms of number of interviews, and number of jobs, so we rock the SLAC consortium. We look to take a leadership role there within the next year. LACN also partnered with us.

TAs: Along similar lines, in terms of grad school fairs, is the culture of that similar to career fairs?

CDO: So, we used to host a large-scale fair, and we did that for about five or six years, and we did it on a day in the Fall. Typically 70-80 grad programs were represented in the Villard room and MPR. It is a

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lot of time and effort to put on a big fair, and what we found was that students did not show up, they did not come. Some schools were actually paying a fee to come in, and all grad programs complained that the only schools getting foot traffic were law schools. I doubt that would even be the condition now. Larger fair style events were tried in the past, and you know, all things find an end and a beginning again. It can be depending on student feedback, and I am welcome to hear it, but it has not historically been a good success. It wasn't the bang for our buck in terms of the person hours that went into it.

### 5 Constituent Concerns ..... (20 min)

Main: Two things, in case anyone wasn't aware, cardswipes around campus are not working. The third floor of Main had the door propped, which is not safe. Something related, because it was propped open last night, people attending the NSO event, not students living on the third floor, were being very loud late at night. I love non-con, but that is not okay, so yeah.

President: Does anyone know why they aren't working?

2017: Two things. The first is similar. When everyone in Noyes got back from break, there were signs up on doors with a grainy picture of two people inside the dorm harassing people, who were not students. With the doors propped open by a rock and now by chair because that didn't work, and with documented cases of people coming in and harassing students and taking stuff, this is very serious and needs to be addressed. The second thing, I heard from many people inside my constituency and outside, related to recent events, that there needs to be a larger conversation about what House Teams have a responsibility to do when students feel unsafe. What can they do without the support of reslife, and how to handle issues when reslife is not communicating. I have never been on a House Team and obviously don't understand their problems, but I heard that from a lot of people.

SoCos: I don't know if this is related, but in the laundry room, the cardswipe was out. You can't pay but the machines work.

Student Life: To directly respond, submit a maintenance request?

Ferry: To directly respond, it is because of the cardswipes.

Strong: They work sometimes but not consistently. Related to what 2017 and Main said, Strong has had concerns recently with individuals, the same individuals 2017 was speaking of, or thought to be the same people based on the images shared. They have been harassing women. Several in my building. For example, one girl, rocks were thrown at her and she was called names that are not appropriate. Another recently had an experience where she was asked if she was going to a party, called a whore, and had a bottle thrown at her through a car window. Regardless if this is not the same people, it is alarming that it is happening. I don't know where to go about this.



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President: I saw the thing on Lost and Found, the picture of these people, and it said to call security if you see these people. Does anyone know what security is doing? No? I'll reach out.

2018: Unrelated, people on class council were wondering why v-print doesn't roll over, and who to go to talk about changing it to roll-over if possible?

Operations: The CIS.

Cushing: I was going to say that we are having problems in Cushing, recently with the bathrooms, and we are trying to figure out how to handle it. Because it is not a service request, it is more that the bathrooms don't have toilet paper and the drains don't work, a lot of problems with the bathrooms, but it is not a service request per say, because it is not that the ice machine is broken, which it also is. I don't know who to go to. My House Advisor keeps saying to send him sixty emails to show reslife, but I don't know if that is the way to go. I can't ask my constituents to send tons of emails to my House Advisor. Them coming to us should be enough. I wanted to ask for advice if anyone has any.

At-large: If it is anything immediate, there is the b&g hotline.

Cushing: We already called that and it directed me to reslife for a service request.

Finance: I live in Main, I have for three years, and always for a period of time there is no hot water.

What I've done, every year, is send an email to Luis Inoa. I say what doesn't work, he says fill out a service request. I then email them once a week until it works. There is a standard needed to be provided for us if we are paying room and board, and this makes these places virtually inhabitable. It sounds dramatic, because we have better conditions than other places, but just because we are relatively better than other places, doesn't mean we are good. There should always be toilet paper and running water. Structurally this is an issue, because there is no manpower to address all of these concerns.

Someone needs to work it out. The only way they can know that is if we are vocal to them. So I hope people will contact him and say what's wrong.

President: Who is in charge of b&g? Oh, we are meeting with Bob next week in council. Bob probably will go fix all toilets himself. When there is too much snow, Bob physically shovels himself.

Town Students: Okay, I don't know if this even needs to be said, but someone came up to me at 4am at a party and was like, "I need to voice this problem". He was like, "I didn't realize how expensive living off campus would be, since they changed my financial aid package", and I think there should be more info and resources just for kids considering living off campus to know about. There is weird culture of almost alienating and isolating off-campus students, we are looked down upon for many reasons, but it is a good option though for lots of kids. Who can I talk to about this? This might already be in the handbook, and I told him that, but it would be helpful to have more resources about the average amount of money it costs, because it is not necessarily much cheaper. What could be helpful would be a spreadsheet, which I could do, of off-campus houses available. To organize a system for people looking into it. It gets to be a passive aggressive social situation for friends fighting for houses.

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Operations: For most schools it would be reslife, but at our school I would suggest contacting financial aid.

President: We can talk about things with Bob next week, because a lot of things fall under him, so it will be helpful to bring up these sort of concerns in the forums where you can speak directly.

### 6 Executive Board Reports

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

Student Life: The big thing, and if you want more info about CCL or CIE you can shoot me an email or talk to me, I would be happy to fill you in. You can even send me notes during meetings. During All College Days, there was a forum on gender neutral bathrooms, and Ramy was the only one not on the working group to show up. So I am wondering how to better communicate these things, given that this thing is happening very quickly, and in terms of initiatives was the most successful ever to come out of the student body, so hit me up to brainstorm better communication, also how working groups can better get feedback. We need to set a system of priorities, like the athletic center, whose update is waiting on finding a new director before making those moves, because the support of an athletic director would mean a lot. BIRT is trying to figure out dealing with micro-aggressions. A few forums with students, maybe in houses to keep things small, because people are both supportive of and intimidated of the possibility of town hall type meetings. We want to promote more face to face interactions. We might have three, maybe just one. SAVP committee met for the first time this semester and set up into subcommittees, for the Know Title IX series, the Color of Violence, and more subcommittees looking at polices in regards to when faculty are accused, and looking at all other kinds of forms of sexual misunderstandings that fall under Title IX. Not officially affiliated with the SAVP office, but the campus climate survey has been focus tested. Much love out to those who were going piece by piece and picking it apart, we are taking those changes into account, and hopefully it will be out in the first few weeks of April. We will leave it open as long as possible, and we are still talking about incentives, maybe a class year incentive, because there is not enough budget for individual incentives, and that also puts anonymity in a weird space. Maybe a pizza party for the class with the most participation. We will spend May and the Summer crunching data to figure out what this all means, and then it will be presented on campus in the Fall. We are thinking about forums and info on the internet, but it is undecided what that will look like or how we will present it. Some committee things. We have unofficial subcommittees. Do you guys want to talk about progress?

2018: So we met with Charlotte and the SAVP intern, and are collaborating to do a poster campaign. We were basically trying to figure out...do you want to talk about this?

2017: So what we decided to go with, and the decision was kind of hard to come to because of the fact that Title IX policies, Title IX will probably look different next semester than they do now, so it is hard to come up with something lasting right now. Basically we decided on a poster campaign highlighting

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the fact that the SAVP definition of sexual assault is intended for educational purposes and the information is different than the actual Title IX criteria for sex assault. It is very important to know before entering the reporting process. We also plan to do a short video, with Charlotte talking and explaining basically the same thing. This is what SAVP defines it as, this isn't the college's Title IX policy, however it is our educational policy. I am not that good at explaining. We are thinking of having Charlotte explain, because it will be easier to understand. I always find hearing and talking much better for retention, and it also puts a face to a name. I know in a few points of the reporting process, you can choose to speak to the SAVP coordinator, and that can be really intimidating, when you are given a name and email and don't know anything more, so anything we can do to familiarize people in the process.

b. Academics.....(7 min)

Academics: The search for the library director is going really well, and we have been meeting every week. It is narrowed down to eight candidates, and we will do Skype interviews over the next few weeks. Then it will be narrowed to three, who we will bring to campus, and have the option for students to meet those people, maybe a lunch. Another library initiative, thesis workshops for juniors. April 1st is the tentative date. We will be giving juniors resources, such as learning how skim 600 pages a week, and other fun things. There is going to be pizza. Going off what the CDO talked about, with the relationship between fieldwork and the CDO and experiential learning offices, Academics is having conversations soon about that how students operate, specifically with fieldwork. Any questions or concerns about experiential learning at Vassar? Student seminars are still accepting applications. There is currently one applicant, which is historically very very low. I am going to get Carolina to resend out the application, and also do a Facebook event. That's it.

Joss: A quick question. Where can you sign up?

Academics: It was sent out in an email, and I can try to put it on the website. The President will send it out again.

Joss: Is it a Word document?

Academics: Yeah, it's short.

## 2 Council Updates

a. Main.....(7 min)

Main: The state of Main is awesome. We are doing well, we had our big event really early last semester so we are on cruise control, but in the best way possible. We have some cool study breaks planned, lots of food, very food oriented. The bigger event this semester for us will be a Week of Love. We will try to do a week in April or May where everyday we do something different, like collaborate with the Deece to get a big party like the one for Marti Gras, a dog day, and other things.

# VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

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b. 2018.....(7 min)

2018: Class council is doing well. We are hosting the Envy floor for Seven Deadly Sins. We are thinking about class t-shirt ideas, and are having a contest for the design. It has to be yellow which is very unfortunate, so we were thinking maybe making it gold or light light yellow.

Joss: Or maybe dark yellow so it is almost black?

2018: Yeah, that is basically all I got.

c. Davison.....(7 min)

Davison: Last week I was out with the flu. Now I am back. There has been some Facebook drama, where an individual was advertising their pre-org. The person was pushing for a pro-life group on the dorm through Facebook and some aggressive marketing. He also co-opted the "black lives" hashtag. So we had a large all-dorm meeting, and both members of the community attended. There wasn't really a resolution, and we are looking into bringing big campus leaders like Judy or Luis, so we will keep working toward a solution. But yeah, we decided not to moderate the Facebook group, and not take down certain posts unless they are direct attacks on students. Other than that, We have a big event in the spring. Get ready, laser tag is coming. I think it is on the calendar. Vassar Events, it is on there. I am designing all the merch, so if anyone wants some, it is coming.

Finance: Are you collaborating with the Office of Health Ed?

Davison: I don't know.

Finance: When will it be?

Davison: I don't know.

Finance: You don't know when or who you are collabing with?

Davison: I can tell you the vague. Sometime spring, and someone.

Town Students: I want to make a comment. I think it is important to not moderate Facebook group dialogue, unless people are offended, uncomfortable or feel unsafe. It is a much bigger issue when you censor. So you shouldn't take that down.

Davison: There were also pro-life posters stamped by whoever stamps them, but not posted in their approved area. So those were taken down by other residents. We sent out an email, saying that posters stamped can be in the approved area but if not they can be taken down. And that is for all posters.

Student Life: Obviously this is your House Team's decision, your decision, but if certain members in the community expressed beliefs that make students feel profoundly uncomfortable, maybe censorship good. There need to be serious conversations on ways that actions impact community generally for that. Just to provide both sides of an argument.

7 Class Gift Chairs Amendment..... Operations (20 min)

Operations: The amendment is on the last page of your packet. Alumni Affairs contacted me, anyway, normally co-chairs are appointed by class council members.

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Finance: Wrong.

2018: They are appointed by class councils.

Operations: Back to the amendment. Alumni Affairs came with the issue that it takes six weeks to begin the year and get people trained, so it is a logistical nightmare, and it is hard to start fundraising, so they asked if people could be elected, so I wrote this amendment. We are not voting this week.

2015: You can try. There is not a lot of interest, maybe with making it elected, cause people drop out, maybe an application would be better.

Finance: As a co-chair for two years, and also as someone who works with Phonathon, I don't think this is appropriate, because the class gift isn't a student government effort. This is not something under our jurisdiction, and if people don't run they will come to BOEA to appoint them, which is just more stuff for them to do, and we don't have other control over the student gift. We don't determine the way to fundraise, so as nice as engaging the class councils is, they used to contact the president and I sent names and they did their own interviews and applications. I don't think it should come to us to elect them or appoint them.

Operations: They prefer that they are chosen by their constituencies.

Finance: But these people don't have constituencies.

2015: It is also important, when working within class council, it works better if they work well with the class council versus being elected.

2017: To the last point, we always change various members, and don't always know if we will work well together. The bigger point, and I don't know that much about how this is supposed to or has worked, but my experience was being told to select two class gift co-chairs. I was given a blurb to send out, and since it was coming from me, the email was probably ignored by most people as most VSA emails are, which resulted in me being significantly past the deadline to get names in, and I extended the deadline I set twice. By the end of the second time there was one person, who said "I guess I can do this if nobody else will". It seems like having these positions publicized and elected would create more awareness about them, and we can communicate better their function. I am not sure how this is supposed to work, but doing it by election seems like a much much better than the way it happened this year.

Jewett: I want to echo 2017. Everyone in class council is elected anyone, so that doesn't make sense. That is not a good reason, just that they should work well together. I feel like that is a fuzzy argument.

Finance: I agree with what Jewett and 2017 said. It isn't important and it doesn't make a difference that people work well together, that is always going to happen, so it is irrelevant. The problem is filling the positions themselves, not in the manner in which we fill them. Freshman are eager to do things, and seniors are more attached to the gift. I think the problem becomes, who are the people we elect as body? From an operational standpoint, who we conduct elections for. We solely represent our

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student government. Just because it is easier for them for us to pick these people doesn't mean it is appropriate given our scope and our org. I don't think it is proper for us to conduct an election for people not under our jurisdiction, to represent the gift we don't have say or control over. Obviously if we are having difficulties finding co-chairs, we should be happy to brainstorm a solution with them, but I don't think this is the solution.

2017: To that, last semester reslife tried to sneak VSA people under their umbrella. We could do the same. To have more sense of student involvement in the student gift. The way it would be set up doesn't seem like very much obligation to the student body.

Finance: But we are not involved in that process. Anyone who is not a senior student gift co-chair isn't involved. The student gift is a manner of fundraising. It is just part of the fundraising effort. They are not going door to door this year because of a decision made, and they don't have constituents, they don't represent anyone to anyone. They don't voice opinions on behalf of their class. They are foot soldiers to raise money, which is fine, but not our prerogative.

2017: My experience was filling in when we didn't have any. It did seem like they had more agency than your saying. They had the ability of underclass co-chairs to not combine all of the student gift into the senior gift. They were involved in several discussions about where money would go. I do believe they have some more influence and agency then you're giving them.

2015: That may be true to a certain point, however realistically speaking, the gift has been combined a countless number of years. While these choices do exist, they are not necessarily equally weighted. Yes, there are options for that, but there is no benefit in choosing that. Ultimately, they can direct it to a specific area, but they are usually given choices by the office. A lot of times a choice would be made, and then the office will say, "Actually that is not feasible, we're doing this instead".

Strong: Maybe I don't know enough about this group and what they do. But why is the position necessary? It just seems like something, I don't know, I don't understand why they can't have student jobs? It doesn't seem like our responsibility?

Joss: If they want us to elect, we should just fucking elect student co-chairs.

Finance: Because they want us to, we should just do it? I'm sorry if some people don't want to be here. If you have legitimate reasons, let someone know what they are.

Cushing: Point of order. Can we please raise placards before we speak.

Operations: These questions can best be answered by the office themselves, so I move to table it. But I don't want to cut people off.

Cushing: I was just going to say, I am feeling very much like a lot people are throwing things out, not raising placards for the speakers list, don't we have a rule that each person speak only twice? I heard Finance speak a lot on this issue and want to hear other people as well? I don't think this should turn into other people getting angry at each other. It is not that we don't want to be here. We want to

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discuss things that are big deals. I think we should table it and get more info on what these people do and whether we need these people to actually exist, Does it have to be filled, maybe talk to senior class council? Lets table it, discuss, and come back.

President: We also can't vote anyway.

Socos: Does a direct response count as one of your two?

President: Generally this is informal unless necessary for discussion. Alright, so we are tabling this. We are almost done. It is going to be okay.

8 ResLife Task Force Charter .....Operations (20 min)

Operations: Okay, this is back. I spoke to Luis and we incorporated a lot of feedback from last week.

We added two to three student members, who will be seniors that were on House Team before and next semester they will be replaced by freshman on House Teams. We also added the phrase "at-least" so that we are not bound by these limits. With that, any questions? Can I move to adopt?

Finance: Thank you for all of the work done on this. I view it as our job be critical of everything we do. Ramy worked really hard. This is definitely a step in the right direction to make sure representatives and students have mediums to express their opinion. I appreciate that you took our criticism and made it tangible for everyone.

President: Does anyone else want to speak to the new charter? Three options. Abstain, Yes, No. Only one vote.

Does anyone abstain? No? Cool.

All in favor? Everyone.

All opposed? Nobody. Woot woot, we formed a committee. Thanks to Operations for putting this together.

9 Open Discussion

Finance: Great. I want to bring up something important to me. The first thing I'd like to say, I am sorry for not raising my placard. Two, we discuss lots of things that some people think are boring. Some, not everyone. We have our own interests, and if you think something is going on for too long I suggest you say so. I am particularly passionate about the student gift because I was the head of the management team, and I have been working with the office and the and people that run it are important to me. It offers opportunities to students that other schools don't have. I am critical out of interest in preserving this tradition. I don't think the VSA is the right body. Another thing I want to talk about, a comment on something exec talked about last Wednesday. The Misc published and will continue to cover changes in faculty policy concerning consensual relationships with students. The resolution it is now, it stipulates consensual relationships between student and faculty are no longer allowed. It is in the faculty rules and regulations. I wanted to bring this up, because everyone should know about it and publicize it to constituents. Also because it is important to have discourse on this. I have more issues

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with the process that this came about in than the policy. Something that professor Lotto said, he said he debated bringing it to the VSA to begin with, I don't think this is right. Obviously this should have student input even if they don't take into consideration what we say. We are mature enough people to be on that committee. We wouldn't say, "I want less work and don't want 10:30am classes", so I think this issue is particularly important to be discussed as a student body. Their reason is that this concerns the validity of consent between students and professors, which is a valid concern, because we have had many conversations and I am still unclear what consent is defined as. But according to this change a consenting adult won't be allowed to have sexual relationships with another consenting adult. This is very invalidating for someone who made the decision as an adult about what they want to do with their body. The question I have is why do they not care what we think? Why is this the first time this was brought to us when it was discussed last semester and the policy submitted December 8th. Why do they think things that affect the student body are not appropriate for us to engage in student discourse on? I am looking further, and will meet with the Dean of Faculty and the head of the committee that wrote the proposal, but if people are interested in pursuing these questions with me, let me know.

Jewett: So a super not boring thing, Seven Deadly Sins this Friday. We are collaborating with seven different orgs. This is basically the thing I care about most in my entire life so everyone come.

Joss: I am just going to apologize for being an asshole on the council floor. Also Battle of the Bands was last night, thank you everyone who helped make it happen.

Davison: Motion to adjourn.

End: 8:40