

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Council Agenda for March 1, 2015

Time: 7:00pm

Location: College Center 223

“The paradox of education is precisely this; that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated.”-James Baldwin

1 Call to Order

Start: 7:03

2 Attendance.....Operations

Proxies: 2018

Absent: Finance, Noyes, Town Students

3 Consensus Agenda

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| a. BAM (Discretionary) | \$85.15/\$85.15 |
| b. Habitat For Humanity (Discretionary)..... | \$2020/\$3330 |
| c. WVKR (Capital)..... | \$1429/\$1429 |
| d. WVKR (Conference)..... | \$500/\$2000 |
| e. Founder’s Day (Discretionary) | \$6000/\$8000 |
| f. Business Club (Speakers)..... | \$100/\$100 |
| g. ProHealth (Speakers)..... | \$1000/\$1000 |
| h. SJP (Speakers) | \$720/\$820 |
| i. VC Soundsystem (Capital)..... | \$250/\$250 |
| j. ViCE NoViCE (Discretionary)..... | \$850/\$1500 |
| k. PUNX (Collaboration) | \$0/\$1200 |
| l. Run Vassar (Discretionary) | \$787.50/\$787.50 |

SoCos: So, first, BAM is getting a subscription for music writing software, and at the end of the year they are also creating a library of all of the sheet music that has been used by acappella groups. Habitat for Humanity needed money to build houses, and we decided to give them transport costs and depending on who can't pay, subsidizing food costs. WVKR needed a new computer because the old one is so old they don't know the administrative password. For the old computer, we are asking that they remove everything important from it and have it wiped so we can give it a new administrative password. From the conference fund, they want to send people to SXSW. The first time the proposed this it was denied, but they came back with good arguments, so we will give them the standard for conferences, which is \$250 per person. Founders Day, due to an increase in costs from last year, asked for an additional \$8000, so we thought perhaps \$6000 will be acceptable. The Business Club is inviting a professor from Vassar to speak, and they need money for food. ProHealth is also bringing a speaker, and since their schedule is full of a lot of events planned, the rest their existing funds had been spoken for. SJP wanted a speaker about religion, so we decided to withhold \$100, depending on what other orgs give them. VC Soundsystem needed a new amp, because the old one was a donation from their members, so we thought it was reasonable to give them another one, especially since they share them with all of us. ViCE NoViCE needed money for a concert, and we decided to cut some of the funding because perhaps want to go with standard... some music term. Punx didn't get anything

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and we asked them to come back again. Run Vassar is collaborating with the Health Education office and NSO to bring laser tag to campus, and we gave them the full allocation.

President: Any questions?

- m. Minutes From 2/15/15
- n. New PreOrgs:
 - a. VC Skate Ratz
 - b. VC CoOPERAtive
 - c. Indecent Magazine
 - d. Students Language Exchange Program
 - e. Vassar College Triathlon
 - f. Middle Eastern Students Collective
 - g. Vassar Card Sharks
 - h. Primary Care Progress, Vassar College Chapter
 - i. Ace Space

Activities: So, we finished processing pre-orgs four weeks earlier than we did last semester, and we approved, out of twenty-five, nine of them. The skateboard pre-org wants to bring students together to accommodate the growing desire to skate on campus. They want to go out to skate parks and teach tricks. The second is a music group that wants to do operas, which would be an interesting thing to have on campus. They are also interested in classical music and want to open up to off-campus. Indecent is a comedy magazine. The Student Language Exchange Program is something done on other campuses, like Brown and Columbia, and emphasises language teaching among students. Vassar College Triathlon will do swimming, biking, and running obviously, and this will allow for an intermingling of different athletes on campus, as well as close up the gap caused by defining certain people as "the athletes". Middle Eastern Students Collective is an identity org. Vassar Card Sharks will be working on card games and teaching skills that you'll only use when you're eighty. Primary Care Progress is a campus chapter aimed to help pre-med students due to the growing science need on campus, so it will cater toward that interest. Ace Space is a space for asexual/a-romantic students that will be out of Judy Jarvis's office.

President: Any issues? Then we will assume it is passed.

- 4 Forum With Bob Walton, College VP for Finance..... (40 min)

Bob Walton: Hello everyone. I've been here for about a year and a half, not quite, and I am the VP for Finance and Administration. I manage a number of areas outside of the student area, including the treasurer's office and managing all monies the college has including endowment, so we work with the board committees to manage that. I work with human resources over in Baldwin, which includes payroll and student accounts, now called student financial services. I work with Buildings and

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Grounds, as well as manage all of the legal affairs of the college and work with all of the law firms we use. I handle the budget office and what we call risk management, insurance programs making sure there are protections for the college and members of the community. I also work with the board commit, the Board of Trustees. Three of those committees are my responsibility. The investment committee, which is meeting tomorrow in the city to talk about endowment, B and G, and the budget finance committee. Some other projects come to me as assigned. There are two major ones right now. The first is that I am partnering with the Dean of Strategic Planning and Academic Resources to work on the campus master plan, and secondly I am working with Dean Roellke to review of our board and food plan. We are taking a deep dive to understand how to improve board and food here at Vassar.

President: Does anyone have any questions? Issues?

2017: I want to ask a two-part question. First, how informed are you about the many concerns students have regarding res life staff cuts, early retirements, shortages in B and G, and how much are you able to communicate about concerns in those areas? Second, how high a priority is the quality of student life to you and your work compared to other things, such as growing the endowment?

Walton: To answer the first part, any time any student group or individual wants to meet with me, I always have an open door policy, and I want to make sure you know that. I have met with many groups, such as the Student Labor Dialogue, as well as students concerned with divestment and food issues, However, I am not really the point of contact for that, not that I am not interested, but there is a whole team of people who are frankly more informed and qualified than I am in res life. The Dean of Students, Student Employment, there are a bunch of people who know what they are talking about. Not to say I am not interested, I just don't have the qualifications. That being said, I communicate frequently with Dean Roellke and other people in that area. The more nuanced part, then, is how to judge priority when it comes to student needs and having a quality experience at Vassar. That is a dedication all senior officers share. Impressions that some people may have about my role, are that I get to pick winners and losers, who gets funding and who doesn't. Actually, it is just the opposite. To do my job well, I have to be agnostic, and what that really implies is that I try to provide a form of fairness for people representing different needs, whether those are for faculty, for research, for facilities, they should all have a place to go get funding without me imposing personal opinions about what I think is good and bad. Again, I have only been here a year and a half, and so I wouldn't trust my personal opinions to guide Vassar. Secondly, senior officers, as a group, have a lot of debate about allocation pros and cons, such as, if we put money here, we are taking away from somewhere else. Vassar's money is not unlimited, so when we use it, it is moving around and we are taking it from one place to another. If you give me the opportunity to learn more I would be perfectly happy to do that. I will listen to some concerns or interest that you have, and you are welcome to contact me any time. I never turn down an appointment. Even if I don't agree with you, it is important to here.

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Let's talk about reengineering. I spoke about the early retirement program, but it is worth talking about again. When the financial crisis hit, seven or eight years ago, the whole country had a huge crash in the stock market. At that time, I was at a different college on the West Coast, the five Claremont colleges. What was interesting is that those college reacted differently to the crash than Vassar. Vassar had, at that time, moved into full need commitment for financial aid, so that students were given admissions into the college without us looking at their need, and we guaranteed full need met. Two Claremont colleges had the same policy, but took different approaches. In the case of Claremont, they actually had terminations. They laid off a bunch of people. Vassar chose not to do that. They chose to do a supplemental draw out of the endowment, so they took more money out to spend in the bad period. It was courageous and unusual. Most didn't take that approach, and it speaks well to President Hill and the board that they did that. The problem was that this was not sustainable. At one point we were taking out as much as 7%, and the national data says on average we should be taking more around 4-5%, so we were actually spending away the endowment, and it was getting smaller. The board made a policy that wanted to slowly wean us off of this supplemental draw, back to the 5% goal by 2017 or 2018. Before got there, the college wanted to make an announcement to lay off 35 people. Presentations were made that 35 would be fired, and we would then recuperate and bring down spending. It turns out, the college was not in favor of this approach, because it can have very toxic results. I've done it and actually have seen the consequences. So President Hill was not interested. So then, one of my assignments when I got here was to come up with different ways to reduce spending. First, we looked at, a group of people in the finance office, looked at how we were spending our money compared to schools like us. There are twenty different colleges in the East Coast area that are similar to Vassar. Schools with old campuses, with around our size of a student body, liberal arts residential colleges, things like that. What we found is, and I can provide data to the Misc if you want, we had a lot more employees than most of our peers do. Actually, we had more staffing. Not excess staffing, but more than most peers. This is how we came up with the idea of voluntary early retirement. It is not forced, it is a package we can give to people who have been here a long time, and it is a voluntary choice, that they can take an incentive to leave, and that would do a couple of things. First, it would eliminate some positions that were vacant without firing anyone. Second, we could then reorganize some units by having vacancies, by having enough at the same time to reorganize a unit and do things differently. We could promote people who were already here and hitting the ceiling with no way to move up, stuck where they were, who's only choice had been to leave and get a job somewhere else or wait. So through this, we had the chance to do thirty to forty promotions. So, this was an expensive program. It cost us five million dollars to be able to implement it and be successful. We hoped that sixty employees would take it, but it turned out that seventy-two took it. That melted back to sixty-

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eight, because the way the law is written, the program is highly regulated, so there is a "I need to change my mind period", where someone can turn in all of the paperwork, think about it for a week, and say "wow , this is kind of scary" and pull it back. So four did that. So, in the perspective of people who haven't been part of the planning of this, it looked like we were trying to manipulate the college's staffing to do something. I don't know what that something would be, but we were just trying to downgrade numbers and rearrange, combine units, and look at doing fewer things. Actually, even after they go, we often re-staff, so a lot of positions still come back. We still have a higher mean than most of our peers when it comes to staffing, with a couple exceptions. One is the dining area. Dining, for example, in ACDC and the Retreat. In a couple areas we are really high, such as B and G, but this didn't really affect faculty or academic programs. So we were able to do a voluntary program, and it was successful, and in the end we were able to draw less from the endowment and met our goal of 5% without laying anyone off, or putting hardships on anybody. That is how I explain that change. It was well intentioned, and served to protect need-blind admission, which I believe is a key value of the Vassar College community. Sorry for the long answer.

Student Life: I have a question and comment. The question is about the board and food initiative with Chris Roellke. What personally do you see the chance of us going independent as?

Walton: Well, I can sort of answer that. To me, chance means percentage. I don't want to sound evasive, because to be quite honest, I don't think we have very good food here. Not because we don't have good staff. Just that, we have a worn out and tried system with structural problems. One of the benefits of me having worked at Claremont, I was working at five colleges at the same time where everything was done differently, so it was kind of like a Petri dish experiment. There were lots of different strategies, and I could see both what works and what doesn't. So what we are trying to do, and students did a fabulous job of studying our food, so we know what the problem is, so now how do we actually fix the problem? One of our problems is likely that we have the wrong supplier, which is Aramark. I am not saying anything mean-spirited about them, because they have been very successful at other schools, and their senior exec came to see me and told me about all of the great things they could do. So my response then was, well, why the hell aren't you doing them? If you know how to solve it, why do we still have crappy food? Sometimes you just have to change. To specifically answer your question, in order to change, and to figure out who to go to, Aramark needs the opportunity to give us a proposal, even just as a point of comparison for when we are interviewing other companies. I've run two independent food programs myself. Not me personally, of course, but I was responsible for two schools who chose to self-operate. There is an association NACAS, that we can bring in to do an audit program, and who will give you a view of how you rate. What we aim to do this year, we are entertaining proposals from a couple different firms. What you have to recognize, is that in order to make that change you have to go in and reconstruct kitchens and redo dining halls for an impactful

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change. For example, if you want a kosher kitchen, it is very easy to do but you have to physically change the space to meet requirements. The same goes for vegan and vegetarian. It is more than just throwing out a plate of veggies and hummus. So to really design a program differently, you have to take it all the way back to the suppliers. It is a very comprehensive kind of deal. Another problem is the meal plan itself. Since we are all here to speak honestly, I have never seen a guest program like we have. I call it the "Seniors eat for free" program. I think we should be taking a lot of money out of our board plan to build a better food program. So I really want to attack that. We might want to reconsider the concept of swiping, and having a certain number of swipes. Some schools are swipe-less. You eat when you need to eat. They don't have people monitoring when you come in, and what happens is, people tend to eat healthier, because they are eating like they would at home. Let's say someone gets a bagel for breakfast, but their main meal is at eleven after class. If they do that, that's already two swipes, when they only had a bagel for breakfast, opposed to just going and eating, let's say, five times on Tuesday and twice on Wednesday. Okay, so we should be taking risks in some areas to shift to others. We need to look at all of it, board plan, pricing, locations, and for real, realistic change, we need to have everybody take part. So the timeline is that we will study data over spring, and will be meeting with vendors. Some have already been on campus actually. But we will likely have to reconstruct parts of ACDC to make it work. If we change the board plan we will have to plan that a year in advance, and for changes in ACDC, we need a year to do that. So in fifteen or sixteen years, we may still be stuck. But I guarantee we are going to fix this somehow. Because right now, it is just not working, but it is not that hard. I think there is often a hesitancy with administration to do something that needs to be done because they are concerned about getting a negative reaction from some part of the student body. But we just have to fix it, even if it ticks off some people. So I would say, the chances are fifty-fifty that we might self-operate. I would also say, from my Claremont experience, that three of the schools had fabulous vendors that people loved. Sodexo, Marriot, and Bon Appétit. So there are actually a lot of good choices, but we must fix the underlying issues. If we don't change those, a new vendor may be constrained and stuck with the same set of choices.

Student Life: So then my comment, which you may not be able to respond to, but something that comes up every week, are B and G concerns specifically with residential houses. For example, the Noyes door is inaccessible, which has caused conflict about non-students in the house. And Raymond in general, sorry Raymond, such as certain rooms being so worn down that students can't walk across the floor without getting splinters. Just so you know, these have been issues every week.

Walton: I would actually like to respond. I will send around a little bit of an ad. This is a one page summary that Carolina saw. It is an opportunity for students over Spring and in the Fall to take an active voice in that kind of issue. I will make it short. We hired a company, a firm out of Boston and I have worked with them before. Art Lidsky is the president, and he has been on campus since

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September working on gathering data. If you are interested, I would be more than happy to come back and show you the data about our campus. It is very interesting. We are finishing Phase Two, and moving into the Spring, we will be organizing meetings in March, April, and Early May, stopping before exams of course, for faculty, staff, administration, and students and alumni, to one, see some information and react, and also to voice things they would like to see. What is Vassar supposed to look like in 2025? If we forget for a minute how we get there, what actually does it look like? Most important probably for you then, what is the future of Main? If we empty Main, 150,000 square feet of space, and rebuild Main to look totally different, what is there? In this process, I want to hear from you, Phase Three will be during the Spring and during the Summer while we are away, we will create scenarios. Then, you will come back for another round and we will present scenarios and you can criticize or support them.

I'll give a different kind of example. One thing that we are doing wrong, no one wants to eat in the same place for every meal. So that is a location problem. Go to one of the Claremont schools, and they have a coffeehouse that goes really late, and it is really crowded, and that is exactly why people like it. It is very different than a dining hall. Part of our goal is to give you a chance to really suggest what you would like to see at Vassar. Whether that is in the Residence Halls, a social space, parking, whatever, recreation, and I think that is how we're going to make decisions on all of the kinds of things you just raised. We have to recognize there are no unlimited funds, but how use those strategically. I encourage participation. My goal is to have fifteen meetings in the spring, we'll bring in pizzas, food, and just talk, and it will be a chance for us to show you what we found out and have you react.

At-large: Two questions. First off, tell me about long term debt and its relationship with our current credit status. This leads into a lot of concerns students have about how long things take for projects to carry out. I want to know about that in the context of short term operations, not ten years, but let's say eighteen months. Not to sound selfish, but as much as long term goals are important, so are short term, and ensuring that we use resources in the short term to improve students' quality of life.

Walton: So here are some facts, we have \$200 million in debt total. This has occurred through a couple of decades. In terms of the Science Bridge project, we have done a lot of refinancing with the prior debt. The good news is, because interest rates are so low, we have refinanced most of that debt in the last three to four years, due to increasingly low interest rates. However, we really have reached our level of debt capacity and should stop. At a speaking engagement, I spoke with the pyramid society, who is a really dedicated group of ex-board members of the college. They had a couple question just like Josh's, but from the opposite side. If interests are so low, why are we not borrowing more money? So there has been a lot of philosophical discussion. There are different points of view, one that we should really pull back because we are taking operating money out, but also that, we should be borrowing more and fixing stuff because money is so cheap. My view, my concern, is that a \$200 million debt, in ratio with

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the overall balance sheet, is pretty normal, and we have a good credit rating. The real question then is, what about now? We are trying to find a balance between keeping in moving forward and making longer term strategic decisions. The cost of the science project, if we include Sanders and New England, since really all three are under one umbrella, all three cost us \$100 million. So science is the vast majority of that debt, but much of that was also funded with gifts. It's a combination of gifts and debt. On Thursday night, at the B and G committee meeting, administration took to them a project proposal to do some near term projects with the operating money in the budget for next year. Most projects in the last few years were things like replacing roofs, steam pipes, working on infrastructure. My concern about those is that there is no perceived benefit of that to be honest. They have to be done, but I think there has to be balance. I am inferring this from your question, and correct me if I'm wrong, but I think there has to be a balance so that people actually benefit in experience today. Let's focus on smaller day-to-day impact. I will be working with a firm in New York for a two-phase redesigning and refurbishing of the College Center First, this summer, we will be moving out the lower level science labs from the Olmstead project. We will study how to create more social student spaces in the lower level, and open it up so it doesn't feel like you're going into a basement. We want to relocate a number of services, and create a sort of connection junction, similar services combined together on a service model, and have that open until ten at night. There is 10,000 square feet of flexible social space, that students should be able to use, and have that available twenty-four seven. So that is Phase One, then Phase Two will be in the summer of 2016. We want to close the two upper levels, including this room. We will gut and rebuild the Retreat as part of the food plan, blow up the Retreat and start over. I am not criticizing it, I love the retreat, but it just doesn't work. If you want to find a confused look of fear, visit the Retreat on the day of admissions tours, as fifty to sixty parents and their students try to figure out how to order a hamburger. So we will open up the first floor in particular, and make it more programmable, so that you can use the entire floor for things you want to do, not just for services. This will be paid out of the operating budget, and will happen this summer and next summer. Part of the reason is, we know the College Center has to improve. It is one place everyone uses every day. So that buys us time to see what our plan will yield. We don't want to wait to do that if we know this is a project we can do now.

At-large: You mentioned the credit rating issue. I am just curious about long term debt.

Walton: That is not really about debt status. The thing that is the problem with debt, which you'll realize once you're out of here, is that you have to pay it back. The college does too, and every time we add another million, that is another million we are not spending to help people here today. \$200 million is a lot, but some argue. Some think I am wrong, and think we can handle \$300 million.

At-large: I guess what I am trying to hinge on, is what percentage is added on, if we are finishing the bathrooms in all the dorms? That's, there are lots of student voices, and few committees hinge on that.

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In here, as a direct one on one, but why is this not happening through a task force? Students have insight.

SoCos: So, I'm curious about using 7% of the endowment.

Walton: We will have lowered that to reach 5.1% at the end of the year.

SoCos: Is that not normal?

Walton: 5% would be. It is a lot better, and we have to really bring down spending to get that draw smaller. One of the things about the early retirement program that is important to realize is that we are about to hit our 5% goal, and then stop. The endowment is growing, the economy is improving. In the last seven or eight years all of our additional earnings were going into bringing down the draw rate, but basically we are going to be there. So as the endowment grows, new money is coming in that doesn't have to go to patching up the place. It can go to new programs, new buildings, and other things. It is really important to recognize that we were in a financial crisis, and now I am declaring that crisis over. We hit our goal. Then the budget will be growing, with new money every year, and we can talk about what we can spend it on.

2017: Back to the dining hall, I wasn't quite sure I understand you correctly. You called the guest policy "free meals for seniors", but those have been paid for. For the Deece to be viable, do people have to not use all of their meal swipes? If every one is used, does that put the Deece into a problem? Someone has paid for those swipes. Not the seniors, but someone.

Walton: Most of that, the college has paid for. The college is paying most of it honestly.

2017: But the college allotted individuals these amounts, so if it is putting the Deece in danger...

Walton: There is logic to your question. I am not aware of a single college out there that does what we're doing. What I don't like is that it is disingenuous. It is not a guest program. I would feel better if it was called "I'm feeding my buddy". It is not feeding parents, or grandparents, but someone else who goes here. There are two consequences. First, it creates conflicts for when people need to go in to ACDC as part of a team or a social act and are not on a meal plan. That's actually weird and it shouldn't be that way. What this means is that there is no ability to plan for a certain number of meals. This stresses the org because you know, swipes are intended to be used one at a time, and if you invite three friends, and we anticipate only one meal, it is not a sensible plan. We can have a scaling system, because each person has a different eating style. An alternative would be a flat-rate system, but the downsides are if you don't eat very much. But also an advantage is you can eat differently and in more places. Another idea is extending dollars and the board plan to off campus, so that is another thing to consider. It may not be a huge amount, but it would be nice to go out and eat in the community. Lots of students are on financial aid, and it's building a barrier for them to do things off campus. Lots of things need to be figured out, which will mean compromises. Apartments have kitchens, so a good idea would be to have a small grocery store on campus that you could use your board plan on and pull items

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to cook that you don't have to buy off campus, since that can be expensive at times, and the school has better purchasing power being a big buyer. I think the hesitancy, the anxiety is that people will be reacting negatively because of change. But we have to go for a blended result, and I do think it can improve.

Student Life: I was wondering if you could speak to anything discussed on Friday with the trustees regarding the employment status of Kemar, the security officer that the Student Labor Dialogue is organizing around?

President: Can you briefly sum up that situation for those who don't know?

Student Life: The Student Labor Dialogue organized a protest for a dinner that happened where information was distributed about considering the wrongful termination of a security officer. Kemar was fired for, well allegedly fired for, complaining about racist remarks in the workplace. So I know his term was discussed in a closed session and the exec board was asked to leave, so I want to know what happened.

Walter: Let me answer the best I can. If it is a closed session, I can't then tell people, so I am not going to tell you, because that would be wrong. What I can tell you, the sources of this, are what the board formally talked about when it wasn't in exec, I can tell you about the dinner, that's anecdotal, and I can talk about my own reaction. First, the overwhelming reaction of the whole board was that they were very impressed with the protest. This means that it was respectful, appropriate, and well intentioned. Individual board members were quite moved, and felt really passionate about the kind of representation of what was concerning by that group. One reaction what that this is the best of what Vassar does. That is a really important thing to recognize about the board. They have a lot of respect about the way that was done. My observation was that there was some concern about the idea of demands. It is an interesting idea to go and demand something, as you are essentially challenging a group on an assumption without all of the information. I think that in the board it was very seriously, and they are going to respond. Before that dinner I had not seen anything about this, and I was interested in seeing the information for myself. I went because I have a responsibility to manage the Human Resources office, so I went, and personally pulled all of the records. I had never heard of this officer, and I didn't find out until Thursday night. I saw the flyer, but I didn't know anything about it. The next day, during my break, I read all of the records, and I can't share those because they are legally confidential, and the officer deserves the right of being protected. I read the records and I felt that, I recommended to the board, that we should seriously consider the records on the basis of whether or not they were handled correctly. A concern by the board was about an appropriate investigation on the claim of racial discrimination. We actually had the equal opportunity, Title IX officer speak to the board, and we did a full investigation, and the investigation found there to be no racial discrimination. This was based on interviews and facts, and I will say from my personal standpoint, we all know this is a

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politically charged time, and from a practical standpoint, it is a time when we really have to be careful with anything like this. We were. I think in end, the board saw this as a really good example of the Vassar values, and that SLD acted appropriately. Just because they didn't agree with students, that doesn't mean they didn't respect that they went through that process. So we'll see what the board says. That was one of the highlights of the board meeting. I wouldn't say it was fun, but it is definitely something we're here to do.

5 Trustee Updates.....President (30 min)

President: As Bob said, a lot of the meetings were confidential, so I will not get into specifics, but a number of members requested information and now is the opportunity to share some reflections. I attend all board meetings as student observer, so I can speak generally, and if anyone has any questions, let me know. A lot of the meetings had a focus on campus climate, because that is really pressing at the moment, and other general business was the campus master planning, the budget, investment and divestment, and then I also, as well as other administrators, updated them on general areas about our constituencies. I shared and we discussed the possibility of paying exec members with work study as well as some of our other initiatives, and they were excited about VSA programming around substance free events, so way to go Activities. There was also a lot about Academics and Student Life. We talked about the gender neutral bathroom project and also IME, the Intensive Mentored Experience. Does anyone want to talk about their small group meetings?

Student Life: The small group meetings that Carolina is talking about are meetings scheduled throughout Thursday. There was a session in the morning about the VSA, and through the day meetings with athletes, SAVP, the ALANA leadership circle, and assorted people from the LGBTQ office. I went to the LGBTQ session, after seeing people leaving the ALANA one in tears. For the LGBTQ session, it went well. At almost every session, someone handed the trustees Kemar's statement and read it aloud and listed some of the demands, that he be reinstated by 5pm Monday. So that happened at the queer session, and we talked about bathrooms. We talked about concerns of letting queer students of color control a certain amount of money to use for whatever end they see appropriate. So that got proposed. There was some serious criticism about the way the meetings were structured. With how the sessions go under a single issue policy, brown, gay, sexual assault, they all are segmented identities which is unhelpful and unnatural. Part of the reasons it is handled like that, our campus has a culture of being skeptical of town hall forums. Often large group meetings with people often turn into Cappy getting yelled at. I'm not saying this isn't valid, but they are trying not to do that. The small groups were not with the entire board, but four specific trustees, including the chair of the board. He said it was productive, and the issue heard most was the understaffing of Metcalf. So hopefully that means there will be a serious investment in mental health resources. An important thing to remember, trustees approve budgets at a macro level. They don't know how much goes where. They

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approve funding in certain areas, but things like more tenure tracked positions in the Women's Studies program and extension of more queer studies, they don't have realistic power control related to that.

President: I just want to add on, someone asked me a few days ago, how much money was approved for Metcalf. They approve billions at once, so it is not sometimes the way we give fund to our orgs. They are really looking at wide scale projects over multiple years, so it is much larger than that. I did hear concerns that Hannah discussed. They were surprised to hear them, but also very receptive, and realized it wasn't done in the best way. Any people on council want to add anything?

At-large: I went to one with SAVP and CARES and TLC, and there was a lot of conversation surrounding Metcalf. They offered some relatively outlandish solutions without hiring new people, I don't really know. For me it just kind of happened, and I don't feel good or bad. We'll see.

President: There was a lot of focus on Metcalf, other than issues of race, Metcalf was the biggest concern in terms of hiring. How to be most effective in that, too. There's a big concern about throwing money at problems and not actually changing anything. A lot of times that is what happens, money is thrown and it sounds good on paper but then nothing actually changes. So that's one of their concerns. They don't want to act too fast.

2017: One important thing I did get, and I've gotten the same impressions from different administrators, is that you bring up a problem, and if you don't have a detailed plan on how to fix it, they're like, "then why are you talking to us about this?" I do recognize that they have jobs and can't immediately drop everything always, but at the same time there is a reason they're college administrators. So to some level there needs to be a way where we can say we don't know how fix something that is wrong without being shut down.

At-Large: Even when they are interested in helping, it is all very external.

President: They also discussed that, that in the past there has been a lot of asking for opinions and then not doing anything. So we have to see. It is easy to say they are not going to do that and then do it.

6 AAVC Updates..... Operations and 2015 (10 min)

Operations: This is the Alumnae/i Association of Vassar College. They meet the same weekend as the trustees but on Saturday. AAVC, unlike the trustees, has no decision making power. They are not rich, so they don't have the monetary stake. It is like the equivalent of the VSA for alumni. They asked us a lot about campus climate and student concerns. An interesting thing that came up, when we tried to convey a lack of trust in administration, and what we see as empty promises, are actually action plans that they are very happy about. Such as strengthening the Vassar website for example. I think that, yeah, they feel these promises are good things, and we tried to convey that students aren't happy. A lot of alumni get it, some don't. One thing that came up was that in the 80s the President was hated and they tried to get her fired, so history repeated itself.

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2015: We talked about campus climate. For all of these meetings, most importantly, the alumni as a whole are very concerned, but they have a different perception than someone who does go here. It is hard to determine what students actually want from the outside. Also a lot of their conversations are far more long term. They are not only looking in the next two-three years. For them, four years is just a blink. So they are coming from a different place, and it is important to remember that when dealing with them. They are trying to work for solutions to long term problems and see the timeline differently than we do.

Operations: Working with the board is very different than working with students on things, but they are really happy to help. They are more connected than trustees because trustees don't have to be alums. They collaborated with the CDO Sophomore Career Connections, and yeah, they were very excited, even if they are on a different page.

2015: Yeah, I would really encourage you to reach out to them for anything, jobs, anything you need, because they do want to be involved, and are trying to figure out how to.

7 Constituent Concerns (20 min)

2016: Mine, again, is about reslife as usual. Also, it involves the whole Noyes door thing. We're juniors, so we've been here two years, and some of my constituents said the door has been broken since their freshman year. Luis Inoa said he didn't know about it. I think the school needs reevaluate reslife.

Already, with the housing crisis, I thought his defense was kind of weak, saying "Oh we don't plan for that until we get back to campus". He should be more aware, especially with the Noyes door becoming a safety concern, with the two people in peoples rooms looking into a private space. I don't find that okay. Also with those two people, they were also found in Strong and Joss. I just don't think that is okay, especially going into people's rooms.

Student Life: To directly respond. Yeah, I don't think he's handled a lot of things well, especially the B and G issues in Noyes. But, I think with the issue of security, especially when talking about people who are not Vassar students in buildings, there are two very different lines in talking about the danger there. Realistically Vassar students are far more likely to get stolen from or assaulted by another Vassar student. So attributing fear and danger to these situations has profound racial implications. I don't agree with the way it was handled, but I think we need to be very careful not to reinforce racist and othering ideas, that just because they're from outside they're dangerous. Realistically the biggest dangers we face are our peers. I definitely would like to see more accountability from reslife, but we as student leaders shape dialogue, and I don't think we should reinforce the narrative that two young kids from Poughkeepsie are super dangerous beings because they were fucking around in a dorm.

Strong: I agree with what Student Life just said, but my problem with the current situation, these two young boys, and I don't want to imply, I am very aware of what has happened, and they have pretty much physically assaulted my residents, and that is not okay. So i am not going to defend them.

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2016: I completely agree with Student Life and we do need to be aware about the racial implications, which is why when I first heard about this I made sure to get more details about it, and now that I am certain they've been assaulting and harassing students, I decided to bring it up.

President: We are having an exec meeting with Bob, and he oversees these issues. We can also talk to reslife, because it is weird that Luis didn't know about this for three years.

8 Executive Board Reports

a. Operations.....(7 min)

Operations: So really quick, I have a few different projects. The first is to pilot Food Truck Friday. We are meeting tomorrow with Activities to figure that out. We are also working on a social media project to improve our Facebook presence. We will be raffling off a Pillow Pet. Third, we are working on making a detailed job description for each VSA position to pass out during elections. Those are the three big. Something I'm personally working on is the Student Leadership Award Ceremony, Emily Platt is helping me with that, and we will be meeting with the Alumnae/i House tomorrow because we are thinking that will be our venue. Also, there will now be VSA update columns in the Misc, which Emily is also doing. The external review report will come out fairly soon, I don't know the exact date. There is also the reslife review taskforce, which I am co-chairing. The first meeting will be next Wednesday, and we are currently reaching out to potential members, and Chris Roellke and Carolina will be sending a joint email for at-large members.

2017: With the report, will there be a physical copy or is it all electronic?

Operations: My guess is electronic because it is 2015. But the committee will talk about the best way to make it accessible.

President: Even if it is on paper we can scan it.

2 Council Updates

a. Strong.....(7 min)

Strong: Hi, this is really short. We plan on hosting a Roaring Twenties event with Raymond. There will be mocktails and fun gambling and party stuff. It will be from 8pm-12am on April 3rd, with more information to come as it gets closer. It will be in the Villard Room and Rose Parlor, and Jade parlor.

b. 2015.....(7 min)

2015: One-hundred Nights was last night. Now we're planning Fifty Nights and senior week. And I'm graduating soon, and it's weird.

Student Life: I heard rumors about Fifty Nights, so can you speak on how it will be different, because I heard we were banned from the Chance.

2015: After a million meetings, since we were banned from the Chance and were extensively searching the town of Poughkeepsie for a space, I emailed the Chance, and apparently if you offer them money they let you come back. Not even more money, just money. It will be a different event this year,

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because the Senior Class pays for it and had their budget seriously impacted with the way it turned out last year. It will probably be limited to just seniors and their guests. We are still in the logistical planning of that.

Operations: It might be too early, but any idea of what senior week will look like?

2015: We just started planning, and it is different this year, because the school gets out on a Friday and we graduate the following Sunday. So it is nine days long this year. Currently towing that line of using a budget designed for four days for eight days. Other things I want you to be aware of, and this is not up to me, is that Luis Inoa is not sure if students will be signed in this year, other than the people that need to run it.

President: If you run for VSA exec and win you get to stay automatically.

2015: We are working on that. I am hoping that is something we can discuss. We'll see and I'll let you guys know.

c. THs.....(7 min)

THs: TH life is good life. As far as events, all public space by the THs is currently covered in snow, except the laundry room, so we can have a laundry room party. We are in the beginning stages of planning events, and there will be more to report by the end of March, hopefully some snow will be melting. And we are working with 2015 a lot.

d. 2016.....(7 min)

2016: I've pretty much been given a whole new council because of JYA, so we are still getting to know each other, and I want everyone on council to sit in on at least one committee. We want to work on smaller, easier programming, like while it is still cold ice skating and sledding with hot chocolate. We will start that next week. Something we want to bring back, I don't know what happened to puppy study breaks, but we have been reaching out on our own to make that happen. All animals welcome. That would be under smaller programming. As for a big event, we briefly talked with Rebecca. We didn't throw anything last semester, and because we are sister classes, I talked it over with my council, and we have some ideas in motion, but I don't want to say until we fully consult. This is exciting, so I will say it, but we kind of want to do a DJ competition. I have to talk to 2018. We are talking about campus climate too, because they weren't here, and discussing stuff that has already been brought up.

9 Open Discussion

Academics: Today is the last day to apply to host a student seminar, but we will probably accept applications through the week. But get it in today, because we want to schedule them. You have until midnight.

2017: What is the current status of the exec board compensation thing?

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Operations: That's something I forgot to mention. We met with student financial services, and we are bringing it to Operations and exec this week, and will probably be voting next week, along with the class gift chair amendment.

TAs: Props to Jewett for Seven Deadly.

Jewett: Thanks to everyone for going and making that happen. I just wanted to ask about the chairs thing.

President: That was just a scheduling issue, OAD couldn't make it.

Operations: I want to motion to adjourn, but first, may the odds be in many of our favors for apartment draw.