

# VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

## Council Agenda for March 8, 2015

Time: 7:00pm

Location: College Center 223

"It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad."-C.S. Lewis

### 1 Call to Order

Start: 7:04

### 2 Attendance.....Operations

Absent: Town Students

Proxy: 2017

At-Large Attendees: Bethan, Maddie, Josh, Josh, Kiran, Tyler Reese, Sarah, Phil, Abby, Allie, Ben, Peter

### 3 Consensus Agenda

- a. Hip Hop 101 (Discretionary) .....\$0/\$6000
- b. ViCE Jazz (Discretionary) .....\$700/\$1500
- c. Christian Fellowship (Capital) ..... \$249.99/\$249.99
- d. Wordsmiths (Speakers).....\$1500/\$2684
- e. The Pianists (Discretionary) ..... \$25 or \$50/\$25
- f. CHOICE (Discretionary) .....\$0/\$100
- g. CHOICE (Discretionary) .....\$0/\$50
- h. EMS (Capital) .....\$369/\$369
- i. On Tap (Conference).....\$1100/\$1200
- j. Aikido Club (Conference).....\$120/\$120
- k. Knights of Commuknity (Capital) .....\$53.42/\$53.42
- l. Crafts Not Bombs (PreOrg).....\$200/\$200
- m. Minutes From 3/1/15

Finance: Hip Hop 101 discussed the possibility of extra funding for Throwback Jam. For the past five years they've gone in debt, and needed a VSA bailout for Throwback Jam. We came to the conclusion that they were solvent enough to finish the year and not go into debt, which is actually a big thing and we are really happy. I chalk it up to leadership changes and new finance committee policies. So we have them a \$0 allocation. ViCE Jazz got \$700 because they over-budgeted for this year, and only had enough to continue through spring break. We decided since these have been popular events, it is worth paying more to have them continued. The Christian Fellowship requested an amp for their drum set. Wordsmiths wanted to bring in a poet, and we gave them that money because they've been one of the most active orgs this year. The Pianists are a pre-org, and wanted \$25 for piano performances by the student body, staff, and faculty. The \$25 was for it to be filmed by VCTV. CHOICE had two fund-apps. They wanted to financially, nominally support two events that they had no collaborative authority over. Both were this weekend, which means they missed the three week prior mark, and the VSA doesn't give money for nominal support. EMS needed more EMS stuff, like

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dummies and DVDs, to train for CPR which is important. On Tap needed money for a conference in DC. They've ever used this fund, at least in the past two years, so we decided it was appropriate, especially because they're staying at the house of an alum, so that is cheap. Aikido needed funds for a conference in Saratoga Springs, which is super inexpensive to get to, so they only needed a slight bump. Knights of Commuknity needed bags for needles and wools so they won't get moldy, and we also suggested that they sell what they make to raise money. Right now they give all of the stuff to charity. Crafts not Bombs wanted their operating budget to build terrariums. Any questions, comments, concerns?

President: We will assume it is passed.

4 Forum With Julian Williams..... (40 min)

Williams: Hi, I am the Director of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, as well as the Title IX office. My office is primarily responsible for a couple things. One is the investigation of complaints concerning harassment and discrimination, and those can be filed by employees, students, guests, visitors, staff, and administration. We are also responsible for supervising the process of investigating matters of sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. My primary responsibility is for the policy against discrimination and harassment, which covers the first aspects discussed by employees and community members, as well as Title IX. I also serve as the point person for faculty and staff recruitment. I work with the search committees for job openings, to make sure there is a diverse search committee and to help cultivate a diverse applicant pool, of which I mean one that contains a significant number of persons of color, women, and also of disability. I am the college ADA 504 officer, so I work closely with the Dean of Studies and others in making sure campus is accessible for those with disabilities, and that is for students as well as employees. An information piece, I've been here two and a half years. I am from Michigan, I've been an attorney. I went to University of Michigan for undergrad and Michigan State for law school, when I then became an attorney working for a teachers union in Michigan. I assisted teachers and public school workers and dealt with employee law cases around discrimination, harassment, and also represented plaintiffs as well, when issues in employment were thought to be Title VII and Title IX matters. I was then the Director of Equity and Diversity at Monmouth University in NJ, and then here. That is in a nutshell how I got here. I would love to take questions, and I can walk through processes, or we can jump in.

Student Life: Hi, I have a few questions. I was wondering if you could speak to a potential change in the panel structure of the Title IX process. Second, could you talk about the know your IX events?

Williams: In terms of a change in panel structure, as it relates to student on student Title IX cases, the potential there is high. The reason for that is a lot of things. Essentially, right now our panel is made of a volunteer base of faculty members and administrators at the end of the process. They make really

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important decisions on responsibility, and then on sanction, such as suspension, expulsion, or probation. What happens is we run out of volunteers, so we have to look alternatives. These people get no extra pay, and they didn't, when they came to work here, sign up for this. These cases have been undertaken by them on behalf of the college because they are important cases, and they do have extensive training to do this. But once again, it is volunteer training. What we're looking at heavily, is a better way to adjudicate this subset of really important cases. We should be utilizing a high degree of legal expertise, as well as fact-weighting, such as a former judge or prosecutor. A person who has worked in college campuses and has been doing these cases at a high level. We're looking at what benefits that can bring. I can think of some. One thing is trying to put together, well it is tough for both sides on the process to look at group and see a professor they've had or plan on having, or an administrator they work closely with, and be worried about what happens, "do I want to face this person, devote intimate details to them, and then what happens afterward?" How awkward is it to bump into them in a work perspective, then. That is one thing we want to alleviate by bringing someone in with a high degree of expertise, and who is less connected to the day to day here at the college. This is an area lots of institutions are moving in, and we are exploring heavily, because we are running out of volunteers for a lot of reasons. What we have to do, is ask, is there a better way? We already moved to getting rid of utilizing students in that role. What we are looking at, is if there is a person or persons that the college can engage with, with training, knowledge, and requisite soft skills to do these things, and still operate under college policies and definitions, our standards of proof, our rubric of if found responsible, our sanctioning range, and a risk management person to help out on the backend as well. One of the first things, when or if an institution is sued as relates to these cases, one of the first challenges is who is making these decisions. You can train and train and train, but if I were the attorney, the first thing I would go after is the hearing board, show me the days of training, and what experience or qualifications do they have to do this. This is something lots of institutions are looking at heavily.

On the know your IX events, my office is working with the SAVP coordinator. I like doing those events, walking attendees through the process and then having an open Q and A. Representatives from family services and Title IX investigations will attend, and we will try to inform campus about what the Title IX investigation process looks like, pre-reporting what resources are available to get students into a place where they are comfortable reporting, and really have some open time to ask questions, and also have students write down questions if they don't want to ask them aloud, so we can provide resources there as well. This is more on the prevention and educational side, which is just as important.

2015: Which pieces of the process would you give out to outside the board?

Williams: A lot of what we're talking about, sexual assault and misconduct, is different from almost everything else that comes up. It is different than a fight in a dorm or disruptive conduct, or a student

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getting a citation for drinking underage. Nationwide, and what we recognize on our campus, is that these cases need to be treated differently, with different investigative structures and adjudicative structures. The way I see us utilizing an outside alternative model is for that high level case, concerns of sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking and harassment. On the other track, which is probably likely to be the college regulations panel, is essentially everything else. We are trying to recognize the amount of seriousness Title IX cases bring to the table and treat it like that. One real counterargument, and a question I always get from parents, is why is the institution even involved in this in the first place, why don't we call the police, why are we involved? My response is, we have to, because it is our legal obligation under Title IX, as well as our moral obligation to protect the campus.

2015: I think that, in my AAVC meeting, my question is, indicated severity seems to determine whether a case is given to the outside or not. Can you explain?

Williams: There is a threshold there. What she was speaking of, is what are the stakes? For a certain subset of college regulations, the stakes are automatically suspension or expulsion, whether that is for a semester or totally gone. We have to figure that out, and what we're likely looking at, when utilizing an external model, is what are the stakes, what are the possibilities for the regulation, and if facing suspension or expulsion, it will likely go to an external model. The most serious violations, non consensual sexual matters, the stakes start at suspension and range up. As we discuss and research more, that'll likely be the starting point. If the sanction is probation, that is likely not something we will send to an external source, but if facing suspension or expulsion we want to have, to protect both parties, we want that prosecution to have a high degree of skill.

Operations: I heard a full time Title IX position is coming next year? Can you talk about that?

Williams: Yes, we are very fortunate, and we were planning on announcing this later in the year, but one thing, as we recognize how best to investigate cases, we currently have a model, a split house advisor model, where someone is a House Advisor slash Title IX panelist, or the Assistant Dean of Students slash Title IX panel member. What we're experiencing, is that the process of investigating will take time. That time commitment can bleed into that slash role. So for the Associate Director of Reslife, or Kelly Grab as a House Advisor, the Title IX investigation role is essentially taking over everything. It's like Pacman, it wants to eat everything. We began to recognize this, and it is really serious and we need to devote somebody fulltime. We will still utilize others and train them to step in. When I say fulltime, I mean their primary function is working on Title IX. We have to essentially pay them enough to not live in residential halls. In order to be an effective investigator, they should not be living down the hall from a person they're working with. We want to look at moving that person outside of residential halls and make them a fulltime administrator. So we got permission to quickly craft what that role might look like, and we already have Kelly who is highly skilled, highly trained, and essentially the perfect fit. She

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will be starting at the end of the academic year as she finishes out her House Advisor role, and this will free up reslife to have that role. Whoever is replacing here, is likely to be trained, but not have that as their primary function, which will free them up to be utilized differently, and allow us to essentially devote higher time and resources and free up Kelly to work with Charlotte and myself and others on the prevention and education side. In that area, we are examining what hiring looks like, and what lots of schools are adding. I think it is time Vassar do the same.

President: Can you speak about what faculty training is like?

Williams: Sure. It is extensive. It covers over 2 days. Essentially it is how to be a panelist. What is Title IX? Decorum is huge in these cases. What questions to ask, how to ask, looking at hypotheticals and going over policy, how to weight evidence, what will students on either side of process be going through, what difference to give investigators and the investigative report, how to read the report critically, and more. One really important aspect is what questions to ask. A big piece if you study how cases play out, a huge piece is questioning. Asking the investigator and student and making a report. We don't want panels to reinvestigate the case, but to receive and digest the report. It is not their job to ask the perfect question, to get someone to spill their guts or have an "aha" moment, because that almost never happens. So sort of deconstructing all these assumptions that are there. We are really studying and examining people who are able to do this. Not everyone we use, simply because, they might not be able to do it for whatever reason. You need a high degree of analytical as well as soft skills. When doing training, we look for all those things and a bunch of people we are probably leaving out. It is extensive, but it is never enough. That's the piece we're running into. We can write down a weeklong schedule and still have things we leave out, or that people may miss, simply because it is not their day job. The ones we have, I am super thankful, but they are not getting paid, and are taking a lot of time out of their schedule, but it is not their day job and they didn't sign up at Vassar to do this. When looking at efficacy of the external model, ultimately it is their day job. Perhaps they've worked on other campuses, or have extensive background already in deciphering facts and weighing evidence. There are pros and cons of looking at it. One drawback, cons a lot of institutions are facing, is does it legalize the process even more? They've spent a lot of time hearing bodies, engaging with the formal judge process, it is harder and harder to do that. Every institution now has to allow a legal counsel inside of the hearing room. They can't speak but they can be there. Another layer in bringing in a lawyer to these matters, is it gives it another level of legalization. Where I see Title IX going, I don't think we will be able to run from that anymore. It will be highly legalized, and campuses have to grapple with what that looks like.

President: How are faculty selected? Is it purely voluntary and then you screen?

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Williams: Yes, we do a lot of screening. Some depend on what area they're working in. Certain people we can't use, like senior officers, the Dean of the College, because of their role in the appeals process or working with students automatically would be a conflict of interest. Some step up, and after talking with them, we just can't use. That's when we say thanks but no thanks. Something we're looking at also as well, my office is responsible for complaints from students and faculty on a variety of issues, and so we may have an employee who steps up to do this, and I can go to my files, and might realize they wouldn't be the right person because they had this experience or interaction that wouldn't make them a good person to sit on panels. We have people who've stepped up and sacrificed a lot of time and energy to be a cog in this process, but as these events played out, we are taking a strong look at moving away from the militia based model, and whether it makes sense to do it differently here.

At-large: There was a lot of talk last semester about the consent policy in the official handbook and how it is different from the consent model SAVP promoted, active sober verbal, and I was wondering, one, what work is being done to edit the consent policy, and two, to make it more transparent?

Williams: Sure, so, part of my job is to look at the policy in the handbook. It is not something we can fit on a shirt or refrigerator magnet. SAVP and my office are different, but as SAVP, they are looking at how to make something that students can remember, something to advertise. They are looking for a slogan. I would argue it is similar to what is in the consent policy but less nuanced. What we're looking at, is whether we need to make changes to the consent policy. If you look at Vassar's on a spectrum of progressiveness, what it says and what definitions are, we are pretty far on the progressive policy spectrum. We are always looking at ways to make it better, and every policy should be a working document. Not necessarily the consent policy, but the incapacitation policy, we are looking at providing more examples of what that looks like. Right now it speaks of knowing the who, what, when where, why. What we'd like to add is more examples of what that looks like, for example is it blacking out or slurring or if you can't walk straight, all the facts investigators and panelists look at in terms of whether or not someone is incapacitated. So those are likely additions to the incapacitation policy. What it does is makes it longer, which may be unavoidable, and is definitely not something you can put on a t-shirt, but hopefully it will provide more info. To go along with that, something I'm optimistic about is that the full time position coming on board and with the fulltime SAVP coordinator, there can be more on the prevention side and education side, to educate about what the policies are and mean. Even with the best written policy what happens is that people don't look at it until they need to. We can talk during orientation, but if we are not reaching people and permeating discussion it isn't effective. People will have questions, and a positive outcome that will come out of the past year, is having a look at what they mean, not rewriting them because we are as progressive as you can get, but to tweak definitions and examine them to make them clearer. From a policy standpoint, there is at least one phone call a month

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from someone at another school really struggling. Since the "Dear colleague" letter, it changed the game on how to deal with these issues, and some institutions for lots reasons are still struggling to put the policies into place, and so they ask me, what are you doing, what does yours look like? I tell them they can copy it word for word as long as they attribute it. They are looking for guidance, and we are on the progressive end but can do a better job in education that makes them clear to students and faculty and the administrative body.

President: How do other schools handle this? Specifically in regard to panels?

Williams: There is a real spectrum. Some still utilize students. Some have moved toward a panel. A lot are moving away from a panel. In pre-2011 it was like the wildest, some would have four students and it would be their job. You can imagine why that was not good. With the "Dear colleague" letter that came out, there was a big push to train faculty and administration and utilize students differently. That lasted for about a year, a year and a half, and now we're moving toward two models. One is the external, having an outside investigator make the decision. That's where this is. There are three camps. The panel, which I think will be moved away from. Another, essentially the investigator is the fact-finder and adjudicator, that's their job. That's something we looked at, but I don't think we'll utilize that at this moment. We still want an investigator to be able to impartially gather information, and for both parties to give that info to an investigator. We also don't want to make one individual investigator the focal point of the investigation. Looking at a person, even if they do the best job, it can be a tough role when you are the face of a decision. That is a model some are using, but the way I see it, I think an external model is the most useful. There is a range if you study what our peers, larger and smaller, are using. It is almost different on every campus, there is no one standard way. We are trying to figure out what works best for us.

President: Thank you for coming in that was super helpful.

Forum With Jessica Bernier..... (40 min)

Bernier: Hello, I am the director of Student Financial Services, which as you all know is a new office now. My background is solely in financial aid, which I fell into from being a work study student, and I decided to pursue it as a career until I figured out what I wanted to do. Seventeen years later, I'm still here. I've been at different schools and can bring those experiences here to Vassar. I've been here six and a half years, which is the longest I've been in one place, and some days I ask myself "what am I doing?" So that is my background. We were of course financial aid for many years, and then we took on employment in 2010, which has been passed around a lot on campus, then it went to career development, then back on its own, and now back to us. Over winter break, we added student accounts and created new the new Student Financial Services office. Our goal is to be a one stop office for any

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student financial concerns. The idea is that if you want to pay a bill, get a paycheck, and also apply to financial aid, you can come here and really the goal is that any major financial concern we will be able to handle. We're working on that. Most of our staff are probably the ones closest to being cross-trained. The rest of us are trying to figure out how to work together moving forward, how to overlap, how make the office more efficient, and there's a communication piece. Something we're more aware of, when we're connecting three different types of info, is that we don't want to bombard students every day, but at the same time, contacting you means we want something from you. Like I said, that is our long term goal, to be as seamless as possible, so that for any financial question, we will be able to answer all of them for you. I would love any questions, feedback, criticism, where you think this should go, etc. We're at the beginning of the process and want to make sure we are able to take it all into consideration.

Finance: I have a question about textbooks, and what the office's ability is there. Is it dependent on the financial aid you have?

Bernier: I will do a mini walkthrough. One of the things, what we do, is we figure out how much it will cost to attend Vassar. We know what you're billed for is tuition and fees, a house, and that you have to have a meal plan. We also know there are other costs like books and personal expenses. Shampoo, laundry, and that you have to get here and home. What we do with all that, is calculate a cost of attendance. A person's expenses for textbooks vary depending on the classes you take, and the same thing with spending habits, we can't take into consideration everyone, so we try to use an average. That is what we start with, what it is going to cost to attend. Second, what you and your family have to pay. All students are expected to work over the summer regardless of parent contribution. The difference between the cost to attend and what we call the family contribution is financial aid. That's covered by work-study, grants, and loans. How we incorporate most students' textbooks is that it comes out of work-study or the family/student contribution. That means less money has to go to Vassar. What we realize is that not everybody is able to save that for the beginning of the semester, so we kept open the ability to charge VCash to the student account. Maybe you need to use work-study and pay it off over the course of the semester. That ability is rare in peer institutions. Nobody does that. So we continued to keep that available. We used to allow it all year round, but now it's been condensed to the first month of classes. We want to keep the ability open without abusing it. I know that's always a question we get, but that's how it works. On that, we get the question of living in senior year apartments. You are not charged a meal plan but you've got to buy food, so we factor in a food allowance. Less goes to the vassal bill, and more to help pay for food expenses. And for some students, with the amount you get, you may get a little credit back from the student account bill to pay for those.



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Cushing: What I want to ask about, is a lot of people have different travel expenses, and those are even bigger for international students, when it costs thousands to go back home. There is also currency exchange. Are adaptations made for that, because my travel expense on work-study is \$120, but I pay around \$2000 to go back. That doesn't cover what it actually is. Is there any way to ask for more money to travel?

Bernier: For international students. Well, first for domestic students, the amount of travel is based on an estimate of what it costs for two round trips from home to Vassar. That is at the end of fall, and again at the end of spring. That doesn't cover October or spring break. Amounts range. For the West Coast the allotment is \$1250, and for NYC it is \$120. This is to reflect costs differences. We've seen some students plan ahead and they can get three trips in, or two and a half. So the big thing is to plan ahead. For international students, we don't cover the cost of roundtrip between home and Vassar. This is similar to what peers are doing. Part of it is that it is hard for us to factor in how much it will cost. Prices fluctuate depending on time of year and where you're coming from. The only travel allowance is the NYC one to get from airports and back. But, the parent contribution we calculate is less than it may be other schools, because hidden in the algorithm we use is a travel allowance. So we try to lower parent costs to reflect the cost to get here. At many other schools, work during breaks is actually assessed and factors into the student contribution for international students. We don't do that, because we know we aren't covering travel. We've tried to find other ways to help without paying for the cost of a plane ticket.

Operations: Hi, so my question is, as you know, the VSA has a compensation proposal, so can you talk about the history of that in relation to your office?

Bernier: I'll talk about student employment in general. There are many jobs on campus. Every department and office has them, almost. In 2008-2009 there were layoffs on campus for staff. That happened for student jobs as well, so we scaled back. As part of the student employment process, there is a taskforce that looks at new requests for new jobs on campus. We looked at if it is truly needed, and make sure it doesn't replace union jobs on campus. We have to be very careful because students can't do staff work. All requests come through us. We set the wage rate at \$9 per hour, and some, maybe twenty-twenty five managerial positions make a little more at \$10. So on working on getting VSA officers paid. I know you are voting tonight. I know you sent a proposal to senior officers about that. When we met, we talked about the hope to have a stipend. Actually, we tried to get away from stipends. the reason was that we need to ensure workers are getting paid at least minimum wage. We find that with many stipends, students are actually getting paid less. So a position will have to be paid out of hourly wage, and we understand that at some parts of the year students work more than ten hours a

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week and sometimes less. We want to make sure students make hourly wage to make sure they're getting at least \$9 an hour.

Student Life: This is also related to compensation. Can you give background about NY State law and why we couldn't pass the proposal if only work-study students could get paid?

Bernier: It is actually federal law. Students can't be paid if those volunteering with the same job don't. It is against regulations. You couldn't have only work-study students paid and others not. They wanted to make sure that if it is for one person, it is for everyone.

Finance: This is unrelated. For international students, we are not need blind. Could you talk about how that affects our diversity on campus and if that group makes up lots of students on financial aid or not?

Bernier: I don't know if I can answer that all. We work with admissions regarding who they are interested in. There is a wide range from all over the world. What I do is to figure out how much they need to receive, and then it is up to them to make the final decision. What we're trying to do is find quality candidates, and what add to have campus diversity, but another piece is we can accept but then who's actually going to come. That is hard to predict. There has been a shift to admitting more students that don't need as much money or any. This has changed the diversity of the countries represented. There is an understanding that this has happened. It is something admissions is looking at. We may have gone too far one way, and need to determine how to bring it back.

Finance: Has there been any discussion regarding whether or not to move to need blind admission for international students?

Bernier: I don't think there have been. That is at a higher level than I am at. There are very few schools that are. Part of it is it can be expensive. Domestic students are able to get federal aid even if not on a grant but on a loan and work-study. International students have a similar package, except Vassar is funding that loan. Students have to pay it back, but it comes from our resources. Even work-study, Vassar is funding it. Every dollar is coming from Vassar. It is hard to predict. Some schools were need blind and have scaled back because it was hard to manage.

Finance: I understand the technical and practical complications. But in your opinion, would it be more equitable to be need blind?

Bernier: You know what's hard? It is hard for me to comment. I don't see who is in the pool. I don't know who we're missing out on, or what those people could add who aren't being considered.

Strong: I am mostly looking clarification. You said earlier that work-study students, other than a couple, everyone gets paid \$9. Why is it then, from my perspective, that some people on work study do way more than others?

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Bernier: So this came about in two different ways. Minimum wage kept increasing to a point where it leveled out to what students were currently making. The other thing, we understand some do more than others, and some get paid to do homework. Our role is not necessarily to, you're not here to work as a living wage. You're here to be a student and it is up to you what choices you make and what reward you get out of that. Some students want time to do homework, others want a great addition to their resume. The other piece, it is hard to monitor. Many departments apply for more jobs with the justification that students will be doing work there every minute of the time working. Then if I walk by, I see them doing homework. It is hard to manage and regulate. It is up to students to decide what type of job they want. It is multi-pronged and has many different pieces.

At-large: My question, where does funding come from?

Bernier: Good questions. The way it is set up is almost every job is paid for by student employment. There are a few exceptions, such as research, which are funded by grants. Most jobs are paid out of the student employment budget.

At-large: Is that always the case? There are staff shortages and people look at positions that ought to pay more, or have a hard time filling, positions like UpC. UpC doesn't care how well it fills, it just changes hours, since they're not the ones funding it. There is a complexity in this where, with the executive compensation amendment, the way it is funded is exclusive of the rest of student employment even if qualifying for work study. One question is has it historically been like that? Is anyone researching things to be funded differently? There are such politics about it, so maybe it should be discussed.

Bernier: Most things are paid out of student employment. Some come to the taskforce and are pushed back, and we say, "no we are not funding that" and they are given reasons why. If a department came back and said they will fund it out of their own funds, we didn't stop them.

SoCos: If there is a job that comes to your attention that requires more work but is not less worthy of being a job, is there any way to deal with that?

Bernier: One of the things now, we look at how many students are currently working and the hours they are working. We want to be fully utilizing students we have now. So we ask, why the new amount of work, and why the need for new students? Or, say they are not fulfilling their work. How many hours does the department need to be filled? It may be yes, they have thirty hours to fill but students they have can't fill it all. In those cases we approve it for that semester or year; it is temporary. We try not to make judgment calls. It is just a matter of what has changed and why they need it now.

Finance: Regarding student contribution, how does that interact with students taking unpaid internships?

Bernier: We still have that expectation regardless.

Finance: What is the average amount expected?

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Bernier: \$2450

Finance: To clarify, that is the standard regardless of having a paid job over the summer?

Bernier: Correct. We understand you need to do internships. We're not at point where we can supplement for internships. It is one future goal. It will not be in the next few years. We've been talking with people about getting more funds. We'd really like to see the internship grant fund become more robust. We want to be able make sure to support that. the next step is to get funds available.

Finance: A follow-up on how this interacts with grants or fellowships. I know a number of fellowships don't require work-study but are given substantial monetary grants.

Bernier: That is part of the application process for some of the fellowships. Some have additional funds, so for any student on financial aid with a student contribution, they will fund that. That is only because of the amount of funds they have. The internship grant fund is to support expenses over the summer, not the student contribution.

Finance: My question is about students who receive funding that aren't on work-study.

Bernier: The internship grant fund is need sensitive. There is a release on there that students can sign to give permission to the financial aid office if we can share info that is on the official financial aid letter.

TAs: Thank you. I just want to clarify one point. Correct me if I'm wrong. The way the office seems to justify giving, saying whether they'll fund a work-study job, is based upon the department's ability to pay as well as need. Because the VSA budget is funded entirely by the Student Activities Fee, and is meant wholly for creating events on campus for students, how can we justify, aside from legal loopholes, how can we justify saying that can be the basis to pay exec if it is only meant for events?

Bernier: I think that's something for the VSA to decide. That is not something I can justify or decide. Part of our process of funding positions or not is really what comes out of our budget. This not coming out of ours, so it is up to the VSA in deciding how they want to use those funds.

Student Life: At the beginning of last semester, we spoke about student assistance for funding extracurricular activities. The last thing I heard, there were a bunch of hoops to jump through. What is the status of that project?

Finance: It became up to Finance to find a way to distribute these funds in an equitable process. The difficulty arises in confidentiality. If we made one of our funds, anyone could apply, and we wouldn't know their aid status. We are trying to figure out a solution to that.

Bernier: This has come up before. Not just this year. it always gets stuck on confidentiality. We don't want to share that information with another student. That is a roadblock we get to each time. And how to work around that without administration telling you how to spend your money. We don't want to

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tell you to spend more on this, this student, etc. Really, it is about protecting students and helping the VSA spend money without getting involved.

At-Large: For finance, is there a way to get around that, by putting somewhere on the application a place where students can consent to having their aid status shared?

Finance: The issue becomes whether it is appropriate as a committee to make those determinations. Even if we could, we're not trained to read those the same way financial aid is. It is not our function. We are trying to look at other measures.

Bernier: Yes, that's what it gets down to.

President: Thank you for coming in, super informative.

Finance: I motion to bring agenda item eight to discussion before item six so people who came here about the exec pay can speak without waiting.

President: All in favor of moving item eight before six? All.

All opposed? None. Great.

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

President: Does anyone have anything? No, okay.

6 Executive Board Reports

a. Activities.....(7 min)

Activities: we are looking at pre-orgs and planning a fair, that's it.

Finance: Unrelated. Would it be helpful if everyone wrote out exec board reports and you could all send it with your updates?

Main: It should be published on the website.

2 Council Updates

a. Lathrop.....(7 min)

Lathrop: Really quick. Last year we had an art market and we are doing it again this year. It will be April 25th, the same day as Spring Concert but during the day. We are coordinating with ViCE to make it cohesive. More information when it gets closer.

b. Town Students.....(7 min)

President: She is not here.

c. Joss.....(7 min)

Joss: We did our major event. It was awesome. Battle of the Bands. We look to do it in the future again. We are thinking of restructuring and taking out the competitive element, making it a student music festival. There will be a JYA fair in the Joss parlor in collaboration with the JYA office. We will announce details later.

7 VSA Executive Board Compensation Amendment.....2017 and Operations (40 min)

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Operations: Thank you to everyone that came. So, there are actually copies of the amendment somewhere over there that you can share.

finance: Also, not to put you on the spot, but if you want to come to the couch it might be easier.

Operations: So let's give some history. I'll defer to Josh Sherman.

President: We will be enforcing speaking at special meeting rules. Keeping that in mind, if something is said, and it is what you were going to say, you can knock, you don't need to repeat it. At-large members automatically go to top of the list.

At-Large (Josh S): This has been a couple years in the making. The goal was to bring work-study compensation to students on work-study on the VSA exec boards. The VSA ought to make the commitment easier for those students. It would only have paid for work in the background, other than the work done by other students who are not paid. This is a very different amendment than the current version. It evolved on dialogues with financial aid because of new rules. The origin of the discussion was around stipends, a flat amount of money. It has now shifted to a job. By being on exec, you are hired in this job, and are paid out by the VSA fund, which is funneled through the Student Financial Services office for legal reasons.

Operations: So I want to go over the text. Wording has changed, because we are not allowed to say stipend. Each member will receive pay up to their work-study allowance, or the amount allowed for their class year if not on work-study. On the back of that is supplemental info that came from Student Financial Services, which is mostly just logistical because last time there were questions about logistics. That's all there. Before discussion we want to take questions to make sure everything is clear.

Finance: I remember a similar amendment presented on two other occasions. Do you remember why those were passed and why they couldn't be enforced?

Operations: The first went to student employment, and the second was a letter to Cappy. They haven't passed, but neither were amendments. Also, both were relating to the student employment budget.

At-Large (Phil): Were either of the two proposals publicized? I don't think I was aware when they happened.

Finance: That falls on the people on council to publicize, House Presidents. I know I sent them. So at least you received them.

At-Large (Ali): This is something I'd like to see debated. In reality, this is not an ok proposal in my perspective. We've been talked about this coming out of the Student Activities fee. There are some issues with that. Students pay \$300 a year for that, and we would be taking a portion of that to pay six people. Unless you can argue somehow that this will improve programming on campus, you should be weighing against that. And about enforcing special meeting rules, why would you not identify what that meant.

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President: We can do that now.

At-Large (Ali): I'll finish my list. Additionally, I'd like to talk about moving thing. Finance, I recognize the purpose of why you might want to move it to earlier in the meeting, but on the other hand, there were people who wanted to come and were intending to come later. They were told to follow the Misc live blog in order to decide when to come or not, and now they're either running over or have said, fine, I guess I missed it. I don't think that is fair, since this is one of the few issues students really care about. Also, I feel like we have to mention this, council is now voting to pay themselves. Four out of six exec members were on council last year, which essentially means anyone on this council has a conflict of interest when voting. I sound angry, because I kind-of am. I don't pay that much attention, but I pay a decent amount, and to notice this issue coming up suddenly, only in an email two days ago, that is not enough time to appropriately address this issue.

At-large (Unknown): I suggest someone make a move to table the issue until after spring break and give adequate time to reflect opinion to their representatives, and then change the vote to popular referendum to better reflect the scope of the issue.

BOEA: I do agree that this is last minute, but we have to vote on this, and we have to vote so it can be publicized to campus so that the people running for Spring elections know the decision.

At-large (Josh S): I also consider myself tapped in, and I was not aware. I don't know the issue of why this is not a referendum.

President: Can we address that in a minute?

2015: Specifics of how this went down aside. It is important to at least talk about. I sent an email to the Senior Class and responses I got were actually pretty split. One of the biggest concerns given to me, is that making the decision as the VSA may not be the best way go about this. I don't know what the specifics of that entail, but given there is an election coming up, which is something the student body already votes on, I think that could be something consider.

President: Can we go over special meeting protocol? And talk about the process of a referendum?

Operations: The reason we took questions first is when we are actually debating, each person can only speak twice. I wasn't going to count questions to your speaking limit. I wouldn't say debate has started, but once it has you get to speak twice. You can directly respond if it is especially pertinent and you absolutely have to say what you need to say, but most of the time just wait your turn. For a referendum, there is a special process that requires council to vote first. Then, whether that passes or fails, a referendum can be brought via signatures. 15% of the student body has to sign the petition to get a referendum, which is 360 students.

At-large (Ali): If people think it is better, why wouldn't you just vote to suspend the bylaws that are relevant?

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Operations: That is an alternative that I was going to mention. We could suspend that by law that required us to vote first.

At-large (Unknown): What do you mean as debate?

Operation: What I mean is that I first want to make sure everyone is clear what they're voting on. Then transition into how people feel about it and criticisms.

President: If you are unsure how this work, we want to get those out of the way. If you have a procedural question, go for it, but then it becomes special meeting rules. Direct responses mean you literally can't go on unless you speak. Anyone else want to go on the question list?

At-large (Phil): In response to considerations for the timing issue, many mentioned that if we push to after break elections happen at the same time. But I want you to consider the possibility of that. Legislation of these sorts don't go back easily, so if it is passed today, it is harder for something like this to be reversed. It harder to lower minimum wage than to raise it. So it is very unlikely it will be abolished later. So timing shouldn't be that much of an issue.

Finance: What I would like to say, thanks to Operations for sorting this out for us. None of it was easy, and I feel bad Operations keeps getting hammered with questions. It is not his fault. My question, something I'm hoping gets explained, is the history within our current session. I also just want to remind everyone, the expectations of House and Class Presidents is to send out emails and for the Misc to publish articles. This is how we publicize.

Operations: The first time Operations committee discussed this was right before winter break. So when we have an amendment, we have to bring it for a reading then we can vote later. It was brought up three weeks ago. There were a lot of procedural questions on how it would be implemented, and that was all sorted out by last week. This is the second reading and we are allowed to vote.

Finance: Did House Presidents and Class Presidents send this information out? Did the Misc tweet about it? No? So I see the publicity issue.

Operations: I just looked at the referendum thing. If the VSA approves the amendment, to make it go to referendum, 5% have to sign. If it doesn't get approved, you need support of 15%. I don't know why, I didn't make the rule.

Strong: I was hoping someone on Operations who knows about this can speak to the differentiation in wording, where it says it will pay up to work study allowance or to institutional allowance for class year. If work study is less than that, won't some people be getting different amounts?

Operations: That's a rule by Student Financial Services.

Strong: Are we going through them still?

Operations: Yeah.

SoCos: So questions don't count but direct responses do.



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Operations: Direct responses don't, but questions will after this.

President: But if you abuse direct responses I will gavel you pretty hard.

TAs: Clarifying some points. If we're going to move this to referendum, is it impossible to table it first but still start that process up, or do we need to vote either way?

Operations: Well according to procedures, we have to vote to go to referendum. Whether that's approved or denied determines the percentage.

TAs: So to clarify, if we vote to not have it passed, and rather move to that point, like, that's an actual motion?

Operations: There are a few options. If the VSA approves it, we can go to referendum if 5% of the student body say they object. If the VSA votes against it and it doesn't pass, 15% have to say they object. Option three is to suspend any bylaws, and a separate vote can be made to automatically go to referendum.

President: And then that would be like elections?

BOEA: I want to make it clear that is impossible to do this before elections. But yes, it would go through polling.

At-Large (Ali): Wouldn't it make more sense to do it during election time anyway?

BOEA: Yes, but one problem, then students can't run with the security of knowing they will have money. Essentially by doing that we push back a year of knowing for sure they can get money.

President: Now we will enter, dun dun dun, the debate period. You can speak two times. If you speak three I will gavel so hard.

Finance: So, I put a lot of thought into what I want to say. I hope that people will listen and not be bored. I think that I can approach this from a unique perspective because I've on council in three different capacities. The crux of the argument is why these positions are different and singled out, why does the VSA uniquely have positions be paid. It comes down to the amount of work and type of work. This week, in prep for this meeting, and I am sorry about the publicity issue, that alone should postpone voting if we think we need to. That is a problem structurally if we haven't been sending out emails, because people do read them. So the amount of work, calculated in my capacity, this week was fourteen hours forty-five minutes. Monday I had an hour of emails, Tuesday two hours in office hours and an extra approving emails and meeting with treasurers. On Wednesday I spent two hours in the first finance committee meeting, and I didn't have the one-hour second one this week, but will every other. Thirty minutes in VSA exec, and one hour of emails. Thursday was an hour of emails, Friday I was in the office and did emails. Saturday, an hour of emails, and Sunday council and the exec meeting before it. Even if that does not include administrative aspects. I will also provide a handout later to the Misc. That is still more than a work study allotment of time. To show for all that, I'll tell

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you what I do. Between now and last month there were 319 p-card transactions, and anytime those are charged, I actually have to go in and look at what it was and approve it. There were eighteen charges to the VSA p-card, which means you have to fill out a form, I have to verify, you attach receipt, and I collect it all in case of an audit. I approved 47 requests in the last week alone. I make sure we are spending money in an appropriate way, the way it is budgeted. I spend the bulk of my time doing that. Minutes from the Finance committee are in this agenda. There were 12 applications asking for a total of \$23,000 that we were responsible for allocating this week. Obviously we didn't do all of them. This is what our decision was, and then, since that Sunday, I've had 300 pages of emails. I've got them printed out. Our positions are unique. They aren't typical positions where you go to a meeting and say opinions. We are actually functioning administrations. We all run an office, and it isn't that different from student workers who work in administrative offices. Now the reason I'm saying this is not to show how much more I do. I like doing this. It is really fun. Part of my privilege was that I was given the opportunity to do this because I don't have to work work-study. I can't imagine doing both. Only a certain subset of our population can dedicate this time. To answer questions why we don't think this could be field work. It doesn't transfer to academic work at Vassar. That's like as if you are saying students working in an office of a department should just get fieldwork as opposed to being compensated for administrative work. Most importantly it comes down to accessibility. We speak so much about representing, looking at the VSA as an institution, and on exec this year, we've made legit steps toward making it more accessible. I speak every week about the Finance committee restructuring. The others spend just as much time and institute just as much change. We want to be bringing you the most representative student government possible. We want to allow people to have the option to be in these pos. That's why I stand in strong proposition to this. And if you'd like to look at these, essentially it is what I produced this week in this capacity.

President: So I'm probably not going to use my second talk. I don't get to vote, one, and two, I want to hear what you have to say. One perspective gets lost in this discussion. It isn't an issue of how much we work. EMS deserves to be paid. CAREs. Tons of people do and don't get shit for it. If that was all this was, I understand. My only thing is, I sit in on trustee meetings as the only student, and at the end of the day, a white women can't represent all students voices. I am not representing student voices that are needed. I'm in the position where I don't have to worry about getting a work study job. People can't hold this job with work study. That is detrimental. We represent a very limited subset of the Vassar population. I love this school, and I will probably give donations if I am ever rich. At the end of the day I'm concerned about who is able to do this because of accessibility.

At-Large (Ben): I've never been to a VSA meeting before. Woah, it is so official. I think the issue of accessibility is really important, but I question whether offering money is going to solve that in any

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meaningful way. I think, sorry, I am looking at the email I sent to you guys so I remember my notes. I'm concerned about the effect this might have, that it might be detrimental to what the VSA does. You mentioned people aren't now compensated. Are people going to run with compensation in mind now? This goes beyond access, and whether or not we are now going to run for that purpose. I wonder if this money comes from programming, if it is appropriate to give \$16000 of that to the VSA exec board. Some main questions is does this have any backing? One, what precedent has been set at peer institutions? The other question is what experiences lead you to believe this will change issues that are so profound? I've been a treasurer for three years and dealt with three different VPs for Finance, and each time they say that for the VSA, all funds are for programming. There has been no other instance of re-appropriating money not directly for programming. This should not be a decision made by people at these tables.

At-Large (Josh S): i am an at-large member of Operations, and I've seen a lot of this evolve. The accessibility argument is a big theme that has evolved. The current state has been changed dramatically from what was brought in. These aren't decisions council made, but as we learned more information we realized everyone has to be paid. There is an issue of civil service. Basically, to be on council is a civil service. Working with a community that is run basically by 90% volunteerism. There's been enough discussion on the definition of civil service, and whether this is, and it is frankly not if everyone gets paid. This is separate from the accessibility argument. Another thing we've discussed in this space is that there is a surplus, and one thing, a big unknown, is whether or not that will be how this is paid for. I don't know what the surplus is, but whether or not it is comparable to what we lose from, this \$16000 could be nothing, since our budget is already in surplus, which is important to bring up. One other thing, transparency. Operations discussed this three weeks ago, and one argument was whether or not to pass this first and figure out details later, or focus in on and fix the finer points. One thing the student body feels is strongly about is getting an exchange for those \$16000. One institution listed on this sheet, Oberlin, has full transparency of hours worked and what exec members do in those hours. That possibility hasn't been discussed. That is a big unknown, and what are the ramifications of wanting more access but under greater scrutiny? Students there actually write letters to the editor when they disagree with how exec hours were spent. These are very important finer points. One other thing, publicity. This is a weird situation, where it has been tabled for so long that we are now on the brink of break, and if it doesn't pass today, it will be impossible to have a referendum and publicize and vote before Spring elections.

BOEA: Correct, that is literally impossible.

At-Large (Josh S): We just had the discussion of publicity, and if the entire goal is accessibility, that frames on everyone knowing about this who wouldn't otherwise apply. So how well can that be done,

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and what committees can research how to get the word out? A big thing is we want to get ready for Spring elections, but is there enough time? There are of moving parts not addressed that will effect whether or not people want to run. This was discussed already, but transparency hasn't been talked about. So a long story short, there are a lot of things not known despite the effort of Operations. We could spend a lot of time finding out more, also seems in status quo that this has not been discussed long enough to make a vote and really have a conscious mind in terms of actual effectiveness. And then, if it isn't effecting spring elections, it doesn't matter if it passes between now and next Spring. That's a decision that has to be made. If we are not 100% ready to go into this, it has to wait until next year.

At-Large (Josh T): I sit on finance and am the intern for the VP for Finance. And in those sessions, someone has to have everything they need together in time to present to us. They can't come and say "we need funding now otherwise the event doesn't go on" because we'll just say, "You should have had your shit together before you came to us". That is what I'm saying to this now. Why was this not, if we knew in December, why were we not feeling it out in winter break, or since January, and explaining it to the student body before they were forced into a vote. It is okay if we wait on this. If we do push this, there is more time for students to speak to the issue, and one of the most important things is to hear them. Another point, accessibility. I wonder if throwing money is the only way we can talk about accessibility. Instead of these people having to do everything, we should seriously talk about restricting the council system so exec doesn't have to do all fourteen hours of weekly work.

Finance: A direct response. With regards to the surplus, we have \$16000 in the budget surplus, and that is only from the special purpose funds, not including money left over in org budgets. So in terms of what impact that will have on us? None. Also, we run budget surpluses in the tens of thousands of dollars for the past three years. All of that info can be compiled and sent to the Misc. In terms of how that will change things, there will be none.

At-Large (Phil): I want to applaud Finance's work, because if I wanted to become VP for Finance I doubt I would be able to do that and balance other obligations. However, I want to draw attention to the logic behind the bill. What you're trying to say, by paying \$16000 this bill will induce more applications for the position and make selected candidates more capable of fulfilling the role because of increased accessibility. While likely, it remains to be established. We are paying a high sticker price for it and it is not very, I think we need some proof that this will actually achieve its purpose.

Something I do want to offer, I wonder if there are other solutions to the problem? For a more administrative-heavy role, because I am aware, I am not exactly sure if there are paid assistants for every VSA exec board position, but Finance has one. From what you're saying, you're doing a lot of work, sometimes big or small. I'm wondering if there is a greater possibility for more paid assistance. It is

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definitely a tradeoff of responsibility and time and effort and capability. The risk and reward is worth considering. My third point, if we make a point to vote today, we should suspend the bylaw and go to popular referendum instead of going through the whole petition thing. A lot of this is planned politics, and if the harm is very widespread students will likely have small incentive to file and sign a petition. I think popular vote is better in this sense.

At-Large (Ali): This is the first time I'm speaking in the official debate session. Okay so, \$16000 surplus, why aren't we talking about dropping the Student Activity fee? That would be an eight dollar deduction. I'm also pretty sure that it was clearly established during this meeting that there is a major PR problem. If orgs knew there was extra money available to be taken, it would not just be sitting around.

Finance: Point of order. I think it is inappropriate to have those characterizations. Three times this semester I talked about it, I gave a presentation during all four treasurer trainings. The students involved have the information they're entitled to. It doesn't mean we have a publicity problem, just because students don't take advantage.

At-Large (Ali): Point taken, I apologize. So the budgeting process. Is that a five year or three year? Because looking at past years, even though we have a consistently increasing student body, it doesn't change. Is there any discussion about changing that process?

Finance: The answer to that is yes.

At-Large (Ali): Another point, it is a reasonable argument that the best time to vote is during elections if we go to referendum because voting turnout rates are high, relatively. I do take considerations made about pushing it off until later. But if this is important, we should consider taking referendum in this election cycle.

At-Large (Phil): A direct response, Finance has done everything in his capacity to publicize this issue. Treasurer's are supposed to relay that information onward. But not all treasurers participate in centered programming, and not all are responsible. This issue may better be served to inform the general student body and all leadership boards.

Activities: A direct response, when Finance brought up the stats I had no idea, so I sent out an email to all org heads. I know they got it, because someone in my org came up to me and was like "There are so many funds we've got to apply to everything!"

Finance: There has been an increase in fund apps since.

At-Large (Tyler): The accessibility question. If compensation is added, yes, that might change who is running, but the fact is this institution is favoring middle to upper-class students already. There is this expectation of what VSA exec should look like, which tends to be mostly white males. An example is two years ago, it was bad. As a result, being something so ingrained in this institution, I don't believe

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## Council Agenda for March 8, 2015

*Time: 7:00pm*

*Location: College Center 223*

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increasing accessibility of who's going to run is going to influence at all those elected into those positions.

At-Large (Bethan): It is really important to talk about the publicity issue. Everyone who is not on exec, your job is to be the representatives of people, and if you didn't say yes that you talked to your constituents, then basically the burden falls on the Misc. It is not the Misc's job to be your publicity org. If you are not talking to the student body, there is no way you should be voting to speak for me or your constituents. I also really think it is important to think about a conflict of interests. If you are even vaguely thinking of running next year, I feel that it is inappropriate. I think that pertains to a bunch of people on council. Also, I generally support referendum. Vassar students are smart enough to know if they want something. Especially if the VSA is having a publicity problem, put the vote to them, they are the best judges in saying what they want and don't want.

Finance: Point of information, please raise your placard if you did reach out to your constituents.

Joss: We don't receive agendas telling us when we are voting. We didn't even find out since less than twenty-four hours ago.

Finance: Yes, but this has been in conversation for three weeks.

At-Large (Bethan): The agenda isn't accessible. I've had people texting me asking what time they should be coming, which is really difficult on a Sunday night when you expect people to speak. You can't expect someone with less than twenty-four hours notice to change their whole schedule if they know representatives haven't done anything to represent them.

At-Large (Ben): I would like to respond to a couple of points. There is a real question of accessibility. I don't think, as much as I respect you all, I don't think time spent should even be in question. There are hundreds of students extracurriculars with long hours. For theater I spend fifteen hours a week. Ten hours rehearsal, three hours of meetings, and several others. I don't think that should be in the question. Aside from that, I want to echo that I don't know that throwing money can solve it. In terms of publicity, I heard about this from my Class Rep, so thanks 2015. I also think you as a council have an issue with publicity, and should take collective responsibility. You're the people we elect, and if you aren't doing a good job communicating with your constituents, you all need to step it up.

At-Large (Ali): Can I make a motion? I motion to suspend article eight, sec one, the section on referendums, and move to bring the amendment to referendum for vote during the Spring election.

Operations: So now there is a separate speaker's list to speak to the motion.

Finance: I agree with the general idea that we need to stop talking right now. Clearly we as a council need to do work on this. Exec board did a lot of work, we've discussed it every meeting and done our best to bring it here. The first time introduction provided an opportunity to ask questions. I don't feel comfortable sending it to referendum if our responsibility as a council is to make sure we send

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something we can all stand by and explain. There are too many questions leftover. It is unrealistic to try and get it in for spring elections. I standby everything I said and believe strongly in it. I'm also disheartened by the lack of publicity as an institution that we have been providing. We can only do so much as individuals. I already annoy the hell out of everyone. But there needs to be a conversation about how we are reaching out, and whether or not call yourself a representative if you are not doing your responsibility. I think this need to be tabled and postponed.

At-Large (Josh): I echo max's sentiments. I am very much for referendum. But if this were to go, would this be how it would look and what students receive? The problem is it doesn't include anything i mentioned. it is very technical. Does anyone know what this is? I'm not sure the general body, not saying we are not smart, but that the language hasn't been discussed really. This isn't complete. If one sentiment has been going around, it is to bring this back to the drawing board.

BOEA: I appreciate how this won't fix accessibility. If anyone in this room knows what is going to fix it, please speak up. This is a step forward. Seeing people try to restructure this both last and this year, it is a long process, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't take steps forward today. I find it disheartening to talk about doing a vote and saying council feels ready to vote now, but that in four weeks the regular student body wouldn't be able. You are underestimating students and four weeks to publicize. The general consensus is that referendum needs to happen. Now we are talking in circles.

At-Large (Ali): Point of motion, everyone is saying referendum. Josh's point was good. Can I amend my motion? I want to make a motion, and amend it to say, referendum should be brought about the concerning issue with language to be determined by the council at a later date. It is still a referendum, but we have time to decide what we give out.

At-Large (Phil): Not enough is being done regarding accessibility that is conducted by polling student opinions. If we are talking about VSA accessibility, why more people of different backgrounds wouldn't apply to different positions, by appointment or electing, the best people to poll and ask why is the students. It would probably be better to conduct research in that regard and find what we can do as opposed to theorizing about what could have happened. It is better to draw from students directly.

Operations: This is very technical, but I move to postpone vote on Ali's motion to refer to the end of the speaker's list to hear what people who have talked to their constituents have to say.

President: I agree, we need to have a serious conversation, and I don't think this will pass now. We need to stop sitting around not talking about anything and have a real conversation with exec about how it is all white men half the time. Not right now, but historically, it's been a lot of white dudes. We need tangible steps.

Operations: We have to vote on my motion now.

President: Abstentions? All in favor? All. All opposed? Nobody.

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Cushing: Thank you for addressing lots of things. I have a few things to say. To preface, I am not going to run for exec ever. I'm just saying, I want to look from an outsider perspective. You mentioned CAREs and EMS should be paid. As a CAREs member, what I am doing is volunteer work. I agree that it deserves to be paid, however I signed up as a volunteer. I can speak for maybe all of CAREs to say that that is what everyone has thought about. Volunteer work essentially means you are up for that. I'm a House President and do CAREs, and can say it takes almost as much time to commit to be a CAREs listener as to be a House President. I want to say to address accessibility issues in the VSA, it is a huge thing, but we can't sit down and do it here. For example, only 10% of the school is international students, so we have to address lots of things about the student body. I want to say that people in places of privilege have more voice when it comes to running for positions. As Tyler said before, it doesn't matter if we pass this or not. People in places of privilege still run and get more appreciation from the student body just because of privilege. We can't change that by talking about it over and over again. Also, they have more confidence in speaking and campaigning. I also want to ask, if we move to take to referendum, during spring or after, does that mean it will apply for the 2015-16 year or not?

Operations: If that is the language on the referendum, then yes.

Cushing: So that means people who run won't know? Ok cool. I think that might create problems obviously. I don't know if we are rushing or not, but I think we are rushing. This wasn't discussed at all last semester. It has been a thing for two years, tabled and discussed, and it has changed so much. I personally haven't sent an email to my constituents. I am very sorry for not sending an email, however, I know a lot of people here don't send everything we discuss during VSA in their weekly email. That is really difficult to do. Also, I personally think we should not point fingers during this discussion. But I appreciate everyone who sent emails.

At-Large (Josh S): Point of information. As for a reason why it has taken so long for dialogues back and forth with senior administrators. Every time this comes up with a structure, they say we have to rework it. There are so many moving parts, and now the biggest change being that Student Financial Services disagrees how this can work financially. That is probably why every time we have to go back to the drawing board.

Cushing: I personally think this should be made for 2016-17 instead of 15-16.

At-Large (Maddie): To that point, this is one year in balance. It is not going to be taken away. Yes, in the short term we will still have an unbalanced council, even over a few years. But we need to think more long-term. In three years none of us will be here, and it won't matter. This needs to be a longer term issue and not your personal thoughts.



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Raymond: I had a lot to say. Just want to say one thing about the voting idea. My personal opinion is that this will not be voted on tonight. I feel that vibe. If you don't, feel the vibe. As far as conflict of interest, I know VSA makes characterizations of the general student body, but vice versa. Assuming that discounts our ability to use abstentions. I can't run because I am going aboard, but if I was, I would abstain.

TAs: A lot of what I was going to say has been spoken to. There were a few good points of TA residents. Being seniors, it has given us a small snapshot of longer term struggles for access to the VSA. It informed us in a few ways how think about this. I don't see the idea of throwing money as a long-term solution to this problem. But given time, given more spaces to speak to this issue and invite at-large members to speak to this, it can be changed to be one small step towards access. One options TA residents proposed that I hadn't even thought about, the idea of fieldwork or class credit for these spots. Though it has been said it is not necessarily pertinent in experience to class or future career, I would argue, although twisted, it is a practice of public service. In recent years, I think that has sort of fallen greatly. But it is. I think that can be a strong argument, and fieldwork is class credit at the very least. That being said, if the VSA is truly committed to talking about access to the VSA overall, I think that it is very important to think about the VSA as a collective bargaining body. For me, hearing the idea that the college is unwilling to support the VSA in making more access, that is a true load of shit to me. That if, the VSA wants to become more accessible, it needs to bargain versus the college itself. So that is my two cents and views of residents as well.

Finance: A lot of people on council don't like me. That is a legitimate statement. Two weeks ago there was an issue on council of various different things, people saying we weren't discussing anything important and why are we having this discussion. This is one of the first times an issue is important to students, so thanks to the students who showed up as well as Phil and Ali for talking about it on Facebook. Now we have the opportunity to talk about something important, and the reason I feel uncomfortable, is that we don't have adequate representation here. We don't have enough of what the student body wants because we as a council have not done our job reaching out. We should've anticipated everything that was said before it was brought to a final state. It is not the fault of Operations, because I know they are doing their job in meeting with committees and administration. The issue becomes, what looks like pointing fingers, because I am. When we bring something to the council floor, it is important that you see that as important and go out to your constituents. Especially an amendment to the constitution. I know it sounds like high rhetoric, but this is what I produced this week. A lot of people don't have the privilege to give that much time. If this what I did this week and I know exec did, then what did you guys do that week? What is the responsibility of members of

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council in contributing to this student government? Ask yourself what you can be doing to exercise authority in an appropriate way.

2018: To touch on a few things, I want to directly respond to Max. With all due respect, most council is also on House Team. They spend a lot of time on House Team things. We divide as council and exec. Most council have to deal with reslife and house issues. It is hard to point fingers, but I get where you are coming from, but also having to do reslife stuff. I want touch on everything else. I will go really quickly. Earlier about the incentive, I don't think that will change who will run because of the amount of work. Also what Ali said earlier, \$2.20 out of the Student Activity fee to pay for this, exec board helps the school run, and if they decided not do their job, the school wouldn't run. We are making sexual assault surveys, where other schools pay up to \$80,000 to make a survey that Student Life did on her own. For someone on work study, I would love to be in that position, and I am very for paying \$2. I do agree with talking about lowering the fee. But i am fine paying extra to help the school run. Vassar could not be Vassar. We can't be dismissing their jobs, because they are doing work administrators should be doing. I also think this should be the student body's decision, I don't think we should be voting on council to pay ourselves.

At-Large (Josh T): Point of order, it would actually be \$7 out of the activities fee. The conversation right now is what does exec do, blah blah blah. What that says to me is that instead of trying to find quick solution, we should be having real conversations like this, about the structure of council, roles of House Presidents, of each position doing too much. I picked up this spreadsheet, and I had one similar last year in Operations, looking at the structure of different governments. Our system is very unique, many others don't run like this, and they seem to be running fine. If it makes students so overworked, too much with too many hours. instead saying let's pay, we should be having actual conversations about how to restructure. Not just more people to run for it, but have more people involved in this conversation. Have that conversation instead of this. this is an easy fix, because we are afraid of going toward complete overhaul, but I think that would be more beneficial in the long run. Student Life: A few things. There are a lot of points of accessibility and workload is really important. But the question of mutual exclusivity is important. We had an external review from Butch, and I totally agree with you Josh, that would be a great thing, but it is not mutually exclusive with paying members of exec. The job's function is not so much something anyone could do, but builds on specialized knowledge and training. I couldn't do Finance's job. There is so much knowledge specific to the administration you work, the way the office functions, and so the idea of simply splitting up work is questionable. The whole point of this is that we are experts at what we do. Throwing money at problem. We identify a sight marginalization, not all work study jobs are the same. Some student work study jobs require lots of hours that they couldn't also put in here. This is not empty rhetoric. Money

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in this case literally solves the problem so you don't have to work other jobs. I don't think this is the same as the Dialogue Across Differences Fund, for example. Students cannot afford do this job, so money is meaningful. It allows some to buy textbooks and food and pay for laundry. Collective bargaining, that is interesting. If we paid exec, that might actually help power the VSA. It is not just who is in but how they choose to allocate time. I could be putting in more hours a week, but every extra means one less of sleep or homework. If paid, there might be greater incentive to schedule meetings, to pester administrators, and real incentive to put in hours at the job. If I sit for extra hour, I get an extra \$8 in my pocket. That is a meaningful incentive to increase the bargaining power I bring. Lastly referendum, yeah, we lose this year's potential applicant pool who would rely on work-study compensation for this job by moving to referendum, but I would be bad student leader if didn't listen to what the voices are saying. I am still extremely pro funding allocations for these positions, but I do thing referendum would be appropriate. We lose out on the potential year, but I do think it is important. For conflict of interest, I think that is interesting. Should we never vote on anything in our own self interest? That would be like saying people of color should not pass laws on civil rights issues. If you are a member of council and on work study, compensation is meaningful to you, and I don't think it is evil or selfish or greedy. I think people who are considering the position might have better insight and decision making calculus that goes into it. Saying they should not vote is pretty simplistic and discounts the idea that they can be affected.

At-Large (Phil): Point of information. For financial incentives. If it is worth paying \$16000 to increase applications that wouldn't be otherwise made, is unclear.

Student Life: I quit my job to do this job. I could not do both. I chose to run only after finding out I had a paid internship over the summer. If I didn't have that, I wouldn't be doing this job right now.

President: Who on exec quit their job?

*Many raise placards.*

Finance: I needed mine. I cut hours in half.

At-Large (Unknown): Hannah, can you talk about how your job is specialized? It seems that if it is so specialized, that is contradictory to how accessible it is to students. If I can't do it, by that structure it isn't accessible to me at all. Then money won't affect that at all. What makes you think it is so specialized as opposed to others?

Student Life: None of us moved in knowing what we're doing. I mean that I am specialized right now because of the incredibly awkward learning process. This is not something I am inherently good at. It is a learning process. It is a fairly long trial and error process. I think it is the same for every student who has ever held a position. Once you learn you become good at it.

At-Large (Unknown): So then why does splitting not make it easier?

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Student Life: It's the things I learned about structure. Knowing which offices do what. There are a lot of conversations that happen about BIRT and CIE, and making connections between the two and being able to know what's happening in each thing helps me to better coordinate what I am doing. It is possible, but you would need a high level of communication, which might cost more hours might actually benefit people. I don't sit on every single committee, I send proxies, and it is less efficient, because the proxy doesn't have all info I have. They don't know what's going on with CIE and SAVP when going to CCL unless I made it explicitly clear ahead of time what's relevant. It is easier if it is centralized to one brain. It is really useful to have one person in charge who knows everything. Like Activities looks after such large number orgs. Splitting 50/50 would be a waste of time.

Finance: For my position, it is helpful to look at the exec positions individual offices. I run the Finance office. I don't do everything by myself. I have my committee, my intern. If I were to do everything it would be thirty hours. I have to communicate and delegate, but I don't think it would be positive to split up into two different committees. In order to only do fourteen hours, I need to be an effective delegator. The issue then becomes, if someone approves half of the fund apps, there could be an inconsistent application of our rules. The orgs we run in administrative capacities. If I had two Joshes, I wouldn't have to be paid, but that's just because has efficient. But do I text him at two in the morning? Yes. And he's also paid.

TAs: I think what you said moves away from point. In improving work involved, lessening workload, you increase access by allowing more spots open. But that is beyond what we are trying to get done tonight. This is overwhelmingly about access rather than work.

Operations: First, I definitely support the referendum. I wish we lived in a world where the VSA could represent enough to vote and not force the student body to do it. That is a structural issue. Second. In terms of redistributing positions, there is no possible way to change structure before the current election. There definitely exists the possibility in another year. I recognize the benefit in the long run. On a personal level., I did not quit work study, because I need my money. It is really hard to do. Plus all my classes other things. It is so overwhelming I see a therapist off campus. A good portion of my work study check then goes toward keeping me sane. I am very personally invested in this. I also want to recognize everyone in this room, particularly House Presidents, because as a former House President I know it is nearly impossible to put in VSA related stuff with House Team.

At-Large (Josh S): I want to echo about transparency. There are a lot of things I'm upset about. For House presidents, the reslife taskforce is looking from the ground up at reslife. In the long run discussion, there are many other things on a huge plate. I want to remind that tons of things are now up in the air, even Main building according Bob.

2015: Point of information. Can we restructure the VSA as the VSA?

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At-Large (Ali): Yes, they did years ago.

Operations: Not before spring elections.

2016: In response to not emailing. I apologize. I did bring it up in council. Some things I got from that discussion. There's the idea of prioritizing these over other big org positions. The head of ViCE does equally as much with so many subsections. I wonder, if this were to pass, what would happen in the future. Another thing, the surplus, how sustainable is that for the future? I don't think it is a strong argument if we don't know that will last. Last, going back to fieldwork and offering academic credit. I know it is not relevant to a field of study. But that is kind of why we are at a liberal arts school. It could really offer a solution to accessibility. You could get credit time towards that and not have one class.

Academics: My perspective on that is that we would have to inject an academic component. My opinions on feasibility of that are very low, in terms of what faculty talks about in terms of fieldwork. They are trying to do an overhaul, because there are currently very lax rules surrounding it right now, so I don't think it would ever be approved. They would ask for pedagogical underpinnings. I don't know what those are for this.

At-Large (Anthony): Two points personally. I am the Lathrop Freshman rep and I did send out an email. Coming from the perspective of a Transitions student, in a way that is somewhat of a demographic, even if I am a white male. I have two issues. One was brought up by 2016. One being are other orgs, like the head of ViCE, the people who run shows, they all have a huge time commitment as well. The argument Student Life made, about specialization. I think it can be better split apart in a way that not only engages the VSA more positively but to get more people involved as well. Also, if you do delegate, you reduce hours. The second point, is the fact that when talking to board presidents, Strong made a point that some people do enjoy their jobs. I like being basketball manager, and I don't want to give that up to work for the VSA. I would like to do both ideally. There are unique opportunities in both of those. In general, a restructuring might be more suitable because if you do vote and pass this amendment, it will slow down the restructuring process which is a bigger issue.

Activities: I want to take a mini-second to thank all of the at-large members and the 2017 proxy. Emily, our intern, writes our minutes. So something that could be done is to send out those minutes. Then, everyone know what is going on, but you don't have to say let me tell you. It could make them more accessible that way.

2018: Maybe no one will read the minutes, they are very long. We could send an outline with the main points. Then, if they see something that interests them, students can also read minutes.

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Operations: A direct response. As I mentioned briefly, the VSA is going to have an update column in the Misc that Emily is writing. If it is okay with the Misc, you could also send that out. I don't know if that is allowed.

President: Could they do it the week after?

Operations: On the same days you publish?

Misc: Why don't they just read the Misc.

Jewett: The more you shove in them the less they're getting out of them.

2015: I don't send them because no one reads them.

President: We are going to vote on the motion.

At-Large (Ali): The motion on the table is put up a referendum in this election cycle, concerning the question of paying for exec members from the Student Activity Fee, with the exact language to be decided on a timeline BOEA things appropriate to get it into elections. You don't need exact language worked out, but you are basically agreeing not to vote now, it is still a good push for something. There has been a lot of conversations today that are really important. But a lot did stray. I think it is important to recognize that you should still address this issue now. Whether we restructure later, that is a later conversation, and this is still a potentially good idea. The student body should be deciding. With this rough outline, we will vote with referendum.

President: We need to have more honest conversations as a college and in this particular body we should not be afraid to disagree. Sitting around is never going to change anything. The motion on the table is to vote to send this as Ali said. You can abstain, vote yes, vote no.

Operations: Point of information, also since this motion is to suspend a bylaw, we need a 2/3 vote.

President: Does anyone abstain?

All in favor? All.

All opposed? None. This will go to referendum as Ali said.

At-Large (Peter): Question, for exec board payment. Is it saying every single exec regardless of income and financial aid will be paid?

President: Yes. Financial Aid basically said you can't pay some and not others. Legally we have to pay everyone. It is a federal law.

### 8 Open Discussion

Student Life: I wanted to let everybody know about an initiative. We have had a conversation about the minimum deposit amount for VCash on the VCard. When using Blackboard, the minimum is similar to using a credit card at stores. But it also applies to any deposit at the Cashier's Office. We're working on meeting with CIS and addressing that. It sucks. It is a really shitty thing. We need VCash for laundry.

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Joss: Yeah, it seemed reasonable, and we thought maybe the reason was the credit deposit thing, but then we realized the Cashier's Office is the same. What the fuck. So, yeah, hopefully in the next week we will have our first meeting with the card office, CIS. Updates to come. People have been expressing frustrations for a long time. It will be nice to be able to put some work in on that.

Jewett: For the publicity issue. I'm pretty sure I asked last semester. Can we get a schedule of the forums from now through the rest of the semester?

President: We just solidified that this week, and I will send it out.

Operations: Elections came up a lot. I wanted to remind you all to email your position description to me. And remind Class Council and House Team members to fill those out.

At-Large (Josh S): Speaking of forms, earlier, I wanted to remind 2018, 2017, 2016, and 2015 about your CAFA representative. That is the space to bring up like what Smith has, to waive the student contribution for students with unpaid internships. I was on it last year, and they don't give a shit about what students say. But speak to them, and use them as way talk to administration and faculty. There has been discussed about undocumented students and waitlisted students and being need aware. CAFA is the space to give concerns.

At-Large (Tyler): As Julian Williams mentioned earlier, there will be openings for House Advisor positions next year. We are going to New Orleans for the first round of interviews. So if there is anything you want me to look for, send me an email.

President: Specifically what houses?

At-Large (Tyler): I think just to find replacements for Kelly and Mariyah. For the others we'll see.

Academics: This coming Wednesday, we'll be sending curricular proposals to faculty. One is the IME we talked about on council last year. One on limiting the max number of units per semester to 4.5, and another changing distribution requirements. That will be the first reading, and the second will happen on April 8th. I will send it to all of you. It will be a good opportunity to send it to your constituents. So I will send it all, read them, and send to constituents.

Operations: The Reslife Taskforce will meet for the first time this Wednesday at 8pm. The location I'm not sure. They still need some at-large members, so if interested email me.

Main: Motion to adjourn.

End: 10:25