

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Council Agenda for April 12, 2015

Time: 7:00pm

Location: College Center 223

"Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud."-Maya Angelou

1 Call to Order

Start: 7:03

2 Attendance.....Operations

Proxies: Ferry, Main, Cushing, SoCos

3 Consensus Agenda

- a. BSU (Social Consciousness).....\$1000/\$1000
- b. BSU (Discretionary)\$1000/\$4000
- c. Devils (Conference).....\$1200/\$2050
- d. Quiz Bowl (PreOrg)\$300/\$300
- e. Business Club (Discretionary).....\$150/\$150
- f. VISA (Discretionary)\$1400/\$2000
- g. FWA (Capital) \$437.40/\$3257.40
- h. Minutes From 4/5/15

Finance: So, we had a light week this week. For the two fund apps from BSU, the first was from the Social Consciousness Fund. There used to be a theater group called the Ebony Theater Ensemble, but it went defunct a couple years ago. However, there is still a group maintaining the programming for it but not through any official organization. This year, we decided to pay for it through the VSA. The second one was from the Discretionary fund, and the org is going to purchase DNA testing kits, which will allow members to trace their DNA origin. They wanted twenty of them, but that would've been \$4000, so we are giving them three to see how it works out, and if they want they can do more later. Quiz Bowl is a pre-org applying for their annual budget. The Business Club needed money to bring in a hedge fund manager, and that happened today. FWA wanted to buy capital purchases for the mug, because a show is happening there. The Devils made it to the last round of an international acappella tournament last week. Any questions?

President: This isn't the most updated Agenda, because it didn't get printed since I forgot to send it to Emily. So Activities has something to add.

Activities: So the Sailing Club is ending. Anyone who would want to take it up again can take it as a pre-org, and we are trying to find an administrator person to take over and make sure this doesn't happen again, that everyone has proper certification, and that safety standards and boats and kept up. The boats were shitty and no one was certified, so they have been decertified.

President: Any questions? Also, we are going to move the VARC resolution to right after the forum so they don't have to wait around. Assuming we are all in agreement with the consensus agenda, we are now going to move on to the forum.

4 Forum With Wendy Freedman..... (45 min)

Freedman: First of all, thank you for inviting me, I really appreciate the opportunity. My voice tends to match the buzz in the room, so let me know if you can't hear me. I am the Director of Counseling

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Services. I want to give you a quick snapshot of what we do, and focus on the changes happening, and then I want to answer questions, any and all that are related. To start off, Metcalf provides short term treatment including individual and couples sessions and group therapy. Short term medication management is also available with our consulting psychiatrist. We handle crisis response on campus for students who need immediate help. We also help facilitate the on-call service on evenings and weekends. We provide consultations for everyone on and off campus. Parents, community members, students, faculty, and administrators. We can provide those who are worried about a student with consultation and ideas on how to be the most helpful. We also work closely with CARES and TLC, and meet every other week with them and the Office of Health Education. We also host training for all sorts of groups. We like to think of ourselves as factors in both response and prevention. We try to prevent stress from going in a negative direction. Wellness and wellbeing are very important to us. We sit in on certain committees and try to work as behind the scenes advocacy and allies for various groups, to push the college to grow and recognize the needs of students. I am happy to go into any more detail. What I really wanted to talk about were some changes. I want to start by thanking you all. I don't know how many people know how helpful the VSA was in getting our post-doc position. We had it some years back, but it went away due to budget issues, and from campus support including the support of this group, we got it reinstated. This year, the post-doc saw as many students as one of our counselors. It has been just delightful. She has a particular interest in helping international students. So there have been some really exciting recent changes, including that the post-doc is now a permanent position, so each year we will be able to renew it. It's really wonderful. There have been a bunch of changes in permanent staffing. Our Assistant Director, who was beloved and with us for six years, left for a new position on November 1st. He is now chairing a faculty department. So that was a big loss. The other change was that one of our counselors had to take a personal leave unexpectedly, so she was out this semester as well. So we have been a bit tight this year. You might have heard, but we will be adding a counselor position for next year. What that looks like is we hired two staff members already. We have an Assistant Director, and the way that works is it is hard to join mid-year, so they will start in August. They've been in the practice for twenty-five years, and was actually a director for fifteen, with a lot of expertise in social justice concerns and first generations students, as well as meditation and mindfulness practices. So he will be joining as Assistant Director. We also have a new counselor, a psychologist who specializes in LBGTQ concerns, who we are delighted to have join us. We are currently in search of a post-doc. So we are supposed to have six faculty members, with a social work intern and a post-doc. If Lisa is able to come back, there will be six, otherwise we will have five. Also, we have our consulting psychiatrist, who is here for five hours on Fridays. So that is short term work. This has been a longstanding thing, and we are working with the college to see that shift a little. There is actually a Mental Health Fund, it has been approved and is in the early stages. We didn't really have the funding for it, so Chris Roellke took money out of his personal budget and made it so it can be available right

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away. There are at least twenty students already accessing it. It provides money for co-pays and transportation for off campus therapy and for medical appointments. Right now, it is mostly for people on full scholarship. My hope is to make it more robust, and we are working on trying to recruit funds to create a more substantial fund for that. We are hoping to continue to grow that to be a wider and more accessible resource. The other thing I wanted to highlight is that we were in a bit of a pickle with the on-call service provided. For many years, and I've been here eleven, we provided 24-hour service to anyone in crisis on nights and weekends. We had staff available to provide support as long as residential houses were open. That had worked fine for many years, but over the past three to five years, we couldn't sustain it. There was a 159% increase in the number of calls we were getting, and our counselors were up all night and then in the office all day, and that was not going too well for counselors. The cost was not sustainable. Luckily, we did research and put in a proposal to senior officers to change to off-site on-call. This service provider actually works with all of the other Seven Sisters, so apparently everyone else has been in on this for a long time. So that was approved, and for three months we were working on special protocol so they know what we would do in every situation. We have our own phone number, and all Vassar specific stuff pops up that we've gone over so they know how to handle it. Additionally, all counselors are available on-call as backup when they have any questions for how to handle something. So our counselors are sleeping now, and we are very appreciative for that. It has been great, and is something we are grateful to the college for. I did want to let you know about that change. There has been good feedback, it has gone well, and if there are any concerns we will address them along the way. Another thing quickly, we are planning more group therapy offerings for next Fall. I've never had this many staff members in all my eleven years, so I am very excited. We will have more groups, as well as a really cool biofeedback program, with trainings and then students can come in on their own and work with the machine and train themselves. So that's fantastic. I will stop there. Those are just some highlights about what's going on. I am interested in what's on your mind.

Finance: Something I wanted to ask about earlier, regarding the number of positions. This is the first time we've had the post-doc for a long time right? And the Assistant Director and a counselor left?

Freedman: The Assistant Director left in November, and the counselor left at the end of December.

Finance: Was anyone filling in?

Freedman: Eventually we were able to find, we had a Masters in Counseling Intern in the Fall. So we were able to bring her back after Spring Break. She will work with us full time through the end of the semester. But the beginning of the Spring was pretty challenging. Now, with her, we are only one down. We were interviewing temporary folks, but they could only give us a day, so we had to look at how much time it would take to train them versus the number of hours they would be able to see students, and it turns out there would not be much pay off. A thought we've had is to bring them in, in the Fall, even if we are fully staffed, and train them then in case we need them in the future.

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Finance: How were you able to function at the same capacity with a quarter of your staff missing?

Freedman: It's been an interesting semester. The college was willing to do whatever we could do, but it is difficult when something like this happens at the last minute as it did. That is probably why you've heard students talking about longer waits. We managed to get that wait time back down with Heather, but at the beginning of this semester I was not pleased with how long the wait was. It is now back down to eight days, which is the max I'd like it to go.

Finance: What was the average wait time?

Freedman: It is about eight days. When we were down, I want to make sure I get this right, but I think it was around twelve days. And as a result, crisis calls increased. So we were really grateful to get Heather back. The reason for the delay in getting her back was that we needed permits. It wasn't because the college wasn't willing to have her sooner.

Finance: So when the new people come in August, what's the change in the number of positions?

Freedman: If we are fully staffed, it will be plus one, not including the post-doc. So one more counselor. We hope it would be Lisa coming back, which would make six counselors, a social work intern, and the post-doc.

Finance: You don't include the consulting psychiatrist in that?

Freedman: No we don't, because at this point he isn't there long enough.

Finance: One more question, about the consulting psychiatrist. So if he is seeing students for only five hours a week, how many students is he able to treat?

Freedman: So, what we do, when someone comes for the first time, the initial appointment is a half hour. The first follow up is also a half hour. Then, once the student is considered stabilized on the medication, they have fifteen minute appointments. Ideally, I would like for him to be able to see everyone for a half hour, but we just can't. He often books two to three weeks out, and that is with us referring as many students off campus as we can. One psychiatric practice is within walking distance, but it is not our first choice for recommending. There are others quite good, but those require transportation. So this new fund allows some students to be reimbursed for that.

Finance: One more question. The initial appointment is a half hour. How many students are able to get to that initial appointment versus the demand for it?

Freedman: I want to get you the hard stats. These are really good questions. I don't want to make up anything. I would say any student gets in, it is just the matter of how long it takes. Often, they get put on the schedule and we work hard in that period before the appointment to see if they can be seen sooner somewhere off-campus. Some can get you in within a week, in Wappinger's Falls. So we hold that spot and if they don't need it anymore, we will give it to another student.

Operations: I was wondering what the ideal situation would be for a counseling service here, and how we compare to our peers, especially in terms of psychiatrists.

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Freedman: Comparing with peers can be tricky, and one reason that has put us in a tight spot in the past is that compared to other institutions, we have more staffing than other centers do, but our services are also more highly utilized. The numbers, nationally, are like one counselor per twelve-hundred students. So that would mean two here. But that is nationally for colleges and universities, including large universities. When looking at usage rates, we have a reasonable situation there. In terms of a psychiatrist, we are not on par with our peers.

President: There was talk of hiring a psychiatric nurse practitioner, because one could potentially also prescribe medication. But I heard that that was no longer happening, so I wanted to know why. I heard about this at the end of last semester.

Freedman: We've been encouraging that as a good idea, and it would also cost less than hiring a psychiatrist. So that's something I'd be in support of.

President: What is the argument against it?

Freedman: Well I think the argument for hiring one for permanent staff has to do with liability. We haven't had the opportunity to flesh it out, so I am not sure. We could also hire one in a consultant role, but for more hours. Ultimately I think it would be great to have one as a staff member, but there are competing demands and all of that.

2017: To clarify, you had said liability concerns, can you speak to what those are?

Freedman: I'm not sure. Let me say this, it is true whenever we hire staff of the college. That does incur liability. The school pays for insurance that all of the counselors are on, so if one is sued for something we did, the college holds some liability. That I totally get. But I haven't had the opportunity to learn more about those concerns.

Finance: So this is a little difficult to talk about, I'm sorry, but I have a couple more questions. There was a New Yorker article about universities in the US and policies that they had for students who attempted suicide. I was wondering, there has been a lot of discussion among our students, and no one knows what our college's official stance is.

Freedman: That is a really important area, and there will probably be an article coming out in the Chronicle about that actually. There has been a shift over my eleven years here. The Office of Civil Rights has created a shift nationally, and everyone is still confused about that and trying to figure it out. According to Title II, a student can't be banned from campus due to risk to self. If they are a risk to others, they can be. That being said, if students are at a super high risk of hurting themselves, this isn't a place that can offer the support or treatment they need. We don't ban students from campus, but we do say we don't know if we can help, and recommend more intensive treatment. If a student is at imminent risk, which means basically that day, and there have been thoughts and intent and a plan, then we have to send the student to a hospital for assessment, which is a legal requirement. There they are determined at risk or not, and if they are, they are kept at the hospital. If they are not, they are sent back and we figure out a plan. At that point, the student may decide to take leave. I think it has often

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been communicated as a community that the college makes students take leave, but that doesn't happen and it is not legally allowed. We are often working with family, and that is an option they choose if the family worried. A student can go to a treatment program for a few weeks and come back after.

Finance: One question, so you said that the school can't ban students, but I've heard that people have been told they can't stay overnight on campus, but that they can come during the day for classes.

Freedman: So, if that going on, that means the situation was not just risk to self. Sometimes in the process of being a risk to self, students have a behavioral impact on the community. Sometimes they're at risk to self also, but a whole group of students is severely impacted by that, in a way that is student conduct related kind of stuff. When that happens, we try to figure out how to walk that delicate line between not banning, but finding a way for them to stay. Sometimes, they will stay with parents off-campus and come on campus for classes. It has been years since it has been just risk to self that would lead to that situation. It is a community impact question.

SoCos: In the last year and a half or so, there have been a lot of changes particularly around the types of situations in which confidentiality is broken. I was wondering if you as director have been able to foresee more changes coming or if that is settling down.

Freedman: I feel there is a pendulum swing, let me provide context first. Throughout the past number of decades, there have been national swings between seeing students as fully independent or in what we call parentus locus, where parents and adults should be taking care of students. It's been far out since a long time ago, legally and culturally, concerning expectations in the level of involvement we should have in taking care of students. The current standard practice, if a student is at a really high level of risk, we are not talking about suicidal thoughts, there are lots and lots and lots of students on this campus with that who are just working with us and no one is notified, but they have plans, thoughts, and the only thing we know is that it will not happen that day. That is a close to imminent as it can get. So we determine if there is another adult in their life that we can talk to, to help us take care of the student. If the counseling staff are the only ones who know in this type of situation, it can be really dangerous. We always try to have the student take the lead in that. It is just based on an imminent risk threshold. For you to know, we don't break confidentiality at all. I know that SSN can get involved, but that is not from us, that is from the community alerting someone about their worries. Students will report, so they'll find out. That doesn't come from us. Any information given to us doesn't get out unless it reaches the imminent risk threshold. SSN does work to see who they can send a student to. If a student is not comfortable accessing counseling, they say, is there anyone else this student has a relationship with, is there anyone who can talk to them about it? And then we can connect them. On that committee, the SSN, I serve the role of consultant. I don't share any info we have at the counseling service.

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Finance: You mentioned earlier that you thought the school was at an all time high in terms of involvement, citing parentus locus. And this is something happening nationally. Can you talk about how this is manifesting in different policies or processes?

Freedman: I think the main thing has been SSN honestly. Ten years ago, there wasn't anything like that. If a student was struggling, they said well, they're independent, and they have to figure it out. Of course, there was always some of that support here at a small school, but it wasn't quite to this degree of hands-on. It shifted a lot after Virginia Tech, when people kept asking, you know, why did no one know, why didn't anyone do anything about this. We still hear about that in the media with shootings and such. BIT teams are now a standard of practice in colleges and universities. So I think that really shifted things, that's where I saw the real shift. SSN is the main area where things are looking different. I think that's the main factor. If anything, ten years ago, they did send students home for suicidality, way more often than we do today.

At-Large: In terms of Financial Aid, sometimes in this process students are required to have lower course limits, and this extends their time at Vassar. How do you approach that?

Freedman: That is not my area, but I can tell you what I've witnessed. Faculty get together when a student has failing grades. Some of us on the outside, if we have permission, we can advocate for the students. Often, we try to figure out, especially when there are reasons for students to stay for an extra semester, how to work with Financial Aid to make that happen. We can usually grant a ninth semester to students. That is not the standard but it happens quite a bit. The Financial Aid Office would best be able to talk about this, and CLP.

Operations: I have trouble phrasing this, so bear with me. This could just be me lacking knowledge about the counseling service. I know some students register with the accessibility office. Does your office do paperwork for that, or do students have to go off campus for that paperwork?

Freedman: Well, historically we have not, and the reason has always been our dual role. When students come to us, we can advocate for them, but we can't make decisions about what they can get or not get. It is set up so that they can come to talk to us about it, but also have to try to make something happen for themselves. We don't make decisions to permit excuses or extensions or anything including accommodations. A challenge we then run into is that students don't have the means to go off campus, and are working with a counselor here but want a diagnosis for paperwork, and that gets complicated. We are actually working with accessibility to get that figured out. We would have to maintain the standards of the accessibility office, which would mean someone would have to work with us for a length of time before we did that. We don't want students coming in for accommodations, because that might lead to an influx of students just coming in and expecting that, saying, "I have depression can you fill out paperwork?" So that puts us in a difficult situation. So that is in transition right now.

President: You mentioned higher levels of suicidality than from ten years ago. Why is that happening, and is there something the school could do to help?

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Freedman: That is the million dollar question. Everyone is trying to figure that out. It is a national thing. I can tell you a hypothesis, but I can't tell you any one fact. The world has much more anxiety and stress, post 9/11 there was a world shift. Holding on anxiety in day to day life changed things culturally. There was also a shift in parenting from what we can see. Kids don't go out and play by themselves on the street anymore. There is a higher level of parent involvement, which can lead to wonderful things, but what it can also do is have folks not have as much experience in learning to cope on their own. Similar challenges might put someone into a crisis now that wouldn't have put them in a crisis back then. We call that resilience. There is also more access when you are younger to medication. We start treatment young, and so students are often stabilized when they come to college, and now they have gotten into college, when ten to fifteen years ago they might not have even gotten in because of their mental health issues. So that is a working hypothesis. Research at Harvard has been done on resiliency, trying to get a better understanding. It is a national trend, and services across the country are trying to figure out how to best respond.

Finance: I was wondering if you have looked into demographic shifts and if that's a contributing factor?

Freedman: We know there are shifts, but we don't know if that link has directly been made. I can speak just from my own perspective, what I see, not from data, but I think students coming to college face tons of challenges based on the stresses and strains from life experiences. This is no fault of their own, it is just reality. Many students are incredibly resilient, every day I am moved by students I meet and how they navigate that, but it is still really hard. There are lots of students here of trauma backgrounds and strained situations, and then they get here, and are faced with additional strains. First Generation college students are a particular example. It is something that is hard to navigate no matter how amazing you are. Historically this has been a white, privileged college, and so students coming from different backgrounds have now a whole different level of stress. Often, students are coming in seeing us because they feel like something must be psychologically wrong with them, but what we realize is that this is just a reaction to an understandably difficult situation, based on environmental stresses and their impact. I have to imagine this is the case in other schools as well.

Finance: This is actually my last question. I think this has definitely been a trending conversation since I started here around mental health services. I feel like conversations happen all the time, and everyone has different information about what is going on. For example, we heard about the possibility of a nurse practitioner from senior officers. We didn't get that from conversations with students. So it seems like there are communication issues, between what we discuss as a student government and what people try to advocate for. It would be useful to all of us if we had information more directly from your office about stats across campuses, stuff we can give to help students advocate for themselves. Because right now, there is not a lot of direct contact.

Freedman: What I would say is if anyone is interested in a particular area, like how this matches up to this, I can provide access and can be a help in pointing out where to look. I would be happy to do that.

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I think when things happen naturally, they tend to go more smoothly. I am very clear with the folks in charge that these are the recommendations I make, and when people ask I'm always upfront about it. But I think it would be hard if every department publicized their wish list.

Finance: I meant more of the demographic info your office has collected. Not many people know how many students this is affecting.

Freedman: I want to make I sure understand, you mean about mental health in general?

Finance: Really all stuff, anything that would be helpful for those interested in organizing around issues. It gives students access so when they meet with administrators, they understand what actually is going on.

Freedman: Like every other department, we calculate stats at the end of each semester. That goes in an annual report to senior officers, with very detailed info. I don't think that is private, and I would be happy if anyone has questions to share some of that. I think that would be okay. In terms of how many sessions we have and students we see, all of that info we keep close track of. The other thing is I can give you access to a quick link I found helpful. It doesn't look specifically at small Liberal Arts colleges, but colleges and universities across the country. That can be found at www.aucccd.org. Information is publicly available on that website each year, and it compares a whole host of things, everything from numbers to the types of services offered, to salaries, so if you are curious, you are welcome to take a look.

President: Alright. well thank you for coming in, we really appreciate it.

Freedman: I encourage you, don't hesitate to ask me questions, we are really happy to answer any questions we can. Being transparent helps us, so have no hesitation. One more thing, we take confidentiality as top priority for us. What that means is that sometimes there are stories on campus about how certain things unfolded, and we have a different story about what happened. The reason we don't speak to that is not because we don't have a different narrative, but because confidentiality is more important to us than anything else. We would rather protect privacy, even if it means there is not accurate information out there. So if students have specific questions about policies, I can answer those, but not questions about specific student circumstances.

5 Constituent Concerns (15 min)

6 Executive Board Reports

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

Activities: Right now we are in the bulk of getting mission statements and constitutions and new exec boards for next year. We are also finishing org reviews, and we might be doing more decertifications.

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

Academics: Hi everyone. The majors fair was really great, wonderful, and a lot of people came, so thanks to those who helped. Pre-Registration starts tomorrow, and I encourage anyone with questions to go to our peer advising system and send emails and ask those people. Student Seminars are

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currently happening, going well, and I hope you signed up to learn wonderful things from peers. For the Library Director search, we've narrowed four candidates who are coming to campus soon, the first will be on April 20th. Students are invited to the open sessions. They are going to come here and give short presentations and we can ask questions. They will be having meetings with the VSA and other super interested students. And from last week, the CCP conversations are ongoing, so if you have any other feedback please let me know.

President: We also have council updates.

Joss: We placed our merch order, and are tabling the 22nd, the 24th, the 27th, and 29th. So that is super exciting, come buy merch. It is designed by first-year students living in Joss. We did our event, so we are really toning down for the year, and getting ready to prep for the new House Team.

President: What is your merch?

Joss: Sweatshirts, T-Shirts, and a mug, and if anyone needs financial assistance, we can help you out.

President: Does anyone have any questions for Joss? Okay, next is Town Students.

Town Students: Um, all is good. We are doing really well. Spring is coming, which means parties will happen and neighbors will get angry, and that is a problem that will never be solved.

President: How has it been after the Fall meeting?

Town Students: There were no complaints actually, but that is because it has been cold.

President: Any questions for Town Students? Okay, awesome, now Lathrop.

Lathrop: We are also ordering merch soon. Sweatshirts and hats and sweatpants. We are also having an Art Market on Saturday, April 25th, so if you want or your constituents want to submit, or be part of it, email lathropartmarket@gmail.com with what you are selling and if you want full or half a table. There is no set deadline, but telling us by the end of the week would be good so we don't have to estimate.

Finance: I just want to say this now, before I forget and so everyone knows, you are not allowed to sell merch at a loss and you can't give it away. it needs to be sold as a fundraiser. You are ordering a little late. Make sure you inventory it and give it to your House Advisor. Don't leave it lying around, and make sure you sell it for a profit.

7 VARC Resolution Operations (15 min)

VARC: Hi, I am here with my exec board members. We wanted to introduce this resolution because last year we saw study breaks happening with petting zoos, and we were uncomfortable with this. The animals here seemed to be very stressed, and it is paradoxical to have stress-busting events that involved stressed animals. petting zoos, more generally, are seen as exploitative of the animals in them. These animals are not treated well at all. We wanted to make sure that those are not welcome anymore. It is exploitative, but it also poses health risks to students who are interacting with animals, especially stressed out students with compromised immune systems, for example, during finals. Also, banning petting zoos would be a good opportunity to pair with local groups on implementing

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alternative activities. Last year, two years ago maybe, Eve Dunbar, the acting Dean of the College, worked to implement an alternative study break, and she really agreed with us. So there was a precedent for it. So we just wanted to introduce this.

President: This is probably a silly question, but does this also apply to when faculty and administrators bring therapy dogs?

VARC: If the person who is living with the animal says you can pet this dog, it is fine. It is fine as long as there is consent.

Operations: Can you speak specifically to what is being resolved and what you are specifically asking?

VARC: We are asking three points. One is to encourage groups to not host events involving animals as entertainment. Another is to seek alternatives, preferably ones that benefit the local economy, and third, the VSA refusing to finance events involving this type of entertainment.

Finance: I am curious, I don't see lot of stuff like this in the news. I never heard about this before I came here. Is there a precedent to having this banned? Has it happened at any other schools?

VARC: We're probably one of the most active animal rights groups in the nation at this point. I don't think I've heard of other campus groups who've banned it.

2017: You described petting zoos in the first "therefore it be resolved", and then broadened it to include all events that would feature non-human animals. Are you including in that events that would not stereotypically be referred to as Petting Zoos? The only events on this campus I've heard about involved dogs and cats from a shelter. Would you include that more with the personal animals or label that as a petting zoo?

VARC: That is a good question. I think I would consider that more as petting zoos, because with companion animals, we know the human has the animal's best interests in mind and a good relationship with the animal. As for dogs and cats in adoption fairs, the main priority is to have as many animals given out to as many people as possible. That doesn't make sense, especially them coming on campus, because our pet policy prohibits cats and dogs.

Academics: In terms of this as a means of institutional memory, I don't a resolution is good at that. I am concerned with Finance in the future not knowing about that. I think an amendment to the constitution would be a better apparatus for institutional memory.

Finance: If this passes, I can put it in the finance policies. We wouldn't have to do special vote.

At-Large: Is this language to ban or strongly discourage? There is a big distinction.

VARC: I don't know, what do you think?

At-Large: This is a very big precedent to consider. VSA typically doesn't tell orgs what to do, except for flowers and bottled water. And those are about philosophies. Those items are most likely gifts and that is a stance the VSA took. This means VSA would be taking stance of VARC, which the student body would have to be behind.

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Council Agenda for April 12, 2015

Time: 7:00pm

Location: College Center 223

"Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud."-Maya Angelou

VARC: By virtue of the third resolve, the VSA would agree not to fund these events. So that is kind of a ban, but if orgs really want to, they can spend their own money, but the VSA would not be providing money to do it. So I guess it is a ban.

President: In the future, who is going to be the judge of whether something falls under this? Because I would have thought Diane bringing her dog to study breaks violates this policy.

2017: Because the wording addresses only this council, I think it should instead be permanently put in the constitution. I don't think you would have to change much wording. It is not hard to write this as an amendment.

Operations: I just did an archive search of the bottled water ban. They went to the VSA to endorse it and CCL to codify it, because they make the actual policies of the college and we do not. Secondly, I don't think it is unclear about what is or isn't a petting zoo. Companion animals are clearly excluded from this.

VARC: How we are feeling is that any event that doesn't involve people's animals from the Vassar Community would make us uncomfortable.

Finance: It is important to change what Jonathan was talking about. This addresses the 29th council, so that's just us. I don't think we need a constitutional amendment, because I can just put it into the finance policies. And this is a precedent for curtailing org activities. We can say you can't buy merch and give it for free or spend all your money on food, so just so this would then go with the rest of the policies for how orgs spend money, but based on an ideology. That is an interesting idea.

At-Large: There is a huge difference between this and bottled water. That involved a philosophical belief. It is a legal thing with merch, but this is what ethics we believe. We should make sure we are agreeing with all of the students we represent.

2015: What about Instagram dogs? Is it about the types of animals? Celebrity dogs? I would pay for a dog to come.

President: If I chose to bring my dog as a celebrity to campus, is that okay?

VARC: That dog will be looked after and will be fine. We're concerned about unsafe conditions.

Operations: VARC, what would you like to do right now? You can amend on the floor for it to address the VSA, not just the 29th council.

VARC: I move to amend the resolution so that it is broader than the 29th council, and encompasses every future council.

Operations: Okay, so the language would be VSA.

2017: Point of information, do you want that corrected in all three or just one?

VARC: All three.

President: Cool, we will vote on it now. Abstain, vote yes to adopt, or vote no, because you love petting zoos.

Operations: We are first voting to amend the language.

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

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President: Oh, thanks for telling me before. You can abstain, vote yes, or vote no.

Abstentions? Cushing, Ferry

All in favor? Everybody else.

Okay, now the language is for the VSA. Now let's vote on it.

Abstentions? Cushing, Ferry

All in favor of no more petting zoos? Everybody except Activities.

All opposed? Activities

The resolution passes.

8 Open Discussion

Strong: Speaking of merch, we will be selling ours in the College Center on Fridays over the next few weeks. There will be beanies, and stickers for only \$2. Tell your friends.

Operations: First of all, shout out to Davison for their laser tag event, I did great. Food Truck Fridays will begin May 1st. What was formerly the Student Leadership Awards is now happening on May 8th, and it will be a dinner thing. Butch's final report is coming out on the 20th, a week from tomorrow. If you didn't come to the pre-council Operations dinner, let me know if you have any questions.

2017: I mentioned this before, but the Class of 2017 is having a film screening outdoors on the 23rd from 8:00-10:00pm. We wanted to do it later but you can't book after 10pm apparently. The film hasn't been released yet. We decided it through a pole of the Class of 2017, with five options and the class determines it. I can't tell you the options.

SoCos: So I've been keeping you updated about reslife's search for a new House Advisor. Candidates are coming next week. Two will be coming for each of the next three weeks. They will be meeting with House Presidents and the future HSAs. So that will be happening every Wednesday and Thursday for the next three weeks, but there might be an exception to that. So make sure you meet them. I met all but one. I really liked everyone that is coming. Also again, this week is Sexual Assault Awareness Week. There will be an Art Show Tuesday, a Speak-Out Thursday, and we are also doing a t-shirt project in the College Center. We will be tabling I think Monday and Wednesday and will be encouraging people to wear shirts on Wednesday as a day of solidarity, and Friday, and we will recollect the shirts on Monday. We are not giving them away for free.

President: So I was asked by BOEA to inform everyone not running next year, i.e. seniors, that you must table next Monday and Tuesday. You must table, and if you don't want to, then you will have to run for a position. So emotionally prepare yourself, if you are not running, you will be sitting at a table telling people about the VSA and why they should vote. There will be a physical polling station with a laptop.

TAs: Motion to adjourn.

End: 8:22