

Vassar Student Association Council
Agenda for April 18, 2010

Time: 7:00pm

Location: College Center 223

Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort. —Franklin D. Roosevelt

1. Call to Order
2. Attendance_____
- Operations
3. Consent Agenda
 - a. Approval of the Minutes from 4/11
 - b. \$300 to Vassar Islamic Society
4. Special Guest
 - a. Peter Leonard, Director of Fieldwork
5. Sustainability Proposal_____ Student Life
6. SAVP Proposal_____ Academics
7. FAQs_____ Student Life
8. Allocation of \$1000 from Council Discretionary to Community Action_____ Finance
9. Open Discussion_____ Anyone
10. Adjourn

Proposal to the Environmental Research Institute for support of training to perform Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventories.

Jeff Walker

College Sustainability Coordinator

Last year the college completed its first ever Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory (sometimes called a carbon footprint analysis). The study covered the five-year period from 2004 to 2008. The results indicated that Vassar emitted around 27,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCDE) in 2008. Over 80% of the emissions were from utilities (heating plant and purchased electricity), and the remaining 20% were from travel, commuting, and solid waste disposal. This level of carbon emissions is below the average for colleges of Vassar's size, geographic region and educational mission (probably the one instance in which being "below average" is desirable at Vassar!). One encouraging finding of the study was that the college had decreased its carbon emissions since 2005 by about 15% primarily through increased building and steam line efficiencies. Interestingly enough, the ambitious goal that President Obama set for the country at the Copenhagen meetings was 17% below 2005 levels, which we have already almost achieved.

Carbon emission numbers such as this can be used for a variety of things, most important of which is setting target emission levels as the college commits to decreasing its carbon emissions toward some goal. The sustainability committee is currently working on a proposal to the college to establish a carbon emission reduction goal that is below emissions by the college in 1996 (the last year for which we have easily accessible utility data, which account for nearly 80% of our carbon emissions).

The GHG inventory was commissioned by the College Committee on Sustainability (CCS), and was performed by the consultant firm Sightlines. The consulting fee for the study, including the comparative data with other schools, was \$15,000, and was paid for with funds gathered from a variety of sources: The Office of the President, CCS funds, alumnae donations, the VSA Great Works Fund, the Program in Environmental Studies, and the Environmental Research Institute. The fact that these sources represented students, faculty, administration and alumnae underscores the widespread acceptance of the importance of such a project.

Our current plans require that we estimate our 1996 emission levels, so that we can establish a carbon reduction goal relative to those levels. We also need to measure our carbon emissions annually to monitor progress toward that goal. In the interest of time, CCS decided to hire Sightlines to estimate our 1996 emission levels using the same protocols as the original study. However the question of annual monitoring of carbon emissions is more complicated. We could hire Sightlines to perform the annual inventory, but CCS believes that the results are more likely to be a part of sustainability discussions on campus if we perform the analysis ourselves. Therefore we have asked Sightlines to train us in the gathering of data necessary to complete a GHG inventory.

The task is not trivial. There are of course, many entries required in the GHG inventory spreadsheet (developed by Clean Air-Cool Planet. There are many more entries which can safely be ignored. Finally, there are entries for which there is more than one way to estimate the appropriate amount to enter (if the actual amount cannot be measured). We plan to rely on Sightlines's expertise to help navigate this process. Sustainability committee interns and members of the committee itself have had preliminary training, and Paul Ruud's ECON 267 course received training in collecting GHG inventory data.

Sightlines's fee for establishing the 1996 GHG levels is \$2500, and for training is \$4000. CCS has received a generous donation from an alumna to support some of these fees, and we would like to again gather a group of contributors to the project from which all can benefit. CCS will use the carbon emission information to prioritize projects in a sustainability plan that details not only the projects but their projected costs and timeframes for implementation. Because of the importance of establishing the 1996 emission levels, CCS will petition the administration (President's Office) for funds to support that aspect of the study. Because the project will be working with students, and establishing carbon reduction goals for the whole community CCS is requesting that VSA consider a contribution of \$500 to support this project.

A Resolution Endorsing the “Sexual Assault Violence Prevention (SAVP) Coordinator Proposal”

WHEREAS, for the five (5) year period from 2004-2009, Vassar College (the “College”) had received grant funding, through the Department of Justice Grant for the Prevention of Violence Against Women (the “Grant”), with which to fund a range of important activities and supports through the office of Sexual Assault and Violence Prevention (“SAVP”) and its dedicated full-time coordinator.

WHEREAS, SAVP offered services this body believes to be vital to the College community, including advocacy, support, and awareness events in matters of intimate violence and violation.

WHEREAS, in light of the cessation of the Grant and financial pressures on the College, the SAVP program was dissolved and its function absorbed into the Office of Health Education (the “OHE”) beginning in the 2009/2010 school year.

WHEREAS, the dissolution of an office and full-time staff member dedicated to SAVP, despite the Sexual Assault Response Team and OHE’s best efforts, has inevitably caused a deterioration of the services offered on the College’s campus surrounding issues of intimate violence and violation. This is evidenced by a decline in the number of students willing to seek support or services for these matters.

WHEREAS, services and awareness events around issues of intimate violence and violation are critical to the College’s primary goal of supplying an outstanding education in an environment that facilitates the physical and mental safety and well-being of its community. Furthermore, this body believes that it is crucial to reinforce the College’s distinguished reputation of progressivism and activism around issues of social justice and advocacy.

WHEREAS, the OHE, in an effort to reestablish SAVP, has drafted that certain document entitled “Sexual Assault Violence Prevention (SAVP) Coordinator Proposal” and annexed hereto as Annex A (the “Proposal”).

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that this body, in accordance with its constitutions, bylaws, rules, policies, and/or other governing documents, endorse the Proposal this ____ day of April, 2010.

Organization: _____
(Organization Name)

By: _____
(Signature of Officer)

Its: _____
(Title of Signing Office)

Sexual Assault Violence Prevention (SAVP)Coordinator Proposal

In the Spring of 2009, Vassar College and the Office of Health Education Department of Justice (DOJ) Grant for the Prevention of Violence Against Women ended. At the time of the grant ending we were waiting to see if our third grant proposal to the DOJ would refund this grant to Vassar. Through this period we put in place a SAVP sustainability plan until refunding or for the remainder of 2009/2010 academic year. We were not optimistic about renewal; we had received funding for two grant cycles previously (a total of five years), and as part of the grants we were to develop a self-sustaining program through these funds. In October of 2009 we received notification that we would not be refunded and would need to sustain this program on our own.

In 2009/2010, the Office of Health Education (OHE) not only continued to house the SAVP program, but the program itself became the responsibility of the Director of Health Education. Through the last year, OHE has been able to fulfill many of the sustainability goals:

- Establish SART (Sexual Assault Response Team)
 - Provide 3 in-service trainings
- Conduct the Orientation session addressing Sexual Assault
- Provide training for Security, Residential Life, and the Dean of Studies
- Chair the SAVP Committee
- Support/Advise CARES
- Hire interns that work with Battered Women Services and the Rape Crisis Center
- Provide programs to the Vassar Community on sexual assault, relationships violence, and stalking

I believe that as Director of Health Education, I have done as much as I could to sustain the SAVP program, but there is still a huge gap in services for our students who are survivors of interpersonal violence.

In 2008/2009, SAVP had over 40 students seek out support and services. Currently in 2009/2010 SAVP/SART has had only 10 students seek out support and services. We would love to believe that this is due to a lower rate of interpersonal violence occurring on our campus, which would be naïve and a dangerous assumption. Through the different campus programs in the last year: the CARES speak-out events, the requests to present on domestic violence, the various tabling events, and the inception of the student led peer activist group we know interpersonal violence is still occurring. About 90% of college sexual assault cases involve alcohol and Vassar has been no exception in this number, with rise of ambulance and hospital alcohol overdose cases this past year I am sure this would be a contributing factor towards sexual assault cases.

Gaps of services:

- Students have reported that when the SAVP office no longer existed as a free standing office (within the OHE), it sent a message that this issue did not deserve the resources and was marginalized.
- For the first time last year we had a few students file formal charges within our judicial process. Students and advocates reported that the process itself was re-victimizing and demonstrated a need for more training and consideration of a different hearing structure for sexual misconduct cases.
- SART is made up of staff, administrators and faculty who so graciously dedicate their time to SART on top of their academic and work duties. If they were to receive a call that may require consultation with an agency off campus, it may conflict with their other responsibilities. This system would be vital to continue as a back-up system but as the sole primary system it presents some innate challenges. The SART team would function in a similar capacity but under the supervision of the SAVP coordinator.
- SART advocates sometimes find it difficult to dedicate all the time and energy needed to support a student. For example, there are many times that, during the school day, a SART advocate needs to accompany a student to an appointment within the community and this can take numerous hours; missing work and the SART advocate's primary job is difficult and hard to justify to the SART advocate's primary supervisor.

- If we had the same number of reports as we did last year, I am not sure our SART system would be able to sustain the number of hours needed to address all the cases.
- Resources within the OHE are stretched thin and the time and money that needs to be invested in outreach is not available. Currently there is one student staff that works 10 hours a week assisting with SAVP programming.
- SAVP for two years had a full-time professional staff member, 2 student office assistants, and a budget for programming and outreach that was close to \$10,000. Besides the Director of Health Education, there is no other professional staff or support staff in the office; these efforts, with no increased staff or budget, cannot be sustained at the level that is needed.

Rationalization for Full-Time SAVP Coordinator

- Hiring a full-time SAVP Coordinator will validate to the student population at Vassar College that the college realizes the importance of this issue and is committed to reducing the number of incidents, increasing awareness, and supporting students who are survivors.
- A full-time coordinator allows full dedication to SAVP:
 - Having one central person whose sole mission it is to provide services, proactive and reactive, in areas of interpersonal violence
 - Training for different areas of the campus community
 - Providing pro-active programming
 - Focusing on making orientation programming more inclusive of interpersonal violence and Vassar College focused
 - Addressing special populations
 - Supporting survivors and creating a climate that is conducive for survivors to come forward for support and file charges
 - Collaborating with outside agencies
 - Addressing policy issues and judicial procedures
 - Establish and sustain a Bystander Program as part of the First Year Experience

The SAVP Coordinator would still be supervised and housed in the OHE. The proactive nature of the programming and education that SAVP conducts fits into and is part of the OHE mission. Additionally, the confidential nature and victim centered approach does not allow the SAVP position to fall under any other offices within Campus Life for liability, reporting, and logistical reasons.

Financial Request for SAVP Coordinator

- \$35,000/year
- Benefits
- Office Budget of \$5,000