

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Council Agenda for Apr. 10, 2011

Time: 7:00pm

Location: College Center 223

“If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.”
-Anne Bradstreet

- 1 Call to Order
- 2 AttendanceOperations
- 3 Announcements:
 - a. Elections ResultsOperations
- 4 Decertification of SAU Activities
- 5 Decertification of Vassar Shared Bikes..... Activities
- 6 Certification of Slow Foods Vassar Activities
- 7 Adoption of Finance BylawsOperations
- 8 Exec Board Reports
 - a. Student Life
 - b. Academics
- 9 Open Discussion Anyone

Vassar College
124 Raymond Ave
Poughkeepsie, NY 12604
Slow Food Vassar

April 11th, 2010
Vassar Student Association
Vassar College
124 Raymond Ave
Poughkeepsie, NY 12604

To Whom It May Concern:

Slow Food Vassar is a nationally recognized chapter of Slow Food, an international organization founded in 1986 as an alternative to fast food culture; it promotes awareness of issues concerning the production and consumption of food, from fair wages for workers to bringing local, wholesome food to as many people as possible around the globe. Over the past five months we have connected with hundreds of students on campus and co-sponsored a number of events with campus community members including students, professors, and administrators. Additionally, we have been in contact with many local farmers, the Poughkeepsie Farm project and the administration in an attempt to unite the campus with the abundance of food-related resources in our area.

When we founded Slow Food Vassar in November of 2010, we could never have anticipated the amount of student interest we were tapping into. As a result, we have grown immensely as an organization over the past five months, holding weekly general body meetings in addition to executive board meetings and meeting regularly with administrators working with issues of sustainability and food services at Vassar College such as Candice Lowe-Swift, Ken Oldehoff, and Maureen King.

While we are undeniably a "young" organization when compared with Vassar's 150 year existence, we believe our ability to sustain interest in our cause is evident in the thousands of years of history regarding humans' relationship to food. In the 20th century, food issues have risen to the modern consumer's consciousness and we seek to bring this consciousness to our college campus. With every class represented in our general body and three of our executive board members remaining on campus through 2013 in addition to another who will be here through 2014, we are confident in our ability to see our organization flourish in the coming years.

With the help of the VSA, Slow Food Vassar would be able to better promote our organization as well as fund workshops, speakers and events promoting an awareness of our relationship with food as a college community.

Sincerely,

The Slow Food Vassar Executive Board

Questionnaire

How would the campus benefit from your group becoming certified?

Becoming certified and recognized as an official organization by the Vassar Student Association would benefit us as an organization as well as the Vassar community by allowing us to fully exercise our ideals in an effective and useful way. Having the force of the VSA - a group committed to promoting student involvement on campus - behind us would be essential in giving us the power, funds, and reputation to be arbiters and advocates of students' food rights at Vassar.

The current lack of communication between students and Vassar dining services will be addressed by Slow Food Vassar through our meeting with administrators at the forefront of developing our food services system. By opening this dialogue to the campus community students will be better able to have their opinions heard and influence what they consume.

2. *How is your group unique and different from the over 130 other VSA organizations?*

Slow Food Vassar is the first organization of its kind; no other VSA organization, either proposed or existent, has committed itself to issues of food sustainability, justice, and quality both inside and outside of the Vassar community as we have. While many student-run and administrative organizations tackle issues of environmental activism, grassroots political advocacy, economic reform, and bringing pleasure and appreciation of culture to campus, no organization applies and relates all of these goals toward food.

In other words, we use food as a medium for grassroots activism. We are also dedicated to working with a variety of other clubs and organizations which share our ideals in these broad issues. Being affiliated with Slow Food - a renowned international organization- allows us to work within the strong tradition of an organization that has been firmly established in working toward epicurean ideals for over 22 years. We would like to work toward accomplishing many of the same goals within the Vassar community as one of the hundreds of recognized *convivia* worldwide, in the spirit of the larger organization.

3. *Does your group already meet regularly? If so, how long have you been meeting and what have you done in that time?*

Slow Food Vassar has been meeting regularly since November of 2010. We have at least two meetings per week, one for the executive board and one general body meeting. In the executive meeting we plan that week's general body meeting, discuss upcoming events, and any other pertinent issues. In the body meetings we address upcoming events, brainstorm ideas, and discuss current food issues on campus and in the world. In the time since our first meeting we have held a local cheese party for our group members, collaborated with many other organizations for food-related events, and catered for several events promoting sustainable consumption and conviviality. For Think Food Day this past November we had a free cheese tasting featuring many Hudson Valley and New York state products. We tabled consistently in February to raise funds for future events. On March 2nd we collaborated with VARC and Wholistic for the Silent Dinner. In late March we catered the GAAP dinner, cooking a full meal for over 50 guests. In this time we have also been in contact with Maureen King and Ken Oldehoff of dining services to work on getting more local food sourced to ACDC.

4. *Does your group have ties to any other student group, academic department, or administrative office? If so, please explain:*

Slow Food Vassar, in its commitment to good, clean, and fair food, works with the Vassar

Greens in addressing issues of social and environmental justice. We work with the Anthropology department through our faculty advisor, Candice Lowe-Swift, and are also hoping to work more with the Environmental Studies, Geography, Earth Science, Sociology, and STS departments.

We have also collaborated with Hunger Action, VEG Student Garden, GAAP, VARC, and Wholistic on various events. Because the Slow Food movement covers a wide variety of issues in its effort to insure that we live in a world in which “all people can access and enjoy food that is good for them, good for those who grow it and good for the planet,” we also plan on collaborating with other organizations and departments. Slow Food also organizes the Vassar Raw Milk Co-op.

5. *What other organizations have you worked with in the past, and/or could you work with in the future?*

For Think Food Day in November of 2010 we collaborated with the RSL Office, Hunger Action, and the Vassar Greens. For The Silent Dinner on March 2nd, we worked with VARC and Wholistic, and for the Building Community conference in mid-March, we worked with GAAP. For Earth Week, we are coordinating with the Vassar Greens and also working with VARC to help them with their “vegetarian/vegan pledge.” We anticipate many future collaborations with these groups in addition to any student organization or administrative office that voices an interest in promoting sustainability and responsible food consumption.

6. *Have you previously received funding for group’s activities? If so, who funded you and what was that funding used for?*

Slow Food has received funding from collaboration with multiple VSA organizations. We participated in the Grassroots Alliance for Alternative Politics conference on community building for Vassar students and Poughkeepsie residents. For this event we collaborated with VEG and catered the forum. Additionally we received funding from the VSA for catering their recent VSA conversation dinner. Slow Food has also been working with the Vassar Greens, the sustainability committee, and a variety of major departments to raise funds for Earth Week.

7. *List some fundraising ideas you have, in as great detail as possible:*

Slow Food has begun fundraising by tabling and selling baked goods. We would like to host locally sourced dinners as fundraisers to raise money for speakers, as well as other events though we currently lack the capital to take the financial risk of throwing such an event out of pocket. Furthermore, by having Slow Food collaborate with other organizations, we can promote food awareness and reach out to a larger portion of the student body, enabling us to raise more funds.

8. *Estimate your budget for next year (and itemize):*

Food (for tabling, dinners, and other events): \$600
 Compostable plates and utensils (for serving food at events): \$200
 Transportation for the raw milk co-op: \$100
 Advertising (flyers and posters announcing upcoming events): \$75

Total: \$975

9. *List some possible events your organization would hold and how they would contribute to the campus community:*

Trips to local farms: Part of our goal as an organization is to bring students closer to their food. Many people on campus have likely never been to or worked on a farm. Today, most people have become very disconnected from their food, not knowing where it comes from or how it is grown. We want to try to lessen that disconnect. On these farm visits we would like to get as much hands-on experience as possible. This might include planting, harvesting, weeding, or simply talking with the farmers. Seeing the effort it takes to harvest a crop and maintain a farm will allow students to become more deeply invested in their food. It will also allow students to see what it takes to run a small farm in the modern economy. We already have relationships with many different local farms so it would be very easy to coordinate regular trips.

Food Workshops: Part of Slow Food is of course a love of food, cooking, and baking. We would like to hold occasional workshops, likely 2 per semester, for all food-interested students on campus. At these workshops students can learn new cooking techniques (such as pickling or canning) and experiment with unfamiliar foods (such as authentic ingredients from different cultures). The content will be largely based on what our group would like to do. This could be a student led baking lesson or a more formal visit from a chef. We will actually be holding our first workshop soon, where a parent with a catering business will come in and teach us how to make Samosas. These workshops will allow students to learn and experiment with food in ways that they do not usually get to experience at Vassar.

Hosting locally sourced meals: We would like to have locally sourced meals together, both within our organization and at ACDC. Our group meals would likely be pot-luck style or a meal that we all prepare together. Eating and cooking together is a simple act but creates bonds and connections. Most students in the dorms do not often get this opportunity. By having a few nice dinners together a year we will be able to create good relations within our group while also learning about the pleasures of simple, good, local food. In regards to the larger dinners at ACDC, we would like to host these to spread greater awareness about the importance of local, sustainable food. We have already spoken to Maureen King and Ken Oldehoff about hosting a “Local Foods Festival” in ACDC later this month and more generally about increasing the amount of local food in the dining hall and the Retreat.

Maintaining a plot at the Vassar Farm or in the VEG garden: Many of our group members have expressed great interest in planting their own crops and maintaining a small garden. This plot would be open to members of Slow Food Vassar and those who express specific interest in helping. A garden can teach the community about seasonal produce, agricultural techniques, and the work involved in growing food. This would be an ongoing project. We would have a schedule for regular planting, watering, and weeding to ensure the best possible result. Hopefully our plot will eventually yield enough to be prepared at a dinner or to be donated to the community. We would love to be able to give students a place to grow their own food and learn about sustainable agriculture.

The Constitution of Slow Food Vassar

Preamble

Recognizing that the enjoyment of wholesome, real food is essential to the pursuit of happiness, Slow Food Vassar is an organization dedicated to stewardship of the land and ecologically sound and sustainable food production; to the revival of the kitchen and the table as centers of pleasure, culture, and community; to the invigoration and proliferation of regional, seasonal culinary traditions; to the creation of a collaborative, ecologically-oriented, and virtuous globalization; to the development of a food culture on campus; to the support of local farmers and naturally-grown and raised foods; and to living a slower and more harmonious rhythm of life.

Article 1: Name and Logo

1.1 The organization shall be called Slow Food Vassar.

1.2 Slow Food Vassar will use the name and logo of Slow Food in accordance with the Slow Food name and logo agreement annually signed by the president and faculty advisor.

Article 2: Purpose

Slow Food Vassar endeavors to invigorate genuine interest in all aspects of food – from production to consumption – within the Vassar community. We strive to link people with their local food supply and challenge current knowledge of the food we eat by exploring the relationship between food, the consumer, and the producer from global to local connections. We are committed to advocating good, clean, and fair food in a way that is adaptable and accessible to Vassar students and providing a space for dialogue concerning all aspects of food. Through encouraging an appreciation for the importance of food in our daily lives and involvement with the local sustainable food community we work to promote quality, locally produced food on our campus and in the Poughkeepsie area. We believe that food traditions should be preserved, food cultures should be celebrated, and the food we eat should reflect the values we believe in.

Slow Food Vassar encourages people to be thoughtful about their food by promoting the rich traditions of slow, sustainable, local eating on campus.

2.1 Slow Food Vassar is a student convivium, or local chapter, of the international Slow Food movement. A student convivium is a tool for implementing the Slow Food mission on a local level and therefore the grassroots expression of the movement.

2.2 Slow Food Vassar engages the university and food producer communities in the Poughkeepsie area in order to support and celebrate the food traditions of New York.

2.3 Slow Food Vassar particularly focuses its efforts on creating a more environmentally, economically, and culturally sustainable food system on campus through advocacy, education, direct action, and community building.

Article III: Membership Requirements

3.1 Membership to Slow Food Vassar is open to any current student of Vassar College.

3.2 Executive Board

3.2.1 The executive board of Slow Food Vassar will guide the general direction of the group, ensuring the projects and activities of Slow Food Vassar are consistent with the ideas and values of the Slow Food movement.

3.2.2 The executive board is a group of 5 individuals who share the responsibilities setting the agenda for body meetings, planning and coordinating events and activities and delegating any other logistical responsibilities that may arise. The executive board must attend weekly planning meetings as well as weekly general body meetings. If one is not able to attend, he/she must notify the president in a timely manner.

3.2.3 The executive board must also send an update with a list of membership and a report on activities triannually: at the beginning, half-way point, and end of the school year. In return, Slow Food USA provides Slow Food Vassar with administrative support, resources, publications, and access to the Slow Food network.

3.2.4 The President, Vice President, and Treasurer liaise with the Slow Food national office as the official student convivium leaders, lead general meetings, act as the three signing authorities for the Slow Food Vassar bank account, act as primary contacts for the group, and generally oversee the activities of the group.

3.2.5 All executive board members are responsible for preparing a detailed transition report at the end of the academic year.

3.3 General Body

3.3.1 Members gain voting privilege and are eligible to run for executive board positions after attending four general body meetings. General body members are considered individuals who support Slow Food Vassar's values, attend occasional general body meetings or participate in general body generated discussions and are on the Slow Food Vassar mailing list.

Article IV: Officers

4.1 President

4.1.1 The President shall call and lead all meetings of the general body and the Executive Board of the group. The President shall also be the primary contact with the VSA leadership, responsible for reporting to the Vice President for Activities.

4.1.2 The responsibilities of the President shall also include, but not be limited to the following:

- Communicating w/ Slow Food USA
- Composing a weekly newsletter
- Authorizing changes to the website
- Attending applicable regional Slow Food meetings
- Compiling semester report of chapter activities
- Facilitating selection of new board members
- Approving event locations and details
- Working to obtain event speakers

4.2 Vice President

4.2.1 The Vice President shall be responsible for coordinating all of the group's programming events. The Vice President shall maintain contact with the SARC intern.

4.2.2 The responsibilities of the Vice President shall also include, but not be limited to the following:

- Writing applicable thank you letters
- Maintaining Facebook page
- Soliciting chapter focus topics
- Conducting negotiations with event detailers
- Informing executive board of projected expenses for the semester

4.2.2 The Vice President will also assume the responsibilities of the President in the event of an absence.

4.3 Treasurer

4.3.1 The treasurer tracks the income and expenditures of Slow Food Vassar, coordinates financial matters with the national office, acts as one of three signing authorities for the Slow Food Vassar bank account, collects receipts for "out-of-pocket" money spent and issues reimbursement, prepares an annual budget for the first and last general meetings, coordinates any school-supplied funding, and oversees fundraising activities. The Treasurer shall be the liaison to the Vice President for Finance for all financial matters.

4.4 Secretary

4.4.1 The secretary produces agendas and minutes for executive board and general meeting, circulates information to membership, and assists with internal administrative work.

4.5 Programming Coordinator

4.5.1 The responsibilities of the Programming Coordinator shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- Facilitating collaboration with other campus orgs
- Monitoring co-op developments

Assisting with chapter publicity efforts (posters, ad campaigns)

4.6 One faculty member of Vassar College acts as faculty advisor to Slow Food Vassar. The advisor acts as a representative of the school administration and helps liaise with the college.

Article V: Meetings and Quorum

5.1 Slow Food Vassar will hold regularly scheduled executive board and general body meetings every week.

5.2 General body meetings will occur on a weekly basis in a permanent meeting room to be established. Each meeting will consist of an update of events of the week and plans for the upcoming week as well as a forum for discussion for the goals of the organization. General body meetings will serve as the primary source of information regarding the organization's activities and general body member's involvement with the group.

5.3 Executive Board Meetings will also occur on a weekly basis at a time that is convenient as determined by board members. These meetings will serve as a time to prepare for the general body meeting and discuss upcoming events and plans for the organization. If necessary, the Executive Board may meet more frequently in order to prepare for upcoming events.

Article VI: Elections

6.1 The president of Slow Food Vassar should be a returning member. At least one of the five executive board members should be new members and at least two should be returning members. If these requirements cannot be met the position should be opened to any member.

6.2 The executive board of the previous year appoints an elections officer to oversee the elections. The elections officer may not run for a position in the election. The elections officer oversees election proceedings, ensuring fairness of process and outcome, answers questions about the election, and collects and counts the ballots.

6.3 The elections officer should announce the election at the first meeting of the year.

6.4 Elections are held at the second meeting of the year (the "election meeting").

6.4.1 Slow Food Vassar may wish to form sub-committees to deal with specific projects, activities, or events. These committees may wish to informally elect a committee leader as the primary contact for and coordinator of the project, activity, or event.

6.5 Candidates for executive board positions may give a brief speech at the election meeting or provide a statement to be read in the event of their absence.

6.6 Voting quorum is half of all members. Members not present may send a ballot with another

member with their vote and signature.

6.7 Voting is done by secret ballot.

6.8 A candidate wins the seat if they receive half the votes plus one.

Article VII: Amendments

7.1 Any member may submit a proposal for the amendment of this constitution.

7.2 This submission must occur at a general meeting.

7.3 If one third of those present, by open show of support, wish to consider such an amendment, the amendment may be taken to a vote at the following general meeting.

7.4 The amendment must receive a 2/3 majority vote of the group.

Article VIII: Impeachment or Removal of Officers

8.1 In the event that an officer of the group fails to maintain the responsibilities of the position (because of dereliction of duty, incompetence, or employment of funds or property of the group for private gain), then that officer may be removed from office by a majority vote of the general body.

8.1.1 The officer up for impeachment must be notified of their status as well as the date of the general body vote by a member of the Executive Board at least one full week prior to the meeting at which their impeachment will be discussed.