

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Council Minutes for October 28, 2012

“The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown”
-H.P. Lovecraft

1 Call to Order

-The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

2 Attendance.....Operations

-All here.

3 Consent Agenda

- a. \$3,600 from the Discretionary Fund to VISA
- b. \$4,500 from the Discretionary Fund to Outing Club
- c. \$125 from the New Organization Fund to Challah for Hunger
- d. \$800 from the Speakers, Lectures, and Panels Fund to GAAP
- e. \$235 from the Discretionary Fund to Ceramics
- f. \$100 from the Discretionary Fund to UNICEF
- g. \$1,500 from the Discretionary Fund to BSU
- h. \$800 from the Collaboration Fund to Punx
- i. \$1,200 from the Capital Fund to Soundsystem
- j. \$1,023 from the Discretionary Fund to VSA
- k. \$200 from the New Organization Fund to Challah
- l. \$1,700 from the Community Fund to GAAP

-All adopted.

4 Forum with Domenico Ruggiero, Director of ALANA Programs and Judy Jarvis, Director of LGBTQ and Gender Resources.....(45 min)

-Domenico worked at Oberlin before coming to Vassar.

-Judy Jarvis played Ultimate at Vassar woot! She has varied experience including working in Philadelphia, San Francisco, and much more.

-Judy’s position currently runs an umbrella organization with many different activities. This week she’s organizing a forum called “Isn’t that a Women’s College?” about how to empower women at Vassar, explore their role on campus, etc. On November 18th they will be working together on social justice dialogues with the help of the Campus Life Office and the interns in the 3 centers (LGBTQ, Women’s, and ALANA). The conference will be a way to look at various “-isms” such as race, class, etc. It will be a full weekend event and a way to create dialogue, for people who want to learn more as well as for people who already are passionate about these ideas. They work a lot towards inter-sectional collaboration.

-Conversations about race don’t only need to happen at the ALANA center. They are a resource for anyone. They speak individually to students and to the campus as a whole.

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-Joss asked about the Campus Climate Campaign that they talked about it CLRG and how the Women’s Center will be involved. Full campus campaigns can be difficult but they both have a lot of experience with this and they’d love to talk more about it.

-2013 asked about how campus climate and bias incidents have changed over the time Judy has been away and is now back. She thinks they’re essentially the same. She regrets not being involved in these conversations when she was a student because she believes it’s important for everyone to be a part of it. She remembers feeling like what a shame, but they didn’t have to do with her. Domenico said that he’s seen different types of bias incidents in his 5 years in higher education. He usually saw them in the spring, but now it’s looking like they’re happening at different times. At Oberlin they were on buildings, but here we’re seeing them more in bathroom stalls and hidden spaces.

-Academics asked about micro-aggressions like those on Say Anything etc. Judy feels that these micro-aggressions don’t affect a whole community as much as build up and weigh on us. They have a similar impact to other vandalism events. Her perspective as an administrator is that she tries not to participate in those types of social media sites unless someone points them out to her. Domenico is looking away from allowing ourselves to see these incidents as isolated from the broader community, they affect all of us.

-Operations asked how students can get involved. Fruit Salad Discussion Series is a monthly event where there’s free lunch and people can talk about different issues (in the past topics have been asexuality, dating violence, queer history). They also hold LGBTQ/Ally dinners every Tuesday (average of 30 students each week). They hang out and do an exercise as a way of building community outside of the dorms. The Women’s Center is a lump of clay right now and she’s hoping to start more regular programming in the spring. Other events include ALANA Fest which happens during family weekend, Images Program, Leadership Retreat, and Faculty Dialogues. Domenico has ten interns that host lots of study breaks during midterms and finals. Molly McGlennen in American Culture has been helping create work around identifying as native.

-Student Life asked about the Women’s Center itself and its location. Right now they are in Strong 114, but it can’t serve more than three students, so it’s not functional as a venue for performances, holding meetings, etc. They were hoping to get space in the new bookstore, but since this isn’t happening immediately she’s talking to Dean Roelke and he’s supportive of their ideas. She hopes some good ideas come out of the forum.

-Strong asked Dominique how to get involved in Vassar issues outside of Vassar because the issues we see here are not the same in the sense that it’s a very different context. What resources does he know of? One thing is getting on their email list where they send out info about events happening in the community. Our proximity to New York City also gives us

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the chance to get internships or pair with different social justice areas. There's not central hub in Poughkeepsie so it is challenging to get a better sense of what's being offered in the community. However, there is a Kingston Hub.

-Cushing asked about how their orgs can be involved in creating campus dialogue around events like the recent one. Judy thinks the immediate response by Jewett was really important and a way to show everyone that we're all a part of this. The Community Forum was awesome, but probably only about 60 students were there, so that could improve. She thinks word of mouth is a very important way for students to encourage people to come. She sees the structural racism and sexism of society trickling down and stressed how we talk about these issues and improve them. Privileging knowledge is so important to empower people and let students learn what they can do. Domenico thinks that these issues shouldn't be seen as separate and wants to improve their involvement in classes.

-Ferry asked about how to make their spaces more inclusive to people who don't necessarily identify with any of these groups. Domenico thinks one way of doing this is programming that people wouldn't necessarily expect at the center. His first program he worked with an English Professor to create a fun event and moments like these help dispel the idea of "it's not for me". He thinks there's always more work to be done. There's also interest in having campus wide initiatives, holding meetings in different spaces, and reminding the campus to use these spaces as much as possible. She feels they are underused spaces. He feels there's a lot of institutional ignorance around the center, like when he had a meeting with the tour guides and they didn't know how to talk about the ALANA Center.

-Lathrop asked about how to prepare incoming freshmen from very different social backgrounds to be a part of and react to issues that these centers deal with. Judy feels that throwing some of the vocabulary out there is very important, but she feels that there is definitely a pressure to be very socially progressive immediately when you arrive here. She feels that people shouldn't be unable to say something because they're scared of being wrong. Tightening contacts/networks and letting people know they're there is one of their biggest challenges. Domenico also feels that having predecessors that didn't last very long creates a disservice to these centers.

-They both sit on a huge variety of committees, including but not limited to Transitions, CIRG, CLRC, Orientation, FLC, Orientation, First Year Committee, Residential Life, Campus Life, Health Education, etc.

-He's always impressed how people survive off of their committees.

5 Executive Board Reports

- a. President..... (7 min)

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-Student Space Committee is moving along. They went to a few schools before break and it was very interesting. He looked at some schools over break and likes the idea of a coffee house/music space. Focus groups are this weekend and they had over 100 people sign up. Life After Vassar Committee is meeting and the consultant will be coming soon—they can tell them where they are and where they need to be on these issues. He went to BHP before Council to talk about communications issues; they had productive conversations.

-Joss thanked him for coming to dinner.

-2015 asked if the communications issues will/should be talked about with all of Council. He hopes they will do this.

b. Activities.....(7 min)

-Activities talked about UpC. Sun-Wed you can submit a request and get the space if it's available. Thurs-Sat is a lottery to see if you can get the space at the beginning of each semester. There's a policy to say that people can't hold events: there are flaws. It was an opt-out system instead of opt-in system. They had 111 people (or orgs) in the UpC lottery. The winners were 2013 and the Vassar Prison Initiative. Neither have used their lottery ticket yet. The Activities Committee came up with another system. The new system will have an application process that keeps in the spirit of UpC. They will put specific events into the lottery so that specific events are chosen rather than orgs. There's a big 10-2 programming gap. The only ones that have happened this semester are Sweet Sixteen and Anything but Clothes. He thinks we need more programming at these times. They are also looking at the difficult job of trying to get certified because you need to hold events and you need \$ to hold events and you need to be able to apply to get spaces.

-2015 asked how 2013 did his event without using his lottery ticket. The Programming Board.

-Strong thinks that using the space in the afternoon might be a good solution because it wouldn't be taking it away at night.

-Jewett asked when the new system would be enacted. The answer was next semester.

-Raymond asked about events that are historically in UpC, like Roaring 20s. This system by way of applications takes this into account a little bit.

6 Campus Climate Campaign Update.....Activities (10 min)

-They didn't have a huge turnout, but lots of passionate people. They went over three big things. The first is finding a space or way for all of the presidents/ reps from all the activist org to get together. Every activist organization talking is important. Second, a photo campaign, having people write down a statement and take a photo to go with that statement

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so that there are faces attached to this movement. They want to make Vassar a safe space for this type of issue where students can opt into showing their support. They also looked at who runs for VSA positions because the VSA has a big role in creating campus climate. The last three years VP for Activities has been two dorm presidents and a class president, why? Houses and classes are organizations. Their next meeting will be Friday November 9th at 2:30 p.m. for them to talk about these issues.

7 Decertification of the Homework Club

-There's a typo in the Constitution. Since there is no activity in the org then they must be decertified. It's been three consecutive semesters and they've been fined for everything they could have missed and have had no event on the calendar. He looked through all the emails to see if there had been contact with the VSA and there hasn't been anything significant for three semesters.

-Joss asked why this came to Council. Exec. Board wanted approval.

-The decertification of Homework Club passed with all in favor.

8 Decertification of Italian Club

-The president didn't know she was president and they haven't had any activity.

-Academics plugged the major's committee chairs as resources for creating activity in some orgs. He wonders if they could replace activities done by different orgs. This is an idea to think about collaboration.

-The motion to decertify the Italian Club passed with all in favor.

9 Open Discussion

-2013: 215 days until commencement. Halloween happened; shout out to the apartment presidents, trick-or-treating was a huge success! He liked extending Halloweekend. They had a ridiculous amount of people show up the Villard. People were still buying tickets at 1:15. First time in 5 years that there hasn't been a fire alarm. They ran out of beer in the beer room. Thank you to Daisies, Violets, and CBS. All positive feedback so far. He was up for 24 hours total!

-Activities gave a shout out to Terry Quinn, she was putting out all of the fires and is just perfect. Give her a big hug.

-Jewett wanted to remind everyone that Hurricane Sandy is coming through, please don't do anything stupid.

-Finance will be going paperless this week. It will save a lot of time and be awesome.

-TAs thought trick-or-treating was an amazing collaboration between underclassmen and upperclassmen. Thank you to everyone who helped!

-Academics reminded people that he sent out an email earlier today about Dean Chenette's proposals. It's open to anyone. You're welcome to come and talk. He'll be chairing it.

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-Activities asked about the online system. Will they be paying for the costs of the orgs? The orgs will pay—it'll be a dollar. Casey noted that they will be printing less paper, on recyclable paper.

-2015 made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:16 with all in favor except Activities.