

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

VSA Council Minutes for Nov. 21, 2010

1 Call to Order

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

2 AttendanceOperations

- All here.

3 Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Minutes from 11/14

- All approved.

4 Forum: Ed Pittman, Associate Dean of the College for Campus Life and Diversity

- Ed Pittman came to give an overview on his job, a little about him, and to initiate some discussion with the VSA. He gave some history on Vassar, as he is an alum ('82), about how the MPR used to be a game room, you used to be able to drink beer while waiting to get into the Mug, and the computer store used to be a record store. His office works on outreach and student life. He talked about keeping students involved and attending events even after the initial orientation week. They also work on dialogues around campus where they create a space where anyone can discuss important issues. They also want to create ongoing spaces where students can talk and where everyone is free to be open and accepting. They find lecturers to come and speak about current issues like social justice, race issues, and sexual orientation in our society. Their job extends from the broad to the very specific. The particular duties include extending a hand to minority students, like students with disabilities, Latino students, gay students, etc. He stressed the fact that everyone needs a place where they feel affirmed. The challenge is how to create these spaces that contribute, rather than stifle the development of these minority groups and students in general. He wants to discuss the use of alcohol on campus as a means of relaxation or recovering from arduous studies. He also opened the discussion to the difficulty in handling comments made in anonymous environments such as online sites or the Misc. critiques. Finally, he wants to discuss inclusion and how we create the most inclusive environments, but be aware of compositional diversity and the ways in which we force this. Last year, there was a controversial incident on campus in regard to the Luau that was hosted here. He wants us to keep in mind how we learn from past experiences.

- 2014 asked about current trends in partying at Vassar. The response was that access is easier in many ways. Regulation takes place in terms of registering to have a party, etc.

- Lathrop asked about the Women's Center and publicizing it more. She thinks this is a useful resource that people should know more about. He answered that there are currently 2 interns that work 19 hours, but Mr. Pittman is open to increasing this if necessary.

- Joss commended the "Is gay the new black?" poster.

- Davison inquired about the independent study course that happened in the past. Mr. Pittman explained how this was a program to help first generation students adjust, and they hope to continue it.
- Town Students addressed the problem of prescription drugs and the lack of action in the administration. Mr. Pittman agreed that drugs should be talked about more and the administration needs to create a space where they talk honestly about this issue.
- Academics wants to know how the VSA can be more helpful in collaborating with his office. He thinks that a strong relationship, especially in terms of communication, is very important and our help with CLRG has already been a good outcome. A solid foundation is the most important. Insight comes from discussion.
- Activities wanted to know more about how his office facilitates discussion so that the VSA and students in general don't feel like they're taking the entire burden in terms of a pertinent issue or crisis. They have a few different committees and sections that address crisis and important issues. They also have a specific crisis committee. However, he feels they need to focus more on issues before they get so explosive that campus needs to deal with the response as well. He talked about follow-up dinners as a space to respond to important meetings.
- Student Life asked him to explain the history of the Women's Center. The mid 70s through the 90s it moved around a bit. When it was moved at one point there was a considerable amount of controversy, but his office dealt with that. It has had a history of transience, and its one disadvantage is that it doesn't have a set administrative system. Now, they have 2 elected interns. In terms of its function, it was formed to provide a space for women, but also to focus on gender education where men can go too. Student Life also asked about the program for diversity and multiculturalism in the freshman experience. Mr. Pittman believes that this needs to be done subtly and consciously and provide a discourse on diversity. This is done through the Activism is Art program, the Freshman 15, Gays of our Lives, etc. They try to reinforce issues that come up in orientation throughout the year. They think of leadership in a broad sense as leaders without titles, not just with positions of importance.
- Lathrop suggested that the basements not be used for spaces like the Women's Center. She also commended the Transitions program in introducing first generation students before the rest of campus. She also thought that we should be addressing more sophomore year issues such as the "sophomore slump" (when students feel lost and overstressed). She also touched on the use of Adderall by non-prescribed students as a way of helping with academics and how that could be further addressed as well.
- Town Students suggested some sort of Life 101 course potentially for freshmen or seniors. Academics responded that they have talked about this idea of social consciousness previously and are still working on it.

- a. President - They are really working on their blog and updating it daily. They are also reevaluating their goals and discussing what are the real issues. He is currently reevaluating spaces in terms of how we allocate space, use space, etc. The VSA board had dinner with Maureen King on Thursday and are continuing to work on current issues. Activities reiterated that they are very willing to work with students who have concerns. They are also working on facilities for students with disabilities.
 - b. Operations - Operations would like to incorporate the rest of the council into the blog in some way. They are going to launch the website for the sesquicentennial celebration November 30th. She is currently working on Mind the Gap Day and making it bigger and more publicized on campus. Noyes is helping the Operations Committee review the documents of VSA.
- 6 Appointment of Founder's Day Co-Chairs.....Operations
- They had 3 different applicants and found them all to be very competent and different enough from each other that the opinion was that all 3 should be appointed.
 - Motion to appoint Sam Allen to co-chair: all in favor except for TAs who abstained.
 - Motion to appoint Marie Dugo, all in favor.
 - Motion to appoint Max Kutner, all in favor.
- 7 Appointment of 2014 CCL RepresentativeOperations
- VSA already knows her so they felt like she would be good because she is already familiar with the system and very passionate about it. Motion to appoint Naimah, all in favor.
- 8 Allocation of \$1030 to ASA from Conference Fund Finance
- ASA wants to attend a ECAASU conference where they talk about many issues for Asian Americans with students from all across the Eastern Seaboard. The representative stressed the importance of this conference in educating Asian Americans about the social context they live in and current issues related to them. They bring back what they learn to campus and share it with the student body and other constituents. They want to bring all the students on campus together and share their culture and they are better positioned to do this if they go to this conference which teaches them ways of doing this.
 - 2011 wanted to know about the breakdown of students that would be attending. They hope to send at least 6 freshmen to open their eyes and give them this experience. They are bringing more people (24) so that they can take advantage of all the workshops that the conference offers.
 - Finance stressed how awesome ASA is at fundraising and they wish they could give them more, but it's a bylaws thing.
 - All in favor, except for TAs who abstained.
- 9 Allocation of \$800 to BSU from Collaboration Fund Finance
- This is the same request that they've made before. They initially weren't sure if they needed security, but they do and the dorms are covering it. The educational aspect of this allocation is that they're covering the condoms. Activities noted that every event that

addresses some social issue encourages conversations and therefore has an educational aspect.

- All those is favor of this allocation, except for activities who abstained.

10 Allocation of \$1000 to Choice Finance

- They are going to bring a speaker to discuss female sexuality

- Allocation to Choice to speakers and lecturers, All in favor

11 Open Discussion..... Anyone

- 2011: 182 days until graduation

- Mini courses could potentially be reinitiated by the last 6 weeks of second semester. THs explained that many people are very interested in hobbies. Town Students wanted to know if her constituents should start brainstorming on ideas. President explained that mini courses are student taught. 2011 suggested Excel as a potential class.

- Town Students has a thing form 6-8 tomorrow in the Alana Center.

- 2013 congrats to everyone on kaleidoscope.

- THs: motion to adjourn, motion passes.