

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Council Minutes for December 2, 2012

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- Theodore Roosevelt

1 Call to Order

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

2 Attendance.....Operations

-All here.

3 Consent Agenda

a. Minutes from 11/25 meeting

-All adopted.

4 Forum with Don Marsala and Kim Squillace, Director and Associate Director of Safety and Security.....(45 min)

-They've had a number of assaults that they're very concerned about. They are still thinking about the laptop thefts, but it's gotten better this year. There's the normal alcohol related mischief. They've seen a small rise in assaults, many people have been going to the hospital, and there's been a lot of graffiti, some personal, some not. Also, quite a few cooking related fire alarms.

-Jewett asked if the assaults are people from on or off campus. They think mostly on campus.

-Student Life asked about the Security Audit. They felt that they knew about most of the suggestions brought up on the security audit. They think they work on most of them.

-2015 asked about crashing a security vehicle. It's still under investigation. In a brand new vehicle an officer veered off the road, rolled over a branch, caught on fire. The officer escaped with minor burns. Don Marsala visited him in the hospital and he's a little banged up, broke a couple of ribs, burns on hands and hair, but will be fine.

-2016 asked about the current smoking policy. His constituents have said that people are smoking close to buildings. He's heard lots of complaints about it in front of Main and the library, etc. They write people up often for this. They changed the placements of the benches at the library so they're further away. He read the article in the Misc. and is also concerned. With this new policy will we have 100 people all on Raymond Ave. every 20 minutes?

-Main asked if he's survived deer hunting? Yes...

-THs asked about having a solo cup in your hand outside and if this is more ok than having an open beer. The officer will write down exactly what they see and smell from where they are. She also asked about how party write-ups have been going. Pretty well this semester, except this past weekend when 5 people got sent to the hospital. She sees danger in the underage students drinking at the THs; that's where most of the problems come from. They get a lot of students who don't know how they got home, and they've found students outside under bushes.

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-Student Life asked about the size of the force and the training they do. They have 24 full time officers, 4 sergeants (supervisors). They also have 8 officers on call/part-time. They do a lot of plugging in in different spots. They have the shuttle, usually run by on-calls. The officers get trained by Res. Life (who talks to them about college regulations), environmental safety (Tim Kelly) in addition to their normal safety. They also had a police officer from Poughkeepsie come in. They also have a cultural training every year. They want to work with the student body and be there for them. They rarely have complaints about officers on patrol, and this year they haven't had any. He was at a conference and was surprised that many people at other institutions lose their staff often; we have officers that have been here 20 yrs.

-Michael really likes vests.

-Activities asked about having too many people in their house, but not wanting to call security on their own house for fear of getting in trouble. Call, you won't get in trouble.

-They can't look in your bureau or desk.

-TAs asked about Community Eyes. It is anonymous. If it's super important, they can ask computing services to help them. They use the information wisely. It has helped them solve problems over the years, like drug dealing.

-Jewett asked about events getting extra security officers thrown in. Often orgs/houses don't budget it in. Sometimes he pays for them himself if he deems them necessary. Security is the prime concern.

-Joss asked what they do with the confiscated items. They were told not to flush drugs down the toilet. They also lit a small fire to burn the acid they found!!! Now they have a huge inventory building up. If it's a really big amount of drugs or hard drugs like cocaine, then they call the policy to get rid of it. The drug task force will get it eventually and like to do tests on it.

-Academics asked about student patrol changing from outside to inside. It became apparent that patrol wasn't doing as much. It's a great professional service. They walk around; they're a great resource for the students. Some people didn't like the change, but they've settled into it. They've been a great asset to the department.

-2013 commended them on being outstanding this year, especially for Halloween. He asked about parking tickets and the way they're handled. They have pretty good compliance with parking rules. The ones that don't follow the rules really don't follow them; usually a few repeat offenders. They've had fewer cars registered recently. Because of the Olmsted science building changes, they might make freshmen banned from parking. They are thinking about

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having parking off campus and shuttles to bring students in or out. This would be in the far future. They also might move the tennis courts off campus.

5 Executive Board Reports

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

-Meet me in Manhattan Committee has decided that Sunday April 21st might be the best day for this event. The Sustainability Committee is working hard on moving the campus calendar online. They are also trying to change the certification system. Right now, you turn in the application that's online and turn in a constitution. They're looking to give it more structure, a new name, etc. They are thinking about a new program for baby orgs (borgs=not certified) so that they have more help, can apply to the New Organization Fund, and have an Activities Committee liaison, guidance, etc.
-TAs was concerned orgs would want to maintain this in limbo status. They don't think that will be an issue.
-2015 loves the name borgs.

b. Finance.....(7 min)

-Next Friday is the Fund-athon. They will look at all the data they've collected from supplemental and other types of budgeting which will be useful in doing annual budgeting next semester. They hope to look at trends, how we're spending our money and really changing annual budgeting where needed.
-They want to charter a special committee for the Social Consciousness Fund.
-They are thinking about a large events fund, the Finance bylaws, etc.
-All the funds are doing very well. Speakers Fund has leveled off. A lot of Conference Fund apps had to be declined this past week.
-THs asked how far back they are going in their Fund-athon. 5 yrs.

6 A BSU representative made a motion to get the funds allocated to them for a conference they want to go to.

-They were able to fund a group of students last year, but their budget is smaller this year so they need VSA funding help. They have more than 36 students interested in going and expect that number to increase.
-The reasoning behind the biannual Conference Fund allocation is that the fund is simply only so big and they have to let clubs go every other year.
-It was clarified that even though they didn't get Conference Fund funding last year, they used VSA funds out of their budget and that's why they can't get funding again this year. A representative was concerned that they will never be able to get funding if they manage to go this year, next year etc. They've already gotten over \$1000 from some departments.

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-2015 recommended moving this to Discretionary because they're budget was cut and they were unfamiliar with the rules.

-Finance urged them to change the rules if they think they should be, but to remember that the rule is there for a reason.

-The motion to call to question passed with all in favor.

-The motion to allocate \$4500 from Conference to BSU failed with all in favor.

-Joss asked the representatives if they could bring this discussion back to Finance instead of discussing it on the Council floor. This doesn't give them enough time. The deadline is December 8th.

-Cushing asked something complicated about finance and annual budgeting.

-Activities asked about fundraising and if an org is allowed to use their funds to start their fundraising. Merchandise is generally ok, but not condoned. He also noted that there are a lot more conferences happening this year and we should look at that from an events perspective.

-2015 thinks that they should discuss this in Discretionary and only fund 10 people if they fund them. How much that would cost? \$1300 would cover the cost of the conference, but not travel and lodging a representative clarified. Their estimate is \$1925.

-Finance asked to stick to discussing the merits of the event instead of technicalities.

-2016 asked if they could somehow bring it to Finance because it's a new fund app.

-President encouraged making motions.

-Academics made a motion to extend 15 minutes. This passed with all in favor.

-Joss made a point that this is in their expected annual budget and made a motion to consider multiple options of allocating \$4550, \$1925, or \$0. 2015 noted a technical mistake about numbers.

-2016 thinks this is a great idea, but is worried that 5 other orgs were denied funding for their conferences; Council needs to notice that this is an exception not a precedent.

-TAs found the Conference Fund bylaws problematic. He feels that Finance Committee looks too carefully at technicalities. This is what Discretionary is for.

-Ferry noted that although other orgs were denied, none of them came into Council. This shows their commitment and dedication. Since there have been more conferences this year, there are extenuating circumstances.

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-Activities asked how BSU feels about putting this app in Discretionary. They are concerned about making it harder for next year's board to go to this conference. It's a dangerous decision.

-2015 thinks that perhaps sending 36 people to a conference isn't the most equitable or practical decision because they have a lot of other orgs to fund as well.

-Main made a motion to call to question. This passed with a majority.

-A rep made a clarifying question to find out if they could try and get more funding for their annual budget to go to this conference next year.

-Option B (\$1925) passed with the most votes. None voted to allocate them no money.

6 Undoing Racism Conference Debrief.....President (10 min)

-4 members of Council went to a workshop this past weekend on Long Island. Around 50 people were there. They talked a lot about historic institutions, peoples' own personal experiences, etc. There was a great diversity of people in the room that made it very enlightening. They hope it will come to Vassar because it's a conversation about racism that doesn't really occur here at Vassar.

-Student Life noted that it was intense and life changing. It was a balance of emotional, historical, and educational. It focused on organization and possible solutions to the problems. He thinks it would be very valuable to bring back to Vassar for a select group of student leaders, activists, administrators. It's broad and could benefit many different people.

-Ally noted it was really incredible, there were lots of social workers. It was a very different type of conversation than we have at Vassar.

-Joss supported anyone who would like to try to go to this on their own. The most valuable thing was to give people practice on having conversations about race and class issues. The workshop put you in the conversations so that they really could "undo racism".

7 Resolution on Widespread and Coordinated Use of Trigger Warnings....Academics (15 min)

-This is phase 3. He'd like to hear what people are saying about it.

-Raymond noted that the house fellow was not in favor and believes the faculty isn't in favor.

-Joss has heard negative feedback from theatre orgs about giving away information. They feel that it's at the discretion of campus activities to decide when they need to say something or not.

-2013 heard feedback about stigmatizing events. Someone recommended putting "triggers" on posters that send the reader to a different place so there aren't specific words on the advertisements.

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-Student Life noted that we shouldn't stigmatize trigger warnings themselves and think about people's comfort first.

-Josh talked about finding the balance between speaking to trigger warning and creating a "spoiler". He's concerned that labeling in this way might have an impact on what is produced on a campus. He wants to make sure that controversial and sensitive issues still have a place on campus.

-TAs noted that trigger warnings have already been used on campus. He doesn't think it will be a very big or jarring shift. People should be fairly adaptable. He asked about the flexibility of the issue. They're looking at where the information goes and who decides on it. There would be some type of brief sent out to all orgs about what to put and for what on posters etc. for their event. Campus Activities can implement this however they want, they are just presenting a model that they think will work.

-Activities noted that these are all student associations because people were wondering about faculty. This is not "this contains..." on posters, it's "TRIGGER WARNING:..." and he thinks this makes a difference.

-2015 saw a lot of unfamiliarity from her class council. She thinks any action should be accompanied by an educational email or something.

-Academics wanted to clarify that a trauma trigger doesn't affect any average person, but will negatively affect anyone who has been affected by trauma in the past. He agrees that awareness is a big deal, and that trigger warning are so unobtrusive, but prevent a large negative affect.

-Raymond wondered how orgs would be enforced to do this or how it would work. Someone would have to complete a checklist when registering an event.

-Main made a motion to call to question which he didn't need to do.

-This resolution passed with all in favor except THs.

8 Resolution Concerning the Gathering of Student Opinion Regarding a Smoking Ban on Vassar's Campus.....Josselyn and 2015 (15 min)

-The changes they've made are striking mention of last year's poll, made 2 "be it resolved," to gather student opinion and something else.

-Student Life reviewed this in their meeting on Monday. They made some language edits.

Student Life will be chartering a student sub-committee. They will be getting advice on

research methods. They hope to have a poll out on the Tuesday they get back from campus.

They are encouraging Chris or Cappy to make a statement to campus about the status of this resolution because it's been unclear up to this point.

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-Joss noted that it's very important to gather student opinion first, vote, and then pass new regulations and that this is the reason this committee is being formed.

-Strong is concerned that the student body hasn't been educated at all and they need to be careful.

-TAs noted that they need to respond to the legal context, status of this movement outside Vassar etc. before making decisions.

-2015 made a language change.

-Main made a motion to call this to question. This passed with all in favor.

9 Resolution Concerning Class

-Class isn't discussed. They ultimately would like to see this discussion create a center on campus. They would like to think about perhaps restructuring the Alana Center Position to include this new resolution.

-Activities is very excited about this. He thinks it's a start to go with the Alana center on this. He knows that space is a huge issue on campus and wants to know where they're thinking about. Initially they talked about putting it somewhere in the bookstore space, a room in Main that could be shared, and they're discussing further options for this.

-Ferry asked about talking to Ed Pittman. They've had a few conversations, but not about what this would look like. She thinks VSA support would help show the campus recruiters that they're serious.

-Jewett asked what resources this would provide that don't already exist. One would be a peer liaison for Financial Aid, a specific place to find out about these issues, and a space for education and conversation on these issues.

-Student Life asked about priorities. Both parts of the resolution need the other. Their goal is to find some sort of resource/support. The center is the ideal, but they are open to other ideas given by the college. Student Life also asked about how this would affect the efficiency of the ALANA Center. She thinks this will factor into picking a new director and restructuring and she thinks that the relationship will be mutually beneficial instead of harmful.

-Finance talked about Transitions and working with them. This resolution wants to help pick up the slack where that program leaves off.

-2015 thanked them a lot for bringing this up. She noted that because this resolution could affect the administrative structure, and the structure of the Alana center that perhaps this should wait. What's their timeline? They are unsure, but want to do it along with hiring a new ALANA center director.

-Ed Pitman is the advisor of the VSA so he knows it's in the works.

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-Student Life made a motion to table this to the student life committee. 7:30-8 on Monday.

This passed with all in favor.

9 Open Discussion

-2013:174 days until graduation. Seniors have 99 Nights on December 8th and the announcement of the student gift. Senior Class Council is having a mega blowout sail on Friday, Monday, and Tuesday of all of their merchandise.

-Activities: the theme is Alice in Wonderland.

-Cushing noted that Finance Committee should look at the bylaw discussed earlier in conference. He also said happy birthday to THs. Finally, he felt uncomfortable with how people snickered when someone voted against something earlier in Council.

-Student life noted that tomorrow during their meeting they will be discussing coal divestment at Vassar.

-Socos is the editor of the Oak Door and wanted to encourage Council members to advertise it. They are looking for papers that students had fun with, show the transition from high school to college, and other things. She thinks it's unnecessary for everyone to validate every point or provide reason for voting. They can be personal.

-Raymond is holding Winter Wonderland in UpC right now.

-2016 thought Dormal Formal was really great and thought it was a cool event for people who don't want to go to Mug-like events. He also noted that people don't like smoke blown in their face and the smoking ban wouldn't necessarily address this. He thinks enforcement is more important than the policy.

-Student Life noted that CCL's view is that it's unenforceable unless you have a campus culture shift and a ban is one way to cause this.

-Activities noted that reasons you're voting should never be personal. This should be a consistent thing.

-Joss noted that he disagrees that not smoking is unenforceable and this is exciting.

-Ferry noted that they have difficult conversations and they do it and he made a motion to adjourn. This passed with all in favor except THs. The meeting was adjourned at 9:22 p.m.