

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Council Minutes for February 7, 2013

“I get knocked down, But I get up again, You’re never going to keep me down.”
-Chumbawamba

- 1 Call to Order
 - The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. President welcomed the new VP for Student Life. Dallas told everyone she’s excited to be here and be part of some “new energy”.
- 2 Attendance..... Operations
 - All here.
- 3 Consent Agenda
 - a. \$5000 from Discretionary to ViCE Music
 - b. \$1,221 from Discretionary to Fem Alliance
 - c. \$764 from Capital to Class of 2013
 - d. \$5,600 from Speakers, Lectures and Panels to VSA
 - e. \$0 from Conference to Pro Health
 - f. Minutes from 2/3 meeting
 - All adopted.
- 4 Executive Board Reports
 - a. President..... (7 min)
 - The student space was discussed at a Planning Meeting. The final decision will be made by the Board in March. One option is a 2 story bookstore where Juliet’s used to be. They might just put in three commercial vendors. They also might renovate the bookstore or make it a two story building.
 - Tim Wise will be here February 15th at 5 p.m. President will be sending out a campus email to let everyone know. All College Day is on the 20th.
 - The Student Faculty Basketball game is on the 20th and tickets are \$3.
 - b. Operations..... (7 min)
 - They’ve been doing appointments for the past two weeks. She is meeting this week with the Board of Elections Co-chairs to figure out the time for voting, etc.
- 6 Women’s Center Resolution..... Deb (20 min)
 - Deb and Sitara made a presentation about the Resolution. They are part of the sub-committee for the space proposal. They wrote a resolution. The Women’s Center was established in the early 1970. They have a director and interns and a large group of students that is really excited about empowering women, planning events, etc. The 4 interns are always accessible to meet with people and have office hours. Right now they don’t have enough space to do the things they want to do. They read the mission statement and talked about comparisons they’ve made to other groups and Women’s Centers at peer institutions. The

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purpose of this statement is to get the VSA’s endorsement of the need to find space on campus for the Center.

-This motion passed with all in favor.

7 Fossil Fuel Divestment Resolution..... Gabe, Noah, Davison, Ferry (20 min)

-The Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign started last year. They are asking for the college to divest in Fossil Fuels burning, extraction, and transportation companies. They are hoping to present their proposal to the Board of Trustees at the upcoming March meeting or the next one. They have 500 signatures on their proposal. They did a Teach-In with professors on the 8th, they staged a demonstration, and they’ve been meeting every week. They’ve also participated in different “convergences” and are sending students to one at Swarthmore in the next few weeks.

-They’ve been in constant contact with the administration. They are recommending that the funds that are divested be spread out over the other parts of the endowment. Throughout the recession the Vassar endowment has grown to \$816 million. They hope to invest in companies that aren’t as risky as fossil fuel companies. They are asking for a couple years to allow the board time. By May of 2014 they are asking for divestment in direct investment in the top 200 coal companies. By May 2016 they are asking for divestment in all companies related to fossil fuels.

-They’ve been in conversation with Paul Ruud this semester who is a professor of economics and their proposal is not only economically plausible, but could be beneficial. A big aspect is thinking about the future and the way fossil fuels aren’t going to be viable in a few years. A research group in California found that divesting from the top 5 groups has a statistically insignificant effect on overall money.

-Jewett asked how much they need to divest. They are unsure. They’re all tied up in the investor’s organization. Estimates guess that 9% of money is invested in fossil fuels.

-Ferry made a motion to make some typo changes in the resolution.

-President suggested that they table this resolution to Student Life Committee. He also noted that a few finance people from the administration are coming in next week.

-2015 asked about what CIRC’s (Campus Investor Responsibility Committee) opinions were after meeting with them.

-When they’ve met with CIRC they’ve brought up financial concerns, but they are very aware and willing to work with them. One of their main issues is the investment office’s only concern being to maximize returns whereas CIRC has a responsibility to the moral concerns of the campus. They have researched the comingled funds and there are a few options for divesting this. They could use a special agency to create a portfolio that isn’t involved in fossil

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fuels or they could take the investments out of the comingled fund as well as perhaps having Vassar create its own ideas.

-Student Life thanked them for bringing together so many different voices.

-2013 made a motion to extend time by 10 minutes.

-Socos asked if there is a serious time crunch if Council does table it. They are open to talking about it in the future.

-TAs asked what the resolution number is. 2078. Also they had proposed previously a resolution to Student Life, but this is its first time in Council.

-Ferry noted that the goal of the resolution is to make a stand about divestment, not as much about thinking about the details and he suggests taking it to a vote as soon as possible.

-Jewett made a motion to table this to Student Life. This passed with a majority.

-President suggested that everyone talk this over with their constituents.

8 Appointment of Class of 2014 Judicial Board Representatives Operations (10 min)

-Two students are going abroad this semester. They had the chairs of the Judicial Board come in and talk to them as well. They were looking for applicants with listening and mediation skills.

-Evan Seltzer is part of the Vassar Democrats and the captain of the Soccer Team and seemed very dedicated. Lathrop recommended him as well from previous experience. This motion passed with all in favor, except one abstention.

-They also want to appoint Callie Winkeller. She has experience in high school doing a similar thing. She has experience in giving sanctions. She was also a student fellow and has experience in mediation. This motion passed with all in favor, except one abstention.

9 Appointment of Davison Junior Representative Operations (5 min)

-Luis Cantor was very committed to House Team, planning events, etc. He has lots of Davison pride and is very involved.

-Activities noted that he’s the most excited non-house team person in Davison.

-This motion passed with all in favor, except 2 abstentions.

10 Appointment of Strong Junior Representatives Operations (5 min)

-Emily Salshutz was the only one who applied so they didn’t even have to meet with her.

11 Appointment of Vice President for Academics Operations (15 min)

-They had six people apply. They all came in with amazing ideas.

-They are recommending Amanda Zeligs. She was a Student Fellow and HSA. She has been research assistant in two departments. She did student teaching last semester. She had a lot of exciting ideas about different fieldwork opportunities. She is excited to interact with

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Council. She had gone through the Council Minutes and knew what Academics and all of Council has been up to.

-The motion to appoint Amanda Zeligs to VP for Academics passed with all in favor.

12 Open Discussion

-2013: 104 days until commencement. He thanked Socos for her confetti thing and thanked the VSA for buying them a T-shirt cannon. Tickets will be available this coming Thursday for the Student Faculty Basketball game. On Saturday the Men’s and Women’s Senior days went well. They had 3 different seniors being honored and they made signs and painted faces. It was great to see some Vassar Spirit. They’re keeping moving with Senior Days.

-2014: 468 days until graduation.

-2016: He is confused and uncomfortable about the way they do appointments. He isn’t sure that Council as a whole needs to be appointing members of House Teams; he thinks this job should be done by the House Teams who will be directly affected. Operations responded that she understands. They bring in class and dorm presidents for those appointments. They have applications which help and the meetings are open so people can come and voice their opinions. There’s no better way to do it.

-Main: This Friday they are having a Mardi Gras fiesta. They will have lots of food and the Jazz combo from 11:30-12:30 here. They are going all out.

-Ferry is having a concert with Sol on Friday around 10. Happy Chinese New Year!

-Raymond: great quote!

-2015: Can we vote to appoint Carlos for sitting on Council as Town Students Representative? Operations noted that this should happen and they should vote. This motion passed with all in favor.

-Student Life: went this morning to a Social Justice Dialogue and said that it was eye opening and cool to see people discussing important issues. She also noted that she’s excited to work with everyone.

-Activities is so excited about the new appointees. He made a motion to adjourn. This passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.