

# VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

## Council Agenda for Feb. 5, 2012

Time: 6:00pm

Location: College Center 223

"Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are small."

-Dr. Seuss

- 1 Call to Order
  - The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.
- 2 Attendance ..... Operations
  - All here, a few proxies.
- 3 Consent Agenda
  - a. \$785 to Ballroom Club from the Conference Fund
  - b. \$1000 to MICA from the Conference Fund
  - c. \$474.85 to Philalethesis from Collaboration Fund
  - d. \$175 to ViCE from the Council Discretionary Fund
  - e. \$200 to Noyes House from the Council Discretionary Fund
  - f. \$2,268.32 to VCEMS from the Conference Fund
- 4 Executive Board Reports
  - a. Activities (7 minutes)
    - Capital budgeting went well. They are talking about having a publications base where different orgs that publish photos/literature can use the software and have a center. They are looking for a space for this. They are also working on changing the Constitution by adding a travel clause, a hazing clause, etc.
  - b. Finance (7 minutes)
    - The VSA is in good financial health. One thing to note is that \$10,000 was moved from the general account to the Discretionary Fund because there was a surplus and the bylaws mandate that any surplus is moved to the Discretionary Fund. They have created a Fund App. rubric so that there are more strict guidelines in order to apply for funds. The allocations from capital budgeting will be sent out Thursday and Council will vote on them next Sunday.
- 5 Recommend Rachel Glorsky to Jewett VP ..... Operations (7 min)
  - Operations Committee found that Rachel is very competent for this position due to her experience in other orgs and her assertive qualities. They need a person now because Seven Deadly Sins is coming up. This motion passed with all in favor.
- 6 \$5000 from Speakers, Lectures and Panels Fund to Vassar Dems.....Finance (7 min)
  - This motion passed with all in favor.
- 7 \$5000 from Council Discretionary to Community Fund.....Finance (7 min)

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-This gives Finance Committee more options and they know of some apps that are coming down the road and they don't want to drain the fund. This motion passed with a majority, Cushing opposed.

8 Investment Responsibility Committee Amendment: Article V, Section 12.....Finance (6 min)

-Finance feels that another person on the committee would be valuable. In the future there will be three elected representatives on this committee, but this year it will be an appointed position. This amendment will be given to Operations Committee and voted on next week.

9 Amendment Concerning Elections: Article VI, Section 2.B, 3.B.....Matt Wheeler (10 min)

-In the interest of making elections more fair and efficient, this amendment separates filing and campaigning time. He thinks this creates an elections system where everything is fairer, because people that decide to run later don't miss out on precious campaigning time. They want to encourage the diversity of people applying and a broader pool of applicants and therefore a stronger Student Government. This amendment would have filing take place before campaigning and then have a set two weeks for campaigning.

-Davison asked what counts as campaigning. Matt thinks that telling people you are running is ok, but you can't solicit votes.

-Student Life asked about the timeline being proposed. Filing would occur for two weeks, a candidates meeting, and then 7 days of campaigning. The Candidates' Meeting isn't obligatory under the current language.

-2014 acknowledged that the current system is flawed and was just proposed as a first step. He feels that the more fluid system doesn't necessarily mean we're diminishing the diversity pool of applicants. He thinks that the current system sometimes adds needed competition. The filing statements are on the website as soon as a candidate posts. Matt responded that under the current bylaws allows some people to campaign longer than others which isn't necessarily good or bad, but very variable.

-Seth thinks that there's nothing blatantly wrong with the current system. He discussed the 50% increase in candidates last year and thinks that the current system gives candidates more time to communicate with their constituents and he's talked to people that liked the extended amount of time to campaign. He thinks that disqualification shouldn't be the automatic solution to having someone accidentally break the rules. He suggested coming back to this discussion later so that we give the relatively new system (10 months old) a full cycle to see how it works. He thinks it's in the best interest of the VSA to see how this system is currently working.

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-President made a motion to extend the conversation 10 minutes. This passed with a majority.

-Matt responded to Seth's comment that there wasn't time to see if these election bylaws work with the fact that we uprooted the current system 11 months before the last one.

-Hannah noted that we've changed the bylaws every single year for the past five years. She thinks Seth brought up a lot of good points. She encouraged Council to focus on this amendment and its content, not maintaining the status quo etc. Currently, the bylaws don't explain when the Candidate's Meeting needs to take place in terms of filing and campaigning and the proposed amendment clarifies this. She talked about the decision to change the bylaws, shorten campaigning, and create the Candidates' Meeting as a response to student backlash.

-Seth sees a logical fallacy taking place that if we've changed it every year this means we should change it again. He noted that anyone can campaign as long as they want by telling people organically when they're going to run, rather than waiting for the specified period. He believes the current system allows fair and free elections. He said that democracy is what people do and this measure is inherently antidemocratic because it's disallowing people from doing what they would otherwise do.

-Michael doesn't agree that there was a fallacy proposed, but in fact they want to change this in order to give earlier bylaws more of a chance. He sees the point of this measure as fostering equity and allowing more people to run in a fairer manner.

-President mentioned that Operations Committee will talk about this in their meeting this week and it only comes to a vote next week.

-The motion to extend the conversation 5 minutes failed with a majority. President thanked everyone for coming in and reminded people that Operations Committee will continue this conversation.

### 10 Resolution regarding LGBTQ position ..... Socos (15 min)

-The position of director of LGBTQ Campus Life is currently vacant. They are currently looking to expand the LGBTQ director position to oversee the Women's Center as well because they haven't had a leader in recent years. They are calling for the college to make this position full time as opposed to its part time status. This motion passed with all in favor.

### 11 Discussion: All-College Day ..... Student Life (20 min)

-They meet every Tuesday to discuss All-College Day and they've been struggling a lot with the theme this year. They can't decide if they want to be more specific or more general and

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how to engage the most people. They would like to bring this to discussion because CLRG wants Council to think about passions on campus and use All-College Day as the first step to actions campus wide and how to take it beyond the conversation level.

-2013 thinks that incorporating student art like murals, student music performances where you wouldn't expect them, are positive ways of engaging students.

-Activities asked about faculty participation in CLRG and asked why there aren't any in the committee. Student Life responded that it's been hard to get them to participate. Activities mentioned past discussions about faculty not being approached enough and not in the right way as well as them not being willing.

-President thinks that getting student to engage more in the overall campus community is part of the problem. If students were more involved then faculty would be too.

-Socos recommended Terbear as a good person with whom to discuss these issues and invite to CLRG because he works with Wellness and this could go under that umbrella.

-Cushing asked about classes and All-College Day and potentially missing class to be involved. This isn't possible, but bringing conversations into the classroom is something they can work on.

-2012 suggested a student panel as being better attended. She thinks the theme of "What does it mean to be a Vassar Student?" embodies a lot of what we've been talking about recently.

-Finance thinks that more opportunities to make this day a bigger event on campus and capture its purpose is embodied in the theme 2012 suggested.

-Jewett asked about why the event is held on Wednesdays. Student Life responded that it's to encourage faculty participation mostly, but change might be possible.

-2014 thinks people are tired of the 150 theme. He thinks that seminars by the professors talking about their current research is an interesting idea which gives Vassar students a lot of pride as well as encouraging engagement.

-Student Life hears that theme is a very important aspect of this event to create cohesion.

-Cushing gave props to 2012's theme and thinks that even beyond VSA Council it's a very relevant and important theme.

-Socos brought up "What is a Safe Space at Vassar and what does this entail?" as part of the theme.

### 12 Open Discussion

-2012: There are 104 days until graduation...I mean 99.

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- Davison: Thanks everyone for coming to the Mug and 100 Nights!
- Operations took a moment and thanked all the at large members who came to meeting tonight and want to talk about these issues. Operations Committee meets at 8:30 p.m. on Wednesdays and is open and they'll be discussing elections this week.
- Seth announced RSL Day on Wednesday. There'll be tabling, a talk by an alum minister, and some music (a lady from Sweet Honey in the Rock).
- 2015: Thank you to Student Life for the ATF focus groups this weekend.
- The motion to adjourn passed with all in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.