

## VSA Council Minutes

*April 11, 2010*

### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02

### 2. Attendance

**a. Student Life (absent)**

### 3. Consent Agenda

**a. Approval of the Minutes from 4/4**

**b. Allocation of \$302.5 from Mid-Hudson to TA's**

### 4. Announcements

**a. Fines for failure to attend/send proxies to the Mandatory Budget Meeting**

### 5. Special Guest: Sam Spears, Director of Religious and Spiritual Life

Mr. Spears explained that the Religious and Spiritual Life Office had been placed in charge of community outreach. Currently he was leading the Community Service based Work-Study Programs. This allows students to take a job off campus in a not-for-profit program. The program has expanded from 15 students to over 50.

One of the things the office plans is a spring break trip, where they sent students to New Orleans, sponsored by Jewish Funds for Justice. In the past they had held spring break "trips" into Poughkeepsie, but the program unfortunately ran out of interest.

In addition, Mr. Spears was the Chair of the Frances Ferguson Grant which is a form of engaged Philanthropy, giving small grants to community organizations. VAST actually grew out of this program. They fund projects like the Poughkeepsie Farm Project or Hip Hop Theatre. They also give small grants to Vassar Staff, as they have invaluable knowledge about the community around us.

Lots of different programs with the Chaplain at Sing Sing Prison, who is an alum from '77. They were working with the pastor to make connections between Religious Life and Community Life.

Operations felt that current Committee on Community Engagement was lacking in power and focus. He wondered if Mr. Spears had any solutions. Mr. Spears noted that for a group without staffing, funding or power, they were taking on incredibly challenging tasks.

However, despite the difficulties, incredible things had emerged and he cited the Meet Me In Poughkeepsie Program as a great starting point.

Academics asked Mr. Spears to explain the interplay between faith and service. Mr. Spears felt that it was a useful way to reaffirm the relationship between the two. He felt that Vassar was in a different place than it was 25 years ago. This was originally founded as a Protestant Campus, but they have, obviously, distanced themselves from that image. This is a good step towards addressing diversity. They don't want to turn the clock back, but they want to address the significant movements for Social Change. They are often critical of the

fact that religious voices are often asked to silence themselves, since people often exhibit anxiety about bringing religion into a subject. It ought to be part of the conversation. Ferry encouraged Mr. Spears to talk to students currently engaged in the work program for advice.

## **6. ViCE Report: Peter Denny, Chair**

Mr. Denny reported that the new Executive Board had been chosen, with Allie St. Jules as the new Chair, and 2011 (Alejandro Bertorelli) as Music Chair. He also addressed the difficulties of creating a unified general body and announced the creation of 2 Assistant Director Positions.

He also announced, with a squeak, the Flaming Lips this upcoming Saturday. Currently they had sold 2,300 tickets and the Poughkeepsie Journal, along with some local radio stations, were doing promotions.

Main was curious what after events were happening. Mr. Denny noted that the seniors would be going to Mahoney's, the Juniors to the Mad Hatter and the Freshmen to Juliet's. Activities asked for clarification on the transport situation. According to Mr. Denny, they would be leaving Main Circle, starting 2 hours before the doors opened. After the show, there will be a large loop until 1:30 or 2:00.

Finance wondered if they would be hosting another pre-founders day show. Another org had picked up that job.

Jewett asked for some more info on the opening bands, he was told that it would come in his email.

TH's: Commended ViCE for their responsiveness and openness to suggestions.

Strong wondered how parking would work, she was told that there was parking right at the Community Center.

## **7. Committee Report**

### **a. CCL**

The Committee on College Life met last week to talk about several issues, including the smoking ban. The President addressed rumors that they were trying to ban smoking by announcing that they were only enforcing current laws. Mostly they were focused on clearing up problem areas. Ms. Pabst argued for Gazebos, but nobody was sure how that would work.

They also announced that next year the campus would be home to Zip Cars!

In addition, they talked about racial issues and creating a different model to address problems proactively.

Raymond announced that the college regulations and room entry policy were two large talking points, and were still very contentious.

2010 expressed concerns over a rumor about further limiting the number of students allowed in rooms, she was assured by the President that Rich Horowitz would not be allowed to get away with it.

The President also announced that they would be allowing organizations like Caplan onto campus to help students train for LSATs and GEDs.

## **8. Sustainability Proposal**

The sustainability committee was looking to endorse a document about lowering emissions and tracking their own output. All were in favor of allocating them money.

## **9. SAVP Proposal**

Academics announced that recently CARES had hosted their domestic violence forums, there had been some concern with current policies against Sexual Assault. This petition demanded the creation of the SAVP Coordinator, a position that had been cut. Operations worried about the cost, but decided that this was important enough of an issue to ignore cost.

Strong agreed, since she was training for CARES.

Finance wondered if CARES was a VSA org, they were not and were currently funded by the college. He wondered what the limitations of CARES were and why they needed more money. He was told that unlike EMS, they are a listening service who offers services on campus. They need an SAVP Coordinator to arrange things like, Long-term care for victims, hospitalization, dealing with the administration, etc.

The TH's wondered if they were addressing the Sexual Assault Trials in the VSA Bylaws. She was told that a proposal was in the works.

## **10. Security FAQs**

Lathrop announced that these were an attempt to clarify some of the roles of Security on Campus. They had been working with Don Marsala and DB Brown to pull together answers, a surprisingly difficult task. 2011 agreed, when they started in September, they thought it would take a month.

Academics wanted a couple things clarified, such as Question 8: can security open the fridge? She was told that they were not allowed to go into belongings, but that reslife could over winter break, if the fridge was left plugged in.

The TH's asked that Question 4 specify that the police on campus are still police.

Strong also felt that the ability to enter suites was incredibly vague.

Finance noted that this would be signed by Roelke and Marsala to give it validity.

Noyes hoped that next year's VSA could address some of these issues.

Academics agreed, this needs to be in House Team Training. She then addressed question number 12, which stated that security didn't have the right to enter for noise complaints. It seems that if you can slip out of your door so that they can't see inside, you are alright.

2011 agreed with Noyes, this only added more questions about student rights. TA's agreed, these documents added to student rights.

## **11. Allocation of \$1500 from Collaboration to Main**

Finance moved to allocate \$1500 for Main's 2nd annual pool party. Last year it was a lot of fun, people came to swim, there were hot dogs, hamburgers, etc. ViCE will be providing smoothies.

TH's wondered how much money was left, there were \$3,096.

Joss wondered why the date had changed, it was to fix conflicts.

## **12. Open Discussion**

41 Days until graduation.

There is going to be a rally for the Arthur May Elementary School, since they didn't want it to close. Cushing agreed, it is really important to campus and a lot of professors with families like having it here.

Operations noted that filing was coming up, they wanted to make sure every position was filled.

Finance reminded council that annual budgeting was soon arriving.

2010 wondered about the likely-hood of the school closing, she was told that this school makes sense in many ways, but that one school in the district will most likely close.

## **13. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 8:34