

VSA Council Minutes

April 12, 2009

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

2. Attendance

Proxies: TS.

Guests: Andrew Bennett (Student Asst. to the President), Matthew Brock (Misc), Brian Farkas (Misc), Julianne Herts (Misc), Emma Mitchell (Misc), Molly Turpin (Misc), Eric Schuman (Pound of Flesh), Emily Riehl-Bedford (Pound of Flesh), Yisha Fan, Adam Greenberg (2009 Treasurer), Nana Debrah-Karikari (CBS), Gcinisizwe Mdluli (CBS), Paul Misak (WVKR, Shared Bikes), Olivia Mak (ASA), Jenni Wong (ASA), Adam Neuman (Disabilities Committee), Max Kutner (ViCE), Rachel Goss (ViCE), Ndo Coufal (ViCE), Christine Yu (ViCE), Rudy Martines (ViCE), Alejandro Calcano (ViCE), Paul Noonan (ViCE), Anabel Graff (ViCE), Kyle Epstein (Ballroom Dancing), Sasha Klimczak (CCL).

3. Consent Agenda

a. Allocation of \$70 from Council Discretionary to Debate Team

No objections were made, and the Consent Agenda was adopted as presented.

4. Announcements

a. Fines

The VP for Finance announced that CSA has been fined \$50 for failure to comply with VSA regulations regarding event application deadlines.

b. Mock Election

The VP for Finance announced that the Mock Election will take place on April 15th; all Council members are encouraged to participate.

c. Brewer Bash

The VP for Activities announced that the first annual "Brewer Bash" will take place from April 24th-26th. The weekend will kick off on Friday afternoon with "HOWBOUT", a celebration of arts and music in the SoCos that will continue with a nighttime Villard Room party. Saturday will feature Relay for Life and various athletic events in the afternoon, as well as an outdoor ViCE/ASA concert at night. Main and Joss' "Pool Party" will take place at Walker on Sunday, and Spring Elections results will be announced that evening. Local vendors will be selling food throughout the weekend, likely at reduced prices.

d. Committee Expectations

The President expressed concern that some VSA Council members have not been regularly attending Council committee meetings, and reminded those present that attendance at such meetings are a mandatory, integral part of their position.

5. Reports

a. CCL Report

Main reported that the committee has been meeting approximately once a month, and has recently been focusing on the issue of transitioning away from a 24-hour campus health service. The committee plans to communicate with the Arlington community about “the inevitable rise in student hospitalizations” and seeks to reintegrate EMS into task force discussions.

The rights and responsibilities subcommittee has been working on a document of student rights and responsibilities; thus far, their work has been well received by the broader committee.

Recent CCL discussions have also surrounded issues of alcohol use and abuse. Though there has been quite a bit of disagreement among committee members, especially with regard to “the geographic origin of drinking problems” on campus, there is a general consensus that there should be “more active alternative programming”. The VP for Activities announced that the Activities Committee is currently processing data from the late-night programming survey, and she hopes to present detailed results to Council in the near future.

b. Disabilities Committee Report

Adam Neuman, Disabilities representative, explained that the committee typically meets 1-2 times per month. Thus far, the committee has been dealing primarily with issues of physical access, but it is now trying to shift focus toward strategies for improving awareness and building community. To this end, the committee hopes to facilitate greater discussion on disability issues by launching relevant film- and/or workshop series next year.

c. 2009

Adam Greenberg, Class of 2009 Treasurer, explained that the current Class of 2009 Exec Board is working to avoid the sort of debts incurred by the Class of 2008. As such, he will be meeting with B&G, Fire Watch and Campus Security to finalize estimates for Senior Week activities and other spring events. Adam expressed hope that taking these precautions will allow the Class of 2009 to budget appropriately. He will be attending future Council meetings to provide updates on the Senior Class’ financial situation.

c. ViCE Report

Anabel Graff, ViCE Director, explained that she is “really, really proud” to have been a part of ViCE this year. ViCE has recently been collaborating with Main and Joss to coordinate the April 26th Pool Party, and has been working with ASA to organize the April 25th Deerhunter, Gang Gang Dance and Golden Triangle concert. There will be “a couple more jazz nights” this semester, as well as one more After Hours showcase. The Film League will also be doing an outdoor screening of “Wet Hot American Summer”.

Anabel announced that elections results are in, and Peter Denney will be next year’s ViCE Director. She concluded that she feels “very proud” that ViCE has provided “more free programming” this year at Vassar – something that she believes is “very important in the current economic climate”.

d. Exec Report from Activities

The VP for Activities stated that, although planning “has been a lot of work”, she believes the Brewer Bash will prove to be an “awesome...celebration of all that is Vassar”. She is currently busy coordinating the logistics of the weekend’s events, and is focused on ensuring that “there is something for everyone”.

Activities acknowledged that programming events has recently been rather “stressful”, as many organizations have failed to comply with application deadlines. She urged orgs to adhere to VSA regulations regarding event registration, and reminded students that the deadline for event application submissions is April 23rd.

Students are also encouraged to complete the Activities Committee’s “Late Night Programming Survey”; the VP for Activities is optimistic that the survey results will shed valuable light on how best to design future events. The deadline for new org applications was April 1st. The VP for Activities has had to turn away many late submissions, due to the lengthy nature of the org certification process. Final org reports and org reviews of the year are coming up soon.

Recently, Activities has been working with Student Life to plan the Fall Leadership Conference. She hopes to include “more practical skills work” in next year’s conference schedule, and requested that VSA Council members submit feedback about their experience this past year.

e. Exec Report from Finance

The VP for Finance reported that the VSA is “in good financial health”. The Class of 2007 was originally allocated \$11,000 from Great Works toward its class gift of solar panels. Only \$3000 was ultimately used, so the remaining \$8000 has been deposited back into the fund; the current Great Works Fund total is \$26,000.

Budgeting for next year is already underway, and applications are due by 11:59pm on April 14th. Applicants will be interviewed at the end of the week.

Finance acknowledged that he “really wants to eliminate the Residences Fund”, as he believes that its resources will be better utilized if dispersed between other funds. He intends to present a motion on this issue at the next VSA Council meeting.

6. Allocation of \$16,000 to Sustainability Task Force

The President explained that he has been in lengthy conversations with the Sustainability Task Force about new Great Works projects aimed at improving campus sustainability. He strongly supports funding for structural changes in the Retreat that will support a long-term composting system. Additionally, he endorses the task force’s plan to initiate a universal recycling system on campus; contamination issues often result because the inconsistencies within the current system tend to create confusion among students. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

7. Allocation of \$2500 from Council Discretionary to ViCE

The VP for Finance moved to allocate \$2500 from Council Discretionary to ViCE for its free outdoor concert featuring Deerhunter, Gang Gang Dance and Golden Triangle. Rudy Martinez, of ViCE, explained that ViCE has been collaborating with ASA to plan the concert, which is set to take place on Noyes Circle. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

8. Transfer of \$\$2250 from Conference to Speakers/Lectures/Panels

The VP for Finance moved to transfer \$2250 from the Conference Fund to the Speakers/Lectures/Panels Fund. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

9. Transfer of \$750 from Great Works to Speakers/Lectures/Panels

The VP for Finance moved to transfer \$750 from Great Works to the Speakers/Lectures/Panels Fund. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

10. Allocation of \$3000 from Speakers/Lectures/Panels to ASA

The VP for Finance moved to allocate \$3000 from Speakers/Lectures/Panels to ASA for the ASA Conference, an event featuring speakers such as Perry Shen and Helen Zia. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

11. Allocation of \$500 from Council Discretionary to Ballroom

The VP for Finance moved to allocate \$500 from Council Discretionary to Ballroom Dance Club for its “Mad Hot Ballroom” event on April 17th. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

12. Transfer of \$750 from Conference to Speakers/Lectures/Panels

The VP for Activities moved to transfer \$750 from the Conference Fund to the Speakers/Lectures/Panels Fund. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

13. Allocation of \$70 from Council Discretionary to the Debate Society

The VP for Finance moved to allocate \$70 to the Debate Society for its inter-college debate tournament. 2009 moved to amend the allocation to \$200, the full amount requested; he felt it unfair - after allocating thousands of dollars for concerts and other events - to deny Debate the relatively modest funds it needs. Finance responded that there “has been fiscal mismanagement” by the Debate Society. Debate’s treasurer submitted incorrect dates when the org was purchasing plane tickets for a tournament earlier this year, and the group had to pay extra to change them. Additionally, not all members have submitted their dues. Operations moved to call to question; all were in favor, and the motion passed. Cushing, Jewett, Main, Academics, Finance, Activities and 2010 were not in favor of 2009’s amendment, though 2009, TA, TH, 2012, SoCo, Lathrop, 2011, Student Life, Joss, Raymond, Operations, TS, Noyes, Strong and Ferry were in favor, and the motion passed. All were in favor of the amended allocation, and the motion passed.

14. Allocation of \$3000 from Council Discretionary to CBS

The VP for Finance moved to allocate \$3000 from Council Discretionary to CBS for its Baccalaureate speaker. THs abstained, though all others were in favor, and the motion passed.

12. Certification of Pound of Flesh

The VP for Activities moved to certify Pound of Flesh. She noted that the Activities Committee has been looking at this certification since the beginning of the year. Emily Riehl-Bedford, of Pound of Flesh, noted that the org has been unofficially in existence for six years. She elaborated that the group is focused on introducing members to Shakespeare and actively

involving them in the process of theatre-making. Finance was concerned about the notion of certifying an organization whose mission statement is so similar to that of Shakespeare Troupe. He continued, “we don’t have the financial resources to continue certifying orgs”. TAs, a former participant in Pound of Flesh productions, responded that the group differs from Shakespeare Troupe in terms of size, performance style and location, and overall goals. 2009 TA, SL abstained. TH 10 fin operations (NIF). All others were in favor, and the motion passed.

13. Certification of the Vassar College Shared Bikes Program

The VP for Activities moved to certify the Vassar College Shared Bikes Program. Maryrose Myrtetus, of Shared Bikes, explained that the program began with the Class of 2009’s Sophomore Class Gift, and has now been operating for 2.5 years. Although issues with bike theft posed challenges early on, the committee has worked to strengthen the program by recovering stolen bikes, enlarging the fleet size, and establishing a new lock system. Since the committee has received funding from Cappy’s Discretionary Fund and is currently seeking local sponsorship, its representatives believe that its certification will not place financial pressure on the VSA. Maryrose noted that there is already great interest in the program, as 140 people have already registered and put down deposits for bike keys. 2009 spoke in support of certification, asserting that the Bike Program will help to improve community and sustainability on campus. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

14. Appointment of BOE Chair

The VP for Operations moved to appoint Maryrose Myrtetus as BOE Co-Chair. 2009 spoke in support of Maryrose, noting that she has been a highly valuable member of Senior Class Council. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

15. Appointment of Leah Wieman to the Board of Elections

The VP for Operations moved to appoint Leah Wieman to the Board of Elections, explaining that she is very “knowledgeable about the software, and can definitely help with technical questions”. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

16. Announcement of Noyes Vice President Vacancy

The VP for Operations moved to declare the position of Noyes Vice President open and up for appointment. The President announced that former Noyes President has resigned and that the former Vice President has assumed the role of President, leaving the VP position vacant.

17. Amendments to Article IV and X of the VSA Constitution

The VP for Student Life moved to approve amendments to Article IV and Article X of the VSA Constitution. These amendments deal with the expectations of elected and appointed VSA members, as well as the grounds for impeachment of leaders. Council will vote on these proposed changes at next Sunday’s Council meeting.

18. Open Discussion

- 2009 announced that 42 days remained until graduation.
- The President thanked the new Noyes President for stepping up to fill this position.

19. Adjourn

The meeting concluded at 9:09 PM.