

VSA Council Minutes
April 20, 2008

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.

2. Attendance

Proxies: Davison, Joss, TH.

Guests: Alison Abreu-Garcia, Andrew Bennett, Paul Brehm, Jasmine Brown, Peter Chesney, Brian Farkas, Belen Ferrer, Julianne Herts (Miscellany News), Mark Marchant (Pre-Cis), Stephen McCarthy, Jr., Acacia O'Connor, Hayley Tsukayama.

3. Consent Agenda

a. Minutes from April 6

b. Minutes from April 13

No objections were made, and the consent agenda was adopted as presented.

4. Reports

a. Campus Life Resource Group

A representative from CLRG reported that the group has been meeting every week on Mondays. They talked after their All College Day events, and looked through the student responses received from the day. The group tried to pick the most touching, yet most criticizing, responses from students and posted them on the bulletin board, which is by the ATM in Main. The responses were also posted on the CLRG website. Additionally, they decided on the topic for the last Conversation Dinner, which did not have as much attendance as they would have liked, because of the night it happened on, and because it is the busiest part of the year for students. Now, the group is wrapping things up and preparing for next year.

b. Equality Opportunity and Affirmative Action

A representative from EOAA reported that the committee had their first meeting of the year this week. The members collectively decided that the committee doesn't really have a place in the college at the moment. There are several other committees that overlap in content with EOAA, such as the Committee on Inclusion and Excellence (CIE), and the governance of the committee does not actually reflect what the committee is capable of achieving. They decided that for next year, it would be a better idea to not have students serve as members of EOAA until the actual governance is changed, because they don't want students to continually feel disappointed. The administrators of the committee understood and supported this decision. The committee will hopefully work to change the governance, and in time the college can begin student appointments to the committee again.

c. CASA

A representative from CASA reported that the committee has really been discussing what CASA should be, because currently there are some misconceptions and discrepancies between student expectations and faculty expectations. The committee has not had another meeting since their last event, which was a bonfire, and which did not go as well as the committee had hoped, largely due to problems in planning.

d. CIE

Operations and Student Life reported to Council on behalf of CIE. The committee has been discussing the issue of undocumented students. They have also participated in a

resource audit throughout the college, looking at which areas need more resources around the college, and looking for areas where resources can be re-allocated. This issue is related to the hidden cost issue, looking at what level the college could cover certain costs—a discussion that must extend into future years. The committee has also been discussing the issue of transfer students, and why Vassar should strongly consider stronger alliances with its peer institutions. Finally, the committee has been considering the successes and weaknesses of the Student Fellow program, especially with regard to last year's effort for diversity among Student Fellows.

e. Exec Report (Student Life)

Student Life reported that he has been dealing with five outstanding items before the end of the year. The first item being handled is the gender-neutral housing policy, which was unfortunately not approved for this coming year. However, Student Life has been working to keep the discussion going for possible approval in coming years. He asked President Hill if the senior members would re-consider their position on the issue, and has finished a memorandum to the senior members providing information about the policy, and the principles behind the policy.

The second item is the announcement of the new food contract. Anyone with questions about the process of the decision and its rationale can most likely be found in the Miscellany News article and the email sent out to students. Student Life and Nate Silver, as well as anyone else on the Food Committee, are willing to speak to anyone with further questions. Student Life further discussed that the deciding factor was likely the site visits made to different food providers. Aramark's food was very good at the sites visited, and hopefully their food service will continue to improve.

The third issue is the outstanding hidden costs of the Vassar education, and getting people in Class Issues Alliance and the Committee on Inclusion and Excellence on the same page with regard to the framing of this issue. Hopefully the college will eventually start providing grant money to help cover these costs.

The fourth item is the Davison kitchen and Davison renovations issues. The kitchen in Davison was going to get cut in the renovation, but feedback showed that cutting the kitchen was a bad idea. Student Life, the project manager, Luis Inoa and Andrew Bennett all met to discuss the issue on Friday, and the kitchen is almost certainly back in the renovation plans. Other renovation updates include using windows similar to those in Jewett, which have a mahogany trim and are much better insulated than the windows in the current quad dorms. Additionally, the doors being used will be special fire magnetic doors, which can be left open and will simply close in the case of a fire alarm, allowing students to leave their doors open. In general, Student Life emphasized to President Hill the importance of completing the renovations well, rather than cutting corners and creating low-quality housing on campus.

The final item is the faculty's creation of the Dean of the College Search Committee, for which faculty members have not yet been decided. As a result, there will likely be an interim Dean of the College for next year, and Student Life's current position on the committee will have to be appointed next fall.

f. Exec Report (Operations)

Operations reported that she has been working on the VSA Bylaws for a very long time, and that most issues have been completed, including bylaws regarding budgeting, elections, special purpose funds, and sophomore and junior representatives.

Recently she has been attending a new committee that has just established itself through College Relations, which is the Parents and Family Committee. It is looking at what information is being sent to people affiliated with students, including parents,

families, and friends, making sure that it is enough information but is not overburdening. The college is possibly adding more information about day-to-day student life in the information sent out to people. The committee is concerned that parents should not know exactly what and when is occurring in their students' lives, such as turning in drafts or pre-registering for classes. They will also be starting a website for parents and families.

Operations reported that the Leadership for Change seminar went well, that she has been attending CASA and EOAA meetings, and has been discussing the problems of the EOAA committee. She is trying to ensure that a wide array of people from different areas will be involved with the bookstore renovations, including the current students on Bookstore Advisory. She is starting to prepare a lot of the transition packets for students that will be serving on various committees, to solve the discrepancies that currently exist between the experience of students on committees and what they had originally expected. This process involves asking students whether they would participate in committees again, and how they felt about the experience.

g. Annual Budgeting Meeting

Finance announced that the Annual Budgeting Meeting would occur on May 8, which is a Thursday, and requested schedules to be sent from VSA Council members for scheduling reasons.

5. Certification of Pre-Cis

Activities moved to certify Pre-Cis. A representative from the organization explained that the creation of the newspaper is a result of the need for more news sources published on campus. 2010 questioned how often the paper would be printing, and the representative responded that it would be printed nearly as frequently as the Miscellany News. All of Council voted in favor of the certification, and the motion passed.

6. Certification of ECVC

Activities moved to certify ECVC. Activities clarified that the certification of the organization does not also confirm their requested budget, which will be decided at a later date. All of Council voted in favor of the certification, and the motion passed. .

7. Transfer of \$1858.25 from Great Works to Collaboration

Finance moved to transfer \$1858.25 from the Great Works Fund to the Collaboration Fund. This transfer is due to continued problems of overdrawing from VSA Funds, due to inaccuracies in fund balances when allocations have been made. All of Council voted in favor of the transfer, and the motion passed.

8. Allocation of \$1000 from Social Programming to QCVC

Finance moved to allocate \$1000 from the Social Programming Fund to QCVC. All of Council voted in favor of the allocation, and the motion passed.

9. Allocation of \$500 from Collaboration to THs

Finance moved to allocate \$500 from the Collaboration Fund to THs. All of Council voted in favor of the allocation, and the motion passed.

10. Allocation of \$400 from Collaboration to Idlewild

Finance moved to allocate \$400 from the Collaboration Fund to Idlewild. All of Council voted in favor of the allocation, and the motion passed.

11. Censure of Peter Chesney

Operations moved to censure Peter Chesney. The rationale for the censure is for violating Article 5, Section B of the VSA Bylaws, with regard to reporting to Council, and Article 5, Section 4-C of the VSA Bylaws, with regard to submitting written reports. Operations explained that he has missed all but one of the Library Committee meetings, and has missed two of the CCP meetings.

Peter was present at VSA Council to discuss his actions, explaining that his failure to attend meetings was due to specific personal issues. Academics then more specifically explained that he should have been in contact with the committee chairs to make them aware of his inability to attend meetings.

Finance abstained from the vote, all else of Council voted in favor of the censure, and the motion passed.

12. Censure of Michael Alvarez

Operations moved to censure Michael Alvarez. The rationale for the censure is for violating Article 5, Section 4-A of the VSA Bylaws, with regard to attendance and verbal reports to VSA Council. The censure also involves Article 5, Section 4-C of the VSA Bylaws, with regard to written reports about organizational activity. All of Council voted in favor of the censure, and the motion passed.

13. Announcement of Fines

Finance announced that Poder Latin@ has been fined \$100 for violating the two-week rule, and for making a contract before getting approval from the VSA. Several members of Council raised questions about the magnitude of the punishment, and discussed the history of fining organizations for violating the two-week rule.

14. Finance Report

Finance reported to Council about VSA Funds, providing information about the amount left in each fund. The VSA funds have the following amounts:

- Speakers, Conference, Special Events, and Collaboration Funds: \$0
- Media Publishing Fund: \$2349.62
- Political and Community Action Funds: \$919.52
- Social Programming Fund: \$1483.75
- Hosting Fund: \$2995.56

15. Open Discussion

- 2008 announced that 35 days remain until commencement.
- Noyes announced that Noyes' 50th Birthday would be happening this Saturday, and would include a wide array of events and performers.
- Activities announced that there are now 126 VSA organizations. Additionally he encouraged students to attend the Jeffrey Sachs lecture on Thursday.
- TAs announced that the Mr. Vassar competition would be on Friday night at 9:30pm.
- Brian Farkas was announced as the new Editor in Chief for the Miscellany News, which held its internal elections recently.

15. Adjourn

The meeting concluded at 8:14pm.