

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

VSA Council Minutes for April 3, 2011

- 1 Call to Order
 - The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.
- 2 AttendanceOperations
 - All here, except Academics who was late.
- 3 Consent Agenda
 - a. Approval of Minutes from 3/27
 - b. Allocation of \$400 to Aikido from Conference Fund
 - c. Allocation of \$500 to CSA from Speakers and Lecturers
 - d. Allocation of \$250 to Choice from Speakers and Lecturers
 - All approved.
- 4 Announcements:
 - a. ReferendumOperations
 - Due to discrepancies in the language of the bylaws, there was extended discussion about the percentage of student votes and the percentage of the student body that was needed in order to pass the referendum.
 - Aaron asked if we could change the bylaws to make the language more clear and accessible. Currently we need 51% of the student body to vote it in and pass it.
 - 2014 feels like this couldn't possibly be what the writers had in mind.
 - Davison asked if these procedures were ever available to the VSA and the answer was no, only the judicial board has access.
 - Operations clarified that this part of the language was lost somewhere in the 2009-10 year. It was off the record—we don't have any proof of this removal. In April 2009 it was adopted, but Council never officially voted it out, it simply disappeared from the bylaws somewhere in the 2010 year.
 - President clarified that the student referendum and the constitutional referendum are very different things and this problem is with the constitutional referendum.
 - Someone stated that 15% of the VSA need to sign the referendum.
 - The discussion continued about the specific language and exactly how many votes are needed for passing and obtaining the referendum.
 - The discussion was over article VI, section 8 and article IV, section 1, pg. 47.
 - They were concerned that there's no language defining a threshold vote and what an abstention means. Finance argued that the language doesn't state that a threshold is needed. There has been no official statement about a threshold given to the student body.
 - Strong inquired about how we will go forward from here. The Board of Elections are the ones that should oversee the elections and make the final decision. The judicial board may make a recommendation.

-Ferry feels that the point of referendum is to give the student body more of a voice and she feels that the VSA is being challenged. She doesn't understand how the VSA passing or rejecting an amendment should affect the student body differently.

-Lathrop wanted to know why these 2 types of referendum aren't treated the same and wanted to suggest making them equal procedures.

-Finance thinks that the students should have the right to call a referendum in the same way regardless of if VSA passes or fails an amendment.

-President thanked the Judicial Board to give a little report and stated that the Board of Elections will have the final say. Thank you for your recommendations.

- b. Elections Town Hall Meeting.....Operations
 -Wednesday at 3 in Sanders.

5 Reports:

- a. Judicial BoardChair

-Student Life asked about the Student Conduct Panels and their effectiveness. This is a new policy that gives students a say in how fellow students are punished. There are 3 students on each panel and they meet every Friday. This year they've heard from more cases than any other year. They are very careful about assuring the validity of every accusation. There's an administrator who sits in on each meeting, however they are a very independent body. It's good to have a student face in this process.

-Academics asked about student assault and violence. Cases usually end up at the College Regulations Panel, usually staffed by 2-3 faculty and 3-4 students. Students are trained to be there, but not to a sufficient level. In the future, they will have simulated sexual assault cases to give them practice with this issue, like asking perceptive questions and understanding how to deal with the difficult and trying emotional experience. There's usually a dividing screen between the 2 people part of the case. Asking questions is a delicate and emotional process. Everyone on the panel is allowed to bring a support member.

-Davison asked about the Student Conduct Panel and asked which cases they receive. There is no difference except for the cases that go to the College Regulations Panel.

-Main asked if there's value in changing the student handbook. The answer was yes that it would be immensely helpful. There's a tack on charge that he thinks they should more accurately word. Also, each charge should be more accurately worded, but there are also downsides to this in that it may not cover certain aspects of abuse.

-TAs doesn't feel that a way to contact them is well publicized enough. She suggested having a box. Students need to talk to the Dean of Students or anyone on the panel, but most of the cases are brought by security, not by one student against

another. They are hoping that freshman orientation will focus more on the student conduct system.

-Student Life asked the representatives if they have any recommendations for reforming the Judicial Board and its relationship to the VSA. Basically, their job is to ensure that the VSA follows the regulations that are in place. The Judicial Board should always know what is going on and changes being proposed should be constantly accessible to them.

-Finance asked if they felt that VSA should be more involved with them, and they said yes.

b. All Class Gift Chairs

-They have announced the gift and it is to the annual fund. They started off the year as normal with a sophomore and senior gift (a cookie cut being one suggestion).

They really wanted something special for the sesquicentennial year and so they decided to collaborate with the sophomores. If 1861 students donate then \$150,000 will be donated. They have also established a sustainability bucket. The annual fund covers everything at Vassar from tuition to the tables we're sitting at. Everyone benefits from the annual fund and they're excited about the sustainably aspect. They are expanding and getting better and better, but they always need more people out there talking it up. The numbers are looking pretty good, but they could be better! Reach out and make sure that everyone on Council has donated. They sent out thank you notes as well.

-Academics asked if you can designate to specific departments. Yes!

-The website will be up very soon. Due to the fact that the administration has undergone some changes this year and different offices are handling different things, they haven't been able to get this done. She feels like giving online is a lot easier so they should push that. There is an online giving form and they'll be tabling with a computer for the rest of the year which will allow students to donate right there. They will also send it out to all the presidents.

c. Founder's Day..... Chairs

-The co-chairs wanted to know if anyone wants to help: They will get a cool staff t-shirt and they get to cut the line for beer and rides. There's merchandise (vintage Vassar is the theme), shot glasses, sweatshirts, t-shirts, and sunglasses. She is also overseeing the budget and they will be asking for money because they don't have enough for staff t-shirts and the movie screening. There used to be film screenings on Sunset Hill after fireworks and they wanted to bring this back because it's the sesquicentennial. They will be screening A Sentimental Journey, Mary Poppins, and there will be fireworks!

-Decorations and Music is going well. They will have Paper Mache beer barrels. They can't reveal the title act yet, but it will be good and they will have some alumni performers too.

-Rides and games are also going well. There will be a booth where you can insert yourself to take a picture, a bouncy house, and 3-4 other games. There's also a kids tent.

-Food and beer is going well. They will have 4 vendors. They have chosen 4 beers that will come on tap; they've chosen some local craft beers and a good variety. They want people to sit and enjoy rather than drink recklessly. They chose the vendors based on applications.

-Cushing asked about a fun-run. The answer was that there will be, along with Mathew's Follies the night before and a golf thing with Cappy, making it a Founder's Day weekend. However, the committee isn't in charge of these activities. The rumor that Founders Day is 2 days is untrue.

-The movie screening would happen inside if it rains, otherwise there are tents.

-Volunteering would entail minimum an hour of your time helping in the kid's tent, or the "Zen" tent—something healthy. They don't want to be on the field this year. Email them if you want to volunteer (foundersday11@gmail.com). They will draft an email and send it out so Council can send it to their constituents.

-Joss would really appreciate help with music.

-Lathrop suggested free sunscreen in the wellness tent.

-April 13th they will start selling merchandise.

6 Allocation of \$900 to CSA from Collaboration Fund Finance

The Caribbean Students Alliance is having an all campus party this Friday with Hip-hop 101. It's one of 10 events they are hosting with a \$2,500 budget. They really want these speakers and they simply can't do it with their budget.

-All in favor, this allocation passed.

7 Allocation of \$600 to Ballroom from Council Discretionary..... Finance

-This will be the 3rd annual Dancing with Professors event. Any professors who want to participate are invited. It's a very popular event. They have 6 pairs so far; they'll be dancing tango, cha-cha, waltz, etc.

-Academics suggested putting professors' names on the advertisements.

-All in favor, this motion passes.

8 Allocation of \$800 to Contrast from Discretionary Fund Finance

They need more money to expand. It's an art and style magazine and they encourage all kinds of participation. They are having a sesquicentennial themed party this year at late night at the Loeb and they will be fundraising, but they want to expand the publication and that's why they need money. They've been tabling in the college center selling clothing.

-All in favor, this motion passed.

- 9 Student Amendment to Bylaws Article VI..... Seth Warner
- He stressed that elections are very important. His procedural change aims to make elections fairer, competitive, increase participation and personal interaction. He discovered that under the current system you can only talk about an election issue for 5 days before the election. He is making a compromise. He wants to expand the election time. His amendment expands it by 1 week, so that it doesn't extend it so much that people will lose enthusiasm, but people have more time to become familiar with the issues. It's only 3 weeks so it makes it more competitive. It makes the filing and campaigning concurrent. His change aims to ask candidates explicitly to talk about issues. They are emphasizing and incentivizing face to face contact. He believes in this change very strongly.
 - The president clarified that they won't be voting on these tonight.
 - Main thanked him for coming in, but wondered about where the mandatory meeting held by the Board of Elections where they make all the rules public would fit in. He's concerned that some runners may not understand these procedures. He thinks this should be put on BOE and this could be helpful to the process.
 - 2011 thinks it's important that people know who they're running against. She also asked about posters. He said that posters won't be allowed in the first 2 weeks of voting period, so that there's more face to face contact.
 - 2014 voiced his support for Seth's initiative. He thinks the language needs to be pinned down. He thinks there needs to be enough structure so there's not confusion.
 - Academics likes the idea of filing and campaigning at the same time, but agrees that language needs to be refined.
 - Town Students asked about how this would affect room draw. Seth acknowledged that all of these changes can't be enacted this year. How would monitoring of posters be enforced? They would take it down and contact the board of elections and the candidate. The candidate's disqualification would be up to the judicial board. The candidates meeting is still mandatory, but if they want to start campaigning beforehand they would have to go to the VSA office and sign some documents.
 - Activities asked if the urgency around elections would decrease by this extension of the voting period. She also suggested doing something about fliers and not having them left everywhere.
 - TAs feels he's put so much effort and this deserves some acknowledgement because it's a testament to the openness of the VSA body this year as it's the first time someone has stepped up to make a change. She wants to commend his work, but thinks wording should be changed to include housing draw.
 - Student Life asked about the process, clarifying that there would be 2 weeks of Campaigning followed by 1 weeks of Filing and then 3 days of voting. He was concerned about the enthusiasm around elections. He thought maybe the BOE and Seth should

consider making the Campaigning period 1 week shorter to avoid apathy. He feels door to door is important, but could be helped if the time was slightly decreased.

-Lathrop talked about starting small and the fact that this new process supports this because students are first made aware of elections by the door to door and then hyped up. Seth talked about the crescendo effect.

-Operations suggested that he come to the Operations meeting 7-8 tomorrow in the VSA office to continue this discussion in a smaller setting. She thinks that would be a good way to discuss this further.

-Joss asked about using the intertubes as a way of getting the word out there.

-2014 understands the appeal of hype, but thinks that democracy shouldn't be chaotic and he thinks that personal interaction is super important.

-Student Life asked about the enactment and its effect this year. Not big changes for this year, but a transition.

-Town Students suggested posters depicting position and their duties in order to make them more explicit. She thinks if having more time would cause more people to run, this would be great! She hopes this will increase percentage of people voting.

-2014 asked if the enactment is even possible because it would be permanently altering the bylaws. His answer was that all amendments have an enactment clause. Operations stated that in our own bylaws we don't have enactment clauses therefore the enactment clause wouldn't be in the amendment.

-Lathrop thought that the mandatory info meeting could be held before the filing period and then maybe again.

-President said that the process from here is that it will go to the Operations committee and then to voting.

10 Capital Budgeting.....Finance

-Finance talked about capital budgeting and how the new system would improve the Mug sound and the 2003 sound system. He would replace it with an equal and more durable system than the old one.

-Lathrop talked about how there'd be a training session on how to use the equipment before using it. She also talked about how students should be further encouraged to apply for funding from the capital fund.

-The current system is really old and run down.

-Aaron encouraged making some sort of capital loan system.

-The Outing Club should be applying more for the capital fund. Apparently dorms can also apply to the capital fund; they can and should use it (apparently it's about \$1,000 or more).

Finance wanted to remind people to spend their money.

-All in favor of this motion, it passes.

11 Exec Board Reports

a. Student Life

-He wants to put together a VSA conversation dinner event and ask students what they think makes an effective governing body. It will be invitation only. 3:30-5:30 on Wednesday is a teach-in event to further inform the students about the referendum. The students working on the referendum are helping with this. The Relationship Abuse charge hasn't moved very far yet, but they're trying to get a final grassroots effort to see if they can get it passed and pushed through to next year. Social norming-they're hoping to get a small campaign going in the spring and trying to decide on a theme.

-2011 asked about invitations and the answer is that they want them to go out by the end of tomorrow so any suggestions should be handed in today.

-Lathrop asked about sending out an email to her dorm asking if there was interest in the dinner. They usually invite like 130 students and about 35 come. She asked why their theme didn't pass and the answer was that they need a more all-encompassing theme.

-Ferry asked where they were drawing the invitees from and the answer was that they will be asking students to come who have been a part of the referendum action, have been vocal in the meetings or over the internet, etc. The question is: What does it mean for a student government to be inclusive and effective? CLRG has no involvement in this dinner; they are just using the model. They are advising through the entire process and they want to provide alternative spaces for students to discuss these issues. It will be table based conversation so the discussion can go in any direction the students choose.

-Ferry also asked if there'll be facilitators at each table, but not necessarily from Exec board. Hopefully there will be some students facilitating and Council members.

-Activities asked about social norming and wanted to know what they're doing to address different issues separately. The idea is to put together some catch phrases and key words for the template and then next year with the Council of Health Ed the VSA can make the bigger changes.

b. Academics

-The CCP has been restructured making it smaller with the hope of greater efficiency. The 2 students involved will be the VP of Academics and someone from Council from a different discipline. She will be working on making this effective and keeping the student voice represented. Student registration is being discussed. Student Seminars are going well. The Registrar is stepping down this year, so they'll be looking at applications starting Friday. They are working on starting a peer advising advertisement campaign.

-Davison expressed his enthusiasm for the student seminars.

-CCP is talking about how to improve pre-registration, but she thinks it's important to have people acknowledge the equitable nature of our system.

-There won't be a majors fair this year, so more reason to include peer advisors.

12 Open Discussion..... Anyone

-Apparently at the Limit show last week one of the rooms in Sanders was trashed-pudding everywhere, a wall used that isn't allowed. Activities will be meeting with the Limit to try and discuss this. Motion to refer the Limit to Activities Committee. All in favor of the motion, it passes.

-2011: 49 days left until graduation. Mahoney's on Thursday was a success. They made the 50% marker for Wabash.

-Raymond: Roaring 20s will be happening this weekend in UpC; there'll be prizes if you enter in the raffle (razor scooters, gift certificates, etc.). There'll be lots of games, gambling, and dancing. It's on Saturday the 9th-the posters aren't correct. There'll be jazz.

-Charlie expressed his enthusiasm for the referendum, but he's a little concerned with how the conversation went with the Judicial Board. He thinks that there should be more transparency and conversation so we don't have more controversy. Operations responded that this issue will go to the Board of Elections whose co-chairs are her and TAs (they are the entire board). She stated that they will make the best decision they can from the documentation they have and referring to people they know. They will discuss it more in Operations Committee.

-Maddie stated that the students need to know as soon as possible about how many students they'll need to get the referendum voted in.

-2012 gave an update on the plaque for Betty.

-Brian wanted to thank Council and he feels proud of them.

-2014 feels that so much of this process will hinge on face to face interaction and house team involvement.

-Aaron made a motion to adjourn and it passed with all in favor.