

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Council Minutes for April 7, 2013

"I believe that if, at the end of it all, according to our abilities, we have done something to make others a little happier, and something to make ourselves a little happier, that is about the best we can do. To make others less happy is a crime. To make ourselves unhappy is where all crime starts. We must try to contribute joy to the world. That is true no matter what our problems, our health, our circumstances. We must try."

-Roger Ebert

1 Call to Order

-The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

2 AttendanceOperations

-All here.

3 Consent Agenda

- a. \$3700 from Discretionary to Measure 4 Measure
- b. \$200 from Preliminary Orgs to Shakers
- c. \$76.50 from Speakers, Lectures, and Panels to UNICEF
- d. \$65 from Preliminary Orgs to ComedyNormative
- e. Minutes from 3/31 meeting

-All adopted.

4 Forum with Renee Pabst, Director of Health Education, on the Relationship Abuse Charge.....(30 min)

-They are here to answer questions about how this came about and what they're doing to go forward. The Relationship Abuse Charge came about two years ago in collaboration with her office and the VSA. She passed around a paper showing an act which the government passed in regards to dating violence, relationships, and married violence.

-President asked about the process of getting this passed. They will draft and then pass it on to CCL so that they can pass it.

-Joss asked how the VSA endorsing this will help if this is federal law. She thinks that saying this shows that we think this is important. Policy reflects our values and she thinks supporting it shows that we think this is critical.

-Finance asked if this will include students. They have an interpersonal violence panel. There are four people on this. The complainant and the respondent both have a say if they want students on the panel. They are working to do a lot more training over the course of the semester instead of just once.

-2013 asked how often students choose to use the panel as opposed to going off campus. Not many students choose to come forward. There have been fewer than ten cases this year. Every single student who comes forward is given all the options on and off campus and Elizabeth can go with them to the police or to press charges in other ways. Any students can pursue both options and there's no time limit to when they can press charges or come talk to them.

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-Renee thanked the VSA for giving voice to the students and supporting such an important issue. It's awesome that we accomplished this two years ago.

-Lathrop asked about education for freshmen. They first have to complete an online course before getting to Vassar. They go through a large orientation and small house orientation in each house during freshman orientation. They also have violence prevention month.

-Activities suggested including this in house team training.

-2013 asked about the activities going on next week. Next Friday they have a panel about reporting on campus at 3 p.m. in the Jade Parlor. On Monday there's a Speak Out, Tuesday is the art show and open mike in the Aula, Wednesday Emily May is coming to talk about speaking out at 7 p.m. Throughout the week they will be passing out shirts and on Thursday they will ask everyone to return them. The following week is the white ribbon campaign which asks people to sign a pledge and write down some ways you are trying to prevent interpersonal violence.

5 Executive Board Reports

a. President.....(7 min)

-There's a search group going on looking for a new director for the Career Development Office. They should have a decision in the next few weeks. Once they pick him/her they will have another search to find an Associate Director. Then they will restructure the office.

-There was a representative at Vassar last week from AirMark to see how we can restructure the ACDC space.

b. Operations.....(7 min)

-Spring elections are under way. There is an Executive Debate Wednesday in Sanders at 6. Voting will be the following week Monday-Wednesday. Operations is working on putting together policies on all of the committees and will hopefully present them next week.

6 Resolution Concerning a Relationship Abuse Charge.....Student Life, 2016 (15 min)

-They changed one section. She made a motion to endorse this resolution.

-This motion passed with all in favor.

7 Resolution Concerning Class Issues..... Student Life (15 min)

-This resolution was brought before the VSA last fall. They've made some changes including taking out the joint director position. They wish to push for a center of their own under the Campus Life Office that provides resources for students of lower income backgrounds.

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-Noyes asked why they changed the resolution. Mostly it had to do with the timeline.

-Joss is happy to see that they're back. Once there's student support for it then they will have some more concrete conversations about it, looking at examples from other schools, and compiling the research to help them.

-Lathrop asked about the current timeline. This depends on how conversations with administrators go, what they think is feasible, etc.

-Student Life made a motion to endorse this resolution. This passed with all in favor.

8 Resolution Concerning Coursework in Social Awareness..... .Academics (15 min)

-They have changed the resolution to endorse CCP to create a sub-committee because they feel it is too bold to tell the faculty what they should be teaching. They want to give the agency back to the faculty to decide what is best.

-2014 asked about the attached document. This is to show that they've been working on something. It's something that they've thought about rigorously and they want to show the faculty what they've been working on.

-Student Life asked about Campus Climate's demand for a social justice requirement. She's worried that a hard and fast requirement might get shut down. She has a few Campus Climate members on her committee who are in support of these changes. The idea is to first get their foot in the door.

-Joss asked about implementation. She is aware that there might be some problems with implementation.

-Operations was wondering what kind of faculty support they have. The faculty support isn't as concrete as she would like it to be. She's been talking to some members and she meets with CCP on Wednesday, after which she'll have a better idea of what they think. The Committee on Inclusion and Excellence is also trying to tackle this in a different way.

-Jewett asked if the sub-committee created by CCP will be closed. President thinks it will likely be closed, but there will be student representation on this committee.

-TAs commended the Academics committee for revising this. This is different terrain since the VSA usually works with the administration, not staff, but he's proud they're doing it.

-2014 asked if we have estimates of how many students take courses regarding these issues. This proposal supports coursework, not necessarily courses. Another way they could fulfill this is through other related work like a series of lectures. The options have been expanded.

-TAs suggested an independent coursework requirement. Students are welcome to do this on their own, but she's not certain how pervasive it would be and is.

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-Davison asked about the timeline. She is unsure, but anticipates her successor hopefully seeing this through.

-Town Houses made a motion to enact this resolution.

-This motion passed with all in favor.

9 Resolution Recognizing Campus Dining Staff.....President (10 min)

-Campus Dining is planning a day of appreciation. He will be sending an email out about this. This will take place Wednesday April 10th.

-Joss asked if we're endorsing the paragraph. No, they are endorsing the idea of a day of appreciation.

-This passed with all in favor.

10 Open Discussion

-2013: 48 days until commencement. 50 Nights was two days ago, but the actual event will be this Saturday April 13th at the Chance. There will be a bunch of DJs and drink specials. There will be a lot of buses. Also, give to the student gift. Senior Merchandise is happening.

-Dave announced Bethan Johnson who will be the new Miscellany News Editor.

-TAs is writing a memo on START. He thinks it's appropriate to give Council an update on rough results. They got 940 responses and it's a split issue. They are going to try to contextualize these issues and articulate on behalf of the student body since they think this is their role. They won't be taking a stance either way. Trying to express students' concerns is where we can have the most power here.

-Joss asked if he had student responses relating to the content of the survey. 2014 answered that they only had about 7 responses about the structure of the survey and those responses were worried it was biased towards moving to smoke free. CCL is meeting this Wednesday and will most likely be voting on it then.

-Activities is worried about student space on campus. He will be meeting with Annabel Jones about the basements in dorms and thinking about unused places to store stuff. Let him know about suggestions.

-Jewett noted that the annual budgeting deadline is tomorrow at noon and treasurers need to do it.

-Joss is disappointed that the smoking ban on campus wasn't discussed in Council. He thinks CCL is ill equipped whereas Council is very well equipped to represent the student body. He hopes in future they will discuss more.

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-THs countered that START has been a very effective committee and she thinks they did a better job since it was for the whole campus, rather than just discussing among the thirty people on Council.

-Cushing made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.