

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Council Minutes for May 5, 2013

“Never underestimate the power of a small group of committed people to change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has.”

-Margaret Mead

1 Call to Order

-The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. President told everyone to raise their hand if they have a question.

2 AttendanceOperations

-2016 proxy, 2017 proxy. Academics is still abroad.

3 Introductions

-Everyone said their name, major, and something they are excited about.

4 Executive Board Reports

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

-There is a Council Retreat May 13th at 7 pm. Kenyon 134.

b. Operations(7 min)

-No updates.

5 Resolution in Support of Social Consciousness..... President (15 min)

-They like to begin the year with a resolution that sets some big goals. They want to change some of the less socially conscious things that happened this year. They are committed to helping students navigate diversity and feel comfortable discussing difference academically and otherwise. They want to review their policies, procedures, and practices in terms of what the VSA does. Student Life is planning to hold an event maybe during Orientation to help start this conversation with new students.

-Joss asked what exactly they are planning with this resolution. What actions? Operations noted that this is a statement of their commitments, not necessarily their exact plans. It's something they're committed to. Student Life asked what she would want to see. She thinks teaching is a good idea, but it's a difficult issue.

-Raymond expressed his support for including this in their goals and is supporting this. He made this a part of his campaign for house president too.

-Finance noted that that's why they're talking about it because it's clear a change needs to be made and due to issues this past year executive board talked about how this is very important to all of them.

-This motion passed with all in favor.

6 Barefoot Monkeys Resolution.....Hannah Root, Michael Prentice-Glasgow (15 min)

-The Barefoot Monkeys had a fire incident last year. Ever since, they have been having trouble certifying others to fire spin. This semester and last they have been banned from Primal Scream. They are trying to gain support from the student body to be included in the conversations about their rights because they feel like they've had very little voice and haven't been in good communication.

-They feel like they've had no voice in being banned from Primal Scream and they have a really good track record. That's their first hospitalization in 15 years and compared to sports teams,

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it's really not fair to ban them completely. The administration sees fire and refuses to communicate.

-They have a convention every year and professionals come in to teach them new techniques.

They have been getting a lot of recognition from circus communities, but the administration banned them from spinning fire at the convention 5 days in advance. The people that came are certified privately and privately insured so they think this is unfair.

-2015 thinks this is a good thing to consider at the beginning of the year so that we start out supporting our student organizations because sometimes the administration doesn't.

-This motion passed with all in favor.

7 VSA Audit Committee Charter Operations (15 min)

-She wants to do a comprehensive audit of VSA structures. This outlines the basic construction of the committee, funding, recording, etc. so that they can get started.

-2015 supports it.

-2017 thinks this is great.

-Finance thinks they need to think about the costs associated with this.

-Student Life asked about recruiting and mentioned Campus Climate. Operations talked about class emails as well as school emails.

-Raymond asked if one semester is enough to make the changes they want to make. They need to start talking about this now.

-2016 asked if they would have to do this through referendum next year. Maybe.

-2017 made a motion to adopt the motion to adopt this committee. This passed with all in favor. They will be publicizing to the student body at large.

8 Appointments..... Operations (10 min)

a. Raymond 2015 Fall & Spring Representative

-They are making 4 appointments and they have their applications in the back of their agendas. They are appointing Raymond 2015 Fall Rep Cat Chapman. She is very qualified and has good experiences and ideas.

-TAs asked why they chose this person since he knows another candidate is applying for both semesters so why not pick them? 2015 spoke to the fact that they prefer change over continuity and therefore picked the best candidate.

-2014 is worried that an incoming house president will be on class council in another role. Raymond thinks this will be fine.

-Cushing noted that this has helped on her Council this year.

-This motion passed with all in favor and two abstentions.

-Cathlene Cono was appointed to be the Spring Representative. She was very enthusiastic, had lots of ideas, and was the only applicant. This motion passed with all in favor.

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b. Main 2015 Fall & Spring Representative

-Catherine Der is applying to be the junior representative in the fall. She wants to focus on class events and is the only applicant. 2017 thinks she's one of the most amazing people at Vassar and will do a phenomenal job. This passed with all in favor.

-Karina Kemeli for the Spring Main Representative. She is a student fellow so she has experience on House Team and is excited to be here. This motion passed with all in favor.

9 Finance Amendment.....Finance (5 min)

-They are presenting it this week and will vote on it at their first meeting in the fall.

-Finance noted that this is important.

-2015 noted that they need to be sure that the meetings are at a consistent time.

-2017 thinks that there needs to be transparency about what they are putting on as an organization.

7 Open Discussion

-President noted what this can be sued for

-2014: 384 days until commencement. They are accepting applications for Chairs and Daisy Chain representatives.

-2017 Freshman class had its last event of the year this past week and it went really well. He also congratulated everyone that is here.

-Cushing noted that she appreciated what Joss brought up, that the actions they brought up might not be concrete and noted that everyone should support some.

-Michael made a motion. The resolution is about concerned Arabic students on campus.

Currently there are only three levels of Arabic and they've been turned down from the administration. The challenges are formidable; they can only take it for 3 years, there are 39 students taking classes, but they can't reach fluency. There is one full time faculty member that was appointed full time as of this year which is bad because it's considered one of the bigger up and coming languages. Students that have previously taken Arabic can't get a correlate since there are only four semester possibilities. There is a faculty member that tables for interested students and it's an issue that students think about when they're applying and thus deserves time and attention. They have the committed faculty, the students that want to take it, etc.

-2016 thinks that they should petition the department because that might help; it did with German. He also thinks this is a good idea to pass if only to investigate it more since peer institutions have better programs. He thinks they should table it until next year so that they can talk about it before then. The representatives concern for this is that they might be keeping 9 students from getting the education that they want. 2016 doesn't think they could get the course catalogue changed anyway. The representatives recognize the limits of this, but they want to show that the students don't have as much lethargy as the administration.

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-Finance is worried that Academics isn't here and doesn't think they should pass it without them. Does it count for language credits? Yes. Have they talked about Independent study? Yes. Some professors do it on their own without compensation or credit.

-2015 thinks it's great that they came with a resolution to open discussion. He thinks it's important that Academics is here to talk about this.

-Joss asked if the people who would be teaching are committed to teaching upper level classes, would get paid more, etc. One professor is getting paid by Carnegie Mellon for his post doctorate so he's not getting paid by Vassar. They are also not paying health benefits etc. for the not full time professors.

-Raymond supports this. He would like to table it for now.

-Strong appreciates this. She asked if the courses at other colleges are culture courses or just language. They are just language.

-South Commons is wondering if this is a problem for many other departments. It's not a department; it's under the Africana Studies department.

-Davison asked about Independent Study. They have gone above and beyond to teach independently, but they shouldn't be asked to do this. She also noted that continuity is very important and time away from a language is horrible.

-2016 wanted them to know that they are very in favor of this, but doesn't see any time logistically.

-2014 said he was sorry that this is happening. He strongly encourages them to talk to Shruti (Academics) about this as much as possible. Don't be discouraged.

-Operations thinks this is a very interesting resolution and very well written. She doesn't want the decision to table to be disappointing to them. She made a motion to table this resolution.

-One of the representatives noted that they had a conversation a few weeks ago about adding a higher level class and they decided not to because they would have to take an elementary class away. They have been fighting for this for a long time and he wants everyone to be conscious that this doesn't mean doing anything, but just showing their support. Ideally they like to bring these to a committee before bringing it to VSA.

-There were five abstentions. This motion passed to table this with a majority.

-2015 wanted to note something about T-shirts being a rip off. Raymond noted he wasn't aware.

-Finance wanted to thank everyone who worked on Founders Day Committees and made it a great event.

-Noyes asked how they find a Junior Representative. There is no real procedure. They publicized that the position was open before summer and then allowed everyone to apply. They leave time for people to apply and then they appoint one. Socos also asked what happens if they can't get a treasurer. They will hopefully find one to fill that position.

-Raymond thinks they've had a very great first meeting.

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-Operations congratulated Activities and Finance for being great Founders Day chairs. She also made a motion to adjourn which passed with all in favor.