

VSA Council Minutes
September 13, 2009

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM

2. Attendance

Proxies: Main, 2013, Jewett

Late: Lathrop, TS, Strong

Guests: Alyssa Pabalan (President's Office) Jillian Schar (Misc), Matt Brock (Misc), Moly Turpin (Misc), Ruby Cramer (Misc), Casey Katims (Act Out), Leslie Hamilton (Act Out), Stephanie Donnelly (Act Out), Michelle Donnelle (Act Out), Emily Sweeny (Act Out), Rebecca Aleman (Act Out), Christopher Ewin (Act Out), Katie Atkins (Act Out), Tristan Feldman (Act Out), Stanton Wong

3. Special Guest: David Davis Van Atta, Director of Institutional Research

David Atta, spoke to the council about the survey data that he has been accumulating at Vassar over the past three years. He informed council that while many of our peer institutions have been engaging in institutional research for quite some time, Vassar is new to the game, only having hired him three years ago. According to Mr. Atta, Institutional research is built around the idea that self-knowledge is a good idea. The job of an institutional researcher, as explained by Mr. Atta, is not to take sides on a debate, but instead to present good information.

The larger question that he hoped to address was "Is Vassar Co-ed?" This was meant not in the literal sense, obviously, but instead alludes to the larger question: do there exist two separate, single-sex colleges existing on one campus?

To help address this question, he compared Vassar students responses from the CIRN study -- a study given within 72 hours of arrival at Vassar -- to responses from other schools. Men's responses were compared with that of men's responses from other co-educational settings. Women's responses were compared to those of both single-sex and co-educations institutions.

Interestingly, the men's responses, with slight differences in terms of liberal identity, artistic drive and desire to raise a family, were actually very similar to those of similar peer institutions.

During the 90's, women at Vassar resembled their peers at same sex colleges, however in the past few years, they have shifted to resemble the women who attend co-ed colleges.

There have also been some trends of note at Vassar over the past 15 years. Since the mid-90's, students interested social activism and promoting racial activism have halved.

Interestingly enough, when asked as seniors, no men had any problems with the male/female ratio. However, the women did have a problem. This seems to be an isolated problem, not related to overall experience or social life.

4. Announcements

a. Meet Me In Poughkeepsie

Activities announced that the date of Meet Me In Poughkeepsie had been changed to October 10th. He noted that all applications would have to be resubmitted by Thursday, September 17th.

b. Freshmen Elections.

The VSA President announced that the filing period for Freshmen elections began September 15th and ran through September 17th. Elections will be held September 22nd through 24th.

c. Fines

Finance announced fines for the following orgs:

5. Reports

a. Finance Report

The VP of Finance assured council that, unlike the rest of the school, the VSA was in good financial health. He announced that while budgets were mostly set, there were some small tweaks that needed to happen, which would be taken care of at the supplemental budgeting meeting on the 24th.

Strong asked why the budget reports only go the president. Finance said that this was to attach the budget to the permanent group email which is currently sent to the president.

b. Student Life

The VP of Student Life announced that she has been working mostly on campus dining and security. Currently the meal plan does not work for most students as it excludes seniors and wastes a large amount of points. They are working to develop a better meal plan for next year.

Student Life is also working on improving relations with security by making them a more known presence in student lives. The Student Life committee has finally finished a room entry policy that has been 2 years in the making. Currently she is working with DB Brown and Luis Inoa to get the policy implemented into the student handbook.

6. Room Entry Policy Proposal

Student Life moved to endorse a new policy for the student handbook. This new policy outlines the room entry procedure taken by security, or b&g, when entering a students room.

Noyes raised concerns about section 20.01c of the policy which states that security

would have "to make efforts to have a house officer and/or the house fellow/administrator present when the room is entered." Noyes worried that this would put house officers into a position of authority over regular students and would unnecessarily burden them.

Noyes then made a motion to strike the words "house officer" from the above policy. Finance responded that the house officer, or house fellow, etc would not be taking the side of security, if anything they would be the advocate of the student, making sure that no rights were violated. Davison felt that it was unneeded as education for students and security would serve the same purpose. The motion to amend came to vote and failed.

2011 felt that if this passes, the VSA needs to make sure it is enforced. The motion to endorse came to vote, TS abstained, all else were in favor.

7. Allocation of \$2000 from Council Discretionary to Act Out

Finance moved to allocate \$2000 from council discretionary to Act Out for the equal rights march in Washington.

Casey Katims, the President of Act Out moved to raise the amount from \$2,000-\$4,000 citing a much larger than expected turnout. This was seconded by 2013. TH's worried that this would have drained 1/3rd of Council Discretionary in just 2 weeks of council. Finance echoed that sentiment. Activities wondered if there was any way they could charge more for the trip, perhaps raising the price to \$20. Casey amended the Amendment to \$3,000. The amendment passed with all in favor, TS and main abstaining.

The main motion passed, TS and main abstaining, all else in favor.

8. Addition to Article IV, Section 25 of the VSA Bylaws

Activities moved to amend the Bylaws. 2011 still felt that this amendment, although revised since last week, was too regulatory. Operations countered, claiming that this is just the right amount of regulation, stating that if enough people felt an org's event to be questionable, it probably was.

The Captain of the Men's Frisbee Team worried that this was a direct attack on frisbee, however agreed that their should be some responsibility. Activities assured him that at this moment, everyone's slate was clean.

TH's moved to table the motion until they could talk to org leaders. The motion passed.

9. Open Discussion

2010 informed council that there was only 251 days until graduation.

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 P.M.