

VASSAR STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Council Minutes for Sept. 16, 2012

Time: 7:00pm

Location: College Center 223

- 1 Call to Order
 - The meeting was called to order at 7:04 by the VP for Student Life because the President was absent.
- 2 Attendance Operations
 - All here except the President. Lathrop was late.
- 3 Consent Agenda
 - a. \$320 from Community Fund to Davison and Strong
 - b. \$3000 from Speakers, Lectures, and Panels fund to MEChA
 - c. \$426.33 from Conference Fund to Business Club
 - MECHA made a motion to take their item off the consent agenda and it was seconded.
 - All else passed with no objections.
- 4 Forum with Judicial Board.....Alaric Chinn (20 minutes)
 - He thanked Council for having him and hopes this will become a yearly or bi-yearly tradition.
 - He explained the structure, components, and responsibilities of the judicial board. The Judicial Board is made up of 4 members from each class yr. and a Chair of the Board, which is his position.
 - The first major panel that they sit on is the College Regulations Panel. There are 4 students on this, two faculty, a note-taker, and an administrator.
 - Hearing, Deliberation, and Sanctions: the basic process.
 - The Interpersonal Violence Panel: this panel functions in a similar way to the College Regulations Panel. It has a special format where a middle person questions the victim/respondent instead of them having direct contact.
 - Cushing asked why the IVP has less students on it; he referred him to the person in Belinda Guthrey's old position. He stated that you need more training for that position.
 - The Academic Panel is comprised of 3 faculty members and 3 students and the Dean of Studies (Joanne Long) as the chair. Professors are the ones that bring issues to this panel.
 - The Student Conduct Panel is comprised of 3 students from the Judicial Board. This panel meets with students in a less formal setting for less serious issues. It is completely student run and led. Its highest sanction is removal from housing.
 - The VSA Judicial Board helps resolve internal disputes of the VSA Organizations.

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- The Appeals Process: any student can appeal a decision of the College Regulations Panel.
 - A 'more likely than not' attitude is applied to the sexual assault cases and therefore to all others to maintain fairness.
 - Alcohol violations are down from 2011 to 2012. Fire Regulations have increased. Disruptive Conduct is still there.
 - They are constantly trying to raise awareness on campus about the roles of these different committees and panels. They have regular office hours so that people can ask questions etc.
 - Joss asked about party offenses: Very large party cases go to administrators, 4 or less people at a "party" goes to the Student Conduct Panel.
 - There are twelve people on the board this year. They participated in a 4 day training for 4 hours every days They had different guest speakers.
 - 2015 asked if the verdicts made by administrators and students were considered equal. Yes. She wanted to know who finds people responsible more frequently. He wasn't positive, but he thinks they are very similar.
 - Student Life asked about trying to keep members on for more than one year so there's not so much change over. The representative thinks that participation on the panel comes down to 2 things: enthusiasm and scheduling. Increasing the number of students may not help increase numbers on the panel because available time is hard to come by.
 - Town Students asked how often they meet about issues: the board responds to the cases necessary on that day so they don't have regular panel meetings all the time.
 - An at large member asked if they're working with the Dean of Freshmen to work on these issues. They are working on a town hall meeting format event as part of Freshman Orientation to expand awareness. The member suggested a quick fact sheet in addition to the Student Handbook.
- 5 MEChA: They are appealing the funding offered for their conference in October. It was started as a conference for students who couldn't go back for Thanksgiving in 1969. It has evolved into a 3x/year conference getting students together to talk about issues regarding brown students on campuses. MEChA does multiple events per year with the community, such as the May Day event, Workers Appreciation dinner, and work with VELLOP for ELL learners. This conference is very competitive and it's the first time in 4 years that Vassar has won the bid to go. They are taking it as an opportunity to put Vassar on the ECSF map. They are working with professors who support them, but they had requested \$11,000. They

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were only given \$3,000. They've been given at least \$3,000 more from academic departments. They are also inviting people from other schools. In the past their events have been upwards of 500 people. They are expecting 175-200 participants. Faculty members have offered to give breakfast and extra conference time. They are doing classroom workshops in the morning and other workshops in the evening. They are asking for an additional \$3,000 from the Speakers and Lecturer's Fund to complete their budget. They are going to have an alumni panel come and speak to Vassar students. They have asked alumni to pair up so they can save on accommodations, but they still need more for honorariums, travel expenses, food etc.

- Finance thanked them and said they simply don't have the money.
- Academics asked about student attendance: They will be tabling starting next week and they're expecting a high attendance from Professor Cann's classes. They are also going to write a Misc. article to get awareness out about the event.
- Activities asked about the parties they'll be funding: they're only paying for the shuttle and DJ at Mahoney's.
- President clarified that initially this was in the Community Fund, but they changed it to the Speakers and Lecturer's because the other fund has a cap at \$10,000.
- 2015 asked if they thought it would be possible without the funding: no, they have alumni coming from New Mexico and Texas which is at least \$500/flight.
- Finance thinks there are things they can do with the event to keep it amazing, while still cutting some of the costs. He suggested not having out of state speakers: She stressed that they're a small org. and the importance of being Chicano/Chicana and being at Vassar. They have to come from out of state to share these experiences.
- They have already invited the alumni and they've purchased their airplane tickets so they're going to have to go back to the departments and tell them that the VSA doesn't support them.
- Ferry asked about Poder Latino's participation: Angelica Gutierrez of MEChA clarified that they're only collaborating on the Friday night event. For the fall semester this is one of the biggest events. In the Spring they do a Dia de los Muertos event along with the Mayday rally and Workers' Appreciation Event.
- 2013 asked about the alums coming and the honorariums chosen: One is the cofounder of MEChA class of '99, and works in education in New Mexico, one is a community organizer, one is a community organizer in California, one works in education in Massachusetts, and one works in law in NYC. They chose the specific amounts for the honorariums because they felt it would be disrespectful not to

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acknowledge them for their hard work. They want to treat them with respect by giving them \$100 each (except the keynote speaker who will receive \$1000 because she will be helping a lot).

- THs asked if they've done any fundraising or considered this as part of their budgeting: They usually use fundraising for other events in the year. THs suggested different ways of making money; she offered options like working at Westpoint or asking individuals in the College Center. The MEChA representative felt that they need to focus on attendance for the event instead of devoting time to fundraising.
- Operations stressed that the VSA supports this event and wishes they could fund it, but it's simply impossible. She wants to work with them to use the little things to make it possible: The MEChA representative felt that since her student Activities Fee goes to ViCE events that she's never attended why can't they fund this event. They've always received funding in the past and this is such a big event, such an important thing for Vassar.
- Cushing appreciates the value of the diversity of alumni on their panel and doesn't think raising the registration fee makes sense. He suggested making some cuts to the social events instead of panel items: They've tried cutting costs as much as possible, but since they're expecting 200 people, it's difficult. They're paying for the NY lawyer service and other speakers to come for free to the community because a major component of this event is access i.e. allowing high school students to attend.
- Joss talked to them about changing from the Community Fund to the Speakers and Lecturer's fund. He wants to know how the event will benefit the entire community, not just people from other schools, but Vassar students. What are their advertising plans to get Vassar students involved? They have a lot of plans, but can't advertise yet because they don't have the funding. A MEChA representative said they don't have time for fundraising. Vassar students will have to pay \$20 and other members will pay \$10.
- 2013 asked how this event was put in their annual budgeting: Moises de Jesus Rivera of MEChA said they needed to increase their budget and that's why they're applying for more. They always have to subsidize to pay for people in the community and food for them, etc. They don't plan on applying for anything else big this semester because they will be exhausted from this conference. They don't know how much is in their initial budget for this event. Two years ago Colombia wasn't prepared when they held the conference and therefore has been banned from the organization. They don't want this to happen to Vassar.

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- TAs admire their re-budgeting and is highly in support of their work, but wanted to clarify the difficulty of this task for the VSA due to MEChA approaching the VSA with less than a month until the event; this is overwhelming for Finance Committee. He also noticed on their budget that they will be asking for a lot more money in the future: They tried to apply as soon as possible, but since classes have just started they felt they did it as timely as they could.
- Raymond asked about advertising and how they could combine this with fundraising/registration: They only have a week to complete registration so that they know how to plan logistical costs. They also wanted the VSA to note that they've been fundraising through departments and are waiting to hear back how much funding they can give them.
- Jewett wants to move to consider multiple options while suspending a by-law.
- Finance wanted to warn against this because of the precedent that this sets in regards to future applications to multiple funds. The recommendation was to suspend Article 7, section 6, subsection E of the bylaws.
- Cushing agrees that it sets a precedent and is thinking about this as an exceptional case and wants Council to think about what it says if they don't support it.
- Town Students wanted to remind Council that they are still the ones deciding on these funds so the issue of applying to multiple funds shouldn't be an issue.
- 2014 wanted to remind everyone that they can move money from one fund to another. He wouldn't feel comfortable drawing from 2 funds. He made a motion to call this to question.
- The motion to call to question passed with a 2/3rds majority.
- The motion to suspend the bylaw failed.
- 2014 had some questions about housing: The MEChA Representative wanted to stress to them that they want them to focus on the Speaker's and Lecturers part of the application because that's what they are applying to. The \$3000 comes directly from the people that attend (unknown number).
- Town Houses asked about their budget: They have \$3,500 for the year, \$1,500 is going to this conference.
- Finance clarified that they had \$5,000, but were in debt so that's why their budget is now \$3,500. He recommended taking more funds out of their own budget: Angelica noted that they have a lot of little events that they need that funding for like hosting students, working with the ELLs in the community, etc.

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- Town Students suggested that they fundraise more for future events: the MEChA Representative talked about being hesitant to take that much from their own budget.
- Cushing made a motion to increase the amount from \$3,000 to \$5,400.
- 2015 really wants to fund events that she is sure will succeed. She's nervous that the event is 3 weeks away and they still don't have a registration page: They said they have experience holding events and will succeed in this. THs was also nervous about their fundraising campaign.
- Activities noted that they should think about fundraising post event and the VSA members should stop bothering them about pre-event fundraising because they don't have time: They've been postering and it's an annual event so people are expecting it. It's something they have to talk to people about and do face to face advertising; that's why they have multiple fundraising options.
- An at large member suggested Kickstarter.
- An at large member noted that the structure of the VSA's organization is stunting their ability to function and this is a minority group that already isn't given very many events catering to their demographic.
- Academics is worried that MEChA already used funds expecting they would be granted the money from the VSA. He's worried about the DJ and expensive dinner: the MEChA representative responded that they might have to reallocate money if they aren't given money, but they still want to get this money. They need to fund the members of the community that can't come without help. They are trying to keep in mind that they are running the conference based on the traditions from the past.
- Joss is concerned with the idea of a support. They cut down their budget \$6,000. He wants to know if they can do more: Angelica noted that they didn't cut \$6,000, they fundraised \$6,000 from their professors. They can't make any decisions since they don't know how many participants they have. LALS wrote up a letter in their support and has offered \$50 out of a \$500 budget. They've played with the numbers, but they can't make any decisions until they get this funding.
- Activities wanted to commend them on cutting down their budget as much as they have.
- Strong made a motion to consider multiple options and make it \$4,200 instead of \$5,400.
- There was a lot of confusion about the motions and how they could change these money amounts.

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- The motion to call to question by Strong passed with a majority.
- The motion to change it to \$5,400 had 9 in favor and 2 abstaining and the rest opposed. This motion failed.
- Operations made a motion to move to multiple options, the options being \$3,000 or \$4,500. She wants to recognize that this is a lot of money and this needs to be acknowledged; this is as much as some organizations get for the whole year.
- MEChA doesn't like comparing themselves to other organizations and thinks they are doing very special things for the campus and the community that other organizations don't necessarily do.
- Elisabeth Raskopf of MEChA asked to focus on just the money, instead of comparisons.
- Student Life wants to clarify that the VSA does support this event, but can't possibly fund every event even though they may support them all. The idea behind these fiscal procedures is fairness and he would like MEChA to consider this. He thinks there are still ways that these costs can be brought down. The money can be found.
- Cushing made a motion to call to question. This passed with a majority.
- The motion to consider \$3,000 or \$4,500 to MECHA passed.
- Activities wanted to thank everyone for this discussion, stressed that that's the best the VSA can do, and pushed post event fundraising.
- Operations wanted to stress that the VSA is here to help them.
- The motion on the table is to allocate \$4,500 from the Speakers, Lecturers, and Panels fund. This motion passed with 1 abstention and 1 opposed.
- The motion for a 5 minute recess passed with all in favor.

6 Executive Board Reports

a. Student Life (7 min)

- They will be getting a debriefing on the ATF report.
- Belinda Guthrey, the title 9 coordinator needed to be replaced. They have a new hire.
- The VSA has new assistants and his is helping him put together a list of top 10 trouble spots on things we need to know from the Students Handbook.

b. Academics (7 min)

- Peer advising had the last training session today. They are talking to professors that teach the freshman writing seminar so they can get the word out.
- By the end of October they will have drinking fountains in each building.

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- They will be giving a survey about courses within a major as related to a liberal arts education.
- In the spring they will be talking about making credits for a major 32 max. They are thinking of making it a requirement to apply for overload of 4 instead of 5.
- They are thinking of having some sort of academics newsletter on campus.
- Academics Committee brainstormed the questions for the freshman survey. They thought about what question freshmen consider when coming in and what resources they're aware of on campus.
- They want to do a curriculum survey in November as students are applying for new classes.
- The Library Committee: There is a movement among libraries to abandon print journal collections. A consortium of liberal arts colleges is funding the E-transition of many journal collections.
- Cushing asked about the SADP meeting. It is a closed committee. There is a CAREs representative.
- Town Houses asked an intelligent question and Academics answered it intelligently.

7 Serenading Debrief.....2013 (15 min)

- It was an overwhelming surprising success! He wanted to thank everyone who helped and the house presidents who contributed. They were impressed by the amount of non-freshman and non-house team people who participated. They are now looking for feedback about how to create a positive institutionalized event in the future.
- 2015 wanted to give a big congratulations to Vince! He did an amazing job at changing the nature of the event.
- Lathrop brought up the fact that Serenading is a day-long event and house teams need to support this event as such.
- 2013 will announce when a meeting about it happens.
- It's looking like the administration will let Serenading still be a tradition as long as it stays chill.
- A freshman at large thought it went really well and enjoyed it: Yay! In 3 years they'll be planning it and it'll be a happy event.
- Activities wanted to note that a lot of sophomore minds were changed as well. He thinks that starting a Serenading Committee earlier is a good idea.

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- TAs has gotten a lot of positive feedback and liked the changes.
 - Joss compromised and everyone approved.
- 8 Declaration of Open Positions.....Operations (5 min)
- Founder's Day Co-chair positions are open. They are looking for 2-3 co-chairs. The position is open to applications. They are due Sept. 30th at midnight. Put it out to your constituencies. This entails overseeing the entire event of Founder's Day.
 - Town Students was wondering about specific info to give people. Operations said she would send everyone a blurb.
 - Operations clarified how open positions are created.
- 9 Appointment of Noyes House Fall Junior Rep.....Operations (5 min)
- Some positions weren't filled last semester. They found someone, Tim Croner, to be the junior rep. He's excited. There was no competition. This motion passed with all in favor.
- 10 FLC Fines.....Activities (5 min)
- 5% or \$25 whatever is less because they didn't come to FLC. They will be fined \$0 if their budget is \$0.
 - This motion passed with all in favor.
- 11 An Amendment Concerning Supplemental Budgeting.....Joss and 2015 (10 min)
- This removes Supplemental Budgeting from the bylaws and makes it part of the Discretionary Fund. It will happen continuously and be much more accessible to orgs so funding doesn't just happen once. Part of the amendment moves the money immediately to the Discretionary Fund.
 - This passed with all in favor.
- 12 An Amendment Concerning Capital Budgeting.....Joss and 2015 (10 min)
- They're making a Special Purpose Fund so that orgs can apply year-round. The enactment clause renames the fund to be Capital Expenditure Fund.
 - This passed with all in favor.
- 13 Open Discussion
- 2013: 250 days until commencement. Thank you for the positive feedback from Serenading. The planning started late so hopefully it will start in advance in future years. Halloween is the next big thing that the Seniors plan and they want to make a big Halloweekend. They want to promote the Halloween experience, not just a big party. They sent out a survey to the seniors to talk about commencement speakers.
 - Activities wanted to commend everyone for the conversation earlier. He wanted to thank Finance for the weeklong conversations they've been having. His one concern

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was knocking; he felt like it became a sort of weapon that put a negative tone on the whole thing.

- Cushing noted that the Institutional Memory Project happened. Some video is still being finished. On Friday Cushing hosted safety and security and Batia was there and only 2 freshman came. It was nice to see that they're open to having those conversations with freshmen. He wants Council to reevaluate their goals as being inclusive and to think about the passive elements of the MEChA conference that you can't measure like its presence on campus.
- An at large member feels that the institutional memory project is a very important element of the history of Vassar. Consult the encyclopedia.
- An at large member felt that the Vassar Devils could have been more informative. 2013 said there were attempts at improving that, but the orientation committee wasn't very receptive.
- Yay Strong Serenading! Socos was impressed with how calm people stayed during our conversations. She doesn't understand abstentions. She thinks they're for a conflict of interest, but isn't sure if people are using them that way.
- President spoke to this as a conflict of interest and something they can talk about at the next pre-Council dinner.
- Operations: filing is open for freshmen elections. They have 33 people running right now. They set a goal of 37.5 and they're almost there! Encourage people to run! The Candidates Meeting is at 5 p.m. in Sanders on Wednesday.
- 2013 will be hosting a coffee night on Wednesday after the lecture. He wanted to stress that everyone should look at the Agendas and minutes before they get to Council so as to move processes faster.
- 2015 made a motion to adjourn. This motion passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

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