

VSA Council Minutes
September 7, 2008

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04PM.

2. Attendance

Proxies: 2012.

Guests: Andrew Bennett (Student Asst. to the President), Brian Farkas (Misc), Julianne Herts (Misc), Emma Mitchell (Misc), Molly Turpin (Misc).

3. Welcomes & Intros

Council members and guests briefly introduced themselves and clarified which constituencies they represent at Vassar.

4. Announcements

a. Meet Me in Poughkeepsie

The VP of Activities announced that “Meet Me in Poughkeepsie”, a day dedicated to strengthening relations between Vassar students and the local community, will take place on October 10th. The event will incorporate a series of activities and trips into Poughkeepsie to expose students to area highlights. The VP of Activities encouraged orgs to host said trips; sponsorship applications will be due September 15th.

b. Community Shuttle Update

The President announced that the Exec Board has achieved its first major policy goal: securing a weekend community shuttle to Stop & Shop, Adams and the Poughkeepsie train station, among a few other destinations. The shuttle schedule will be posted mid-week.

c. Election Dates

The VP of Operations announced the following dates for the Fall Elections:

- Filing: Sept. 10th at 12am (begins); Sept. 17th at 5pm (ends).
- Candidates’ Meeting: Sept. 17th at 8pm.
- Campaigning: Sept. 18th at 12am (begins); Sept. 22nd at 5pm (ends).
- Presidents’ Debate: Sept. 21st at 5pm.
- Voting: Sept. 22nd at 8pm (begins); Sept. 24th at 8pm (ends).
- Results Party: Sept. 25th at 8pm.

d. Fines

The VP of Finance announced that Aids Educational Committee, Premium Brew, VC Bikes, Vassar Green Party and Woodshed would be fined \$25 for failure to attend the annual treasurers meeting.

5. Guiding Principles and Priorities for 2008-2009

The President presented to council the Guiding Principles and Priorities of the Student Body Leadership 2008-2009, as crafted by the VSA Executive Board. Its foci are “Community”,

“Accountability”, “Transparency”, “Access”, “Leadership”, “Sustainability”, “Togetherness”, and the cultivation of “an academic environment that puts students first”. He elaborated that, while these goals are quite comprehensive and challenging, the Exec Board regards them as “largely attainable” and intends to work with Council towards their ultimate achievement.

2009 suggested that goals relevant to promoting a positive campus dining experience be incorporated, given the substantive meal plan changes made recently. Noyes stressed that Vassar should be mindful of the concerns of students with physical disabilities, particularly when carrying out current and future renovations on campus. TAs encouraged the VSA to push for increased support for student internships and other summer ventures, claiming that the funding Vassar provides is not as substantial as that offered by many peer institutions. The Exec Board addressed these issues and fielded other questions, agreeing to take such concerns into account as the year progresses.

The President then moved to endorse the Guiding Principles and Priorities for 2008-2009; all were in favor, and the motion passed.

6. Declaration of Open Positions and Appointments

The VP of Operations moved that the following positions be declared open and up for appointment:

- Board of Elections: 1 chair, 4 members
- Main House Treasurer
- SoCo: President, Programming Director, Treasurer
- Town Students: Programming Director, Treasurer
- Junior Representatives from Main, Strong, Raymond, Noyes
- DOC Search Committee: 1 position

Strong, Noyes, Raymond and Main announced that they had already selected their Junior Representatives; these positions were subsequently removed from the list. All were in favor of declaring the revised list of appointments open and up for appointment, and the motion passed.

7. Decertification of Save Darfur/STAND

The VP of Activities moved to decertify Save Darfur/STAND. As the organization lacks a leader for the coming year, a representative from the group contacted the VPA and asked that they be decertified. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

8. Decertification of the Bridge Club

In response to the club’s recent request, the VP of Activities moved to decertify the Bridge Club. The group expressed concern that it no longer has sufficient leadership. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

9. Freeze Activities of AIDS Ed

The VP of Activities moved to freeze the activity of AIDS Education. The organization has failed to respond to emails over the last three months, has failed to update its contact information, and appears to have no recent activity of any kind. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

10. Meal Plan Discussion

The VP of Student Life asked Council to provide input about how students, particularly freshmen, are responding to the current meal plan.

2009 was concerned that the new policies harm social life on campus because they prevent students from sitting in ACDC without purchasing full meals. He also reported hearing complaints from those who misplace their V-Cards; despite having sufficient points, a student in this position is unable to purchase food because campus dining will not accept her ID number alone.

Main suggested that the removal of trays posed an issue for some students, particularly those with disabilities. He proposed that a collection of trays be made available and placed in an accessible area.

Noyes was concerned that this system encourages students to eat a small number of large meals every day, but limits options for those who prefer a larger number of smaller meals. He also expressed that the new all-you-can-eat system may not be financially fair to many students, particularly those with smaller appetites.

2011 suggested that Maureen King and Ray Parker be invited to an upcoming Council meeting to discuss these and other issues relevant to the meal plan.

11. Open Discussion

- 2009 announced that 259 days remained until graduation.
- The VP of Student Life reminded dorm presidents to appoint their representatives to the Food Committee, if they had not yet done so.
- The VP of Student Life also announced that RLAC needed a representative from one of the apartment complex areas. TAs volunteered to serve as the representative.
- The VP of Operations asked that council members encourage students to get more involved with VSA and the VSA Council, particularly as a president from SoCo has not yet been selected.
- The VP of Operations also expressed that a senior VSA Council member was needed as a representative to the Board of Elections. TAs volunteered and was selected.

12. Adjourn

The meeting concluded at 8:14 PM.