VASSAR COLLEGE DISORIENTATION GUIDE

2018-2019

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Welcome to Vassar! After months of anticipation, you've finally arrived on campus ready to embark on a transformative 4-year journey. Through admissions packets, guided tours and college webpages, Vassar has been sold to you as a beacon of enlightenment and progress. Your Orientation Week will attempt to further inculcate you with tired clichés of a "liberal arts education" and create a fantasy of exceptionalism.

We are a group of radical students who created this publication to combat this romanticized administrative introduction. This guide aims to peel back the carefully curated image of college and provide an understanding of institutional power at Vassar. Underneath the college's supposed "progressive" history and "social justice" emphasis is a deep legacy of colonial violence. The grandiose library and manicured lawn have long been bastions of consolidating class power and catering to whiteness. Our institution sits on stolen Wappinger land and maintains an exploitative relationship with Poughkeepsie. We aim to disrupt the narrative that Vassar is committed to being a "just, diverse, egalitarian, and inclusive college community" by offering a glimpse at the white supremacist, cisheteropatriachal, capitalist values that govern the college.

This is not a comprehensive examination of all the forms of oppression Vassar perpetuates. We are notably missing accounts of navigating Vassar through different identities and backgrounds. This guide is simply a means of sparking critical analysis, giving context to student activism and examining of our own role as students of a colonial institution dedicated to producing the next generation of civil bourgeois intellectuals. In creating this, we have borrowed from previously published disorientation guides at other schools and prior Vassar student and faculty work. This guide is only the beginning and intended for this to be built on in coming years.

Recognizing the fallacies in the harmonious advertised version of Vassar is an uncomfortable process. As your ideals of campus life begin to crumble under the dismal reality of the corporate college, you may become disillusioned. But to disorient and defamiliarize oneself from the logic of the modern university is to begin. It is the necessary first step to undermine and challenge institutional authority. We hope this guide can inspire a culture of dissonance and serve as toolkit for understanding systems of power at Vassar.

Please hit up vcdisorient@protonmail.com with your questions, criticisms, death threats or general feedback.

With love,
VC brewers hellbent on nothing but destruction

a short timeline of

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Hudson sails
upriver, claiming
to have
"discovered" land
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Wappinger
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1643: Dutch colonial settlers killed half of the Wappinger population in a series of battles over the course of just two years. The Wappinger confederation broke apart and many fled to neighboring nations

1845: Hudson River Railroad opened and manufactur industrie further increas Poughkeepsie's population

1760: Poughkeepsie population grew as the owners began to sell and lease farmsteads, expanding into the second largest population in all New York counties by 1760. Much of this growth occurred along the river, where whale rendering, and shipping developed industry in the region.

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estant elite.

1854: City of Poughkeepsie is chartered

1880: Two international Japanese students enroll at Vassar, likely the first students of color.

1897: Anita Hemmings becomes first African American graduate, passing as white until a few weeks before graduation

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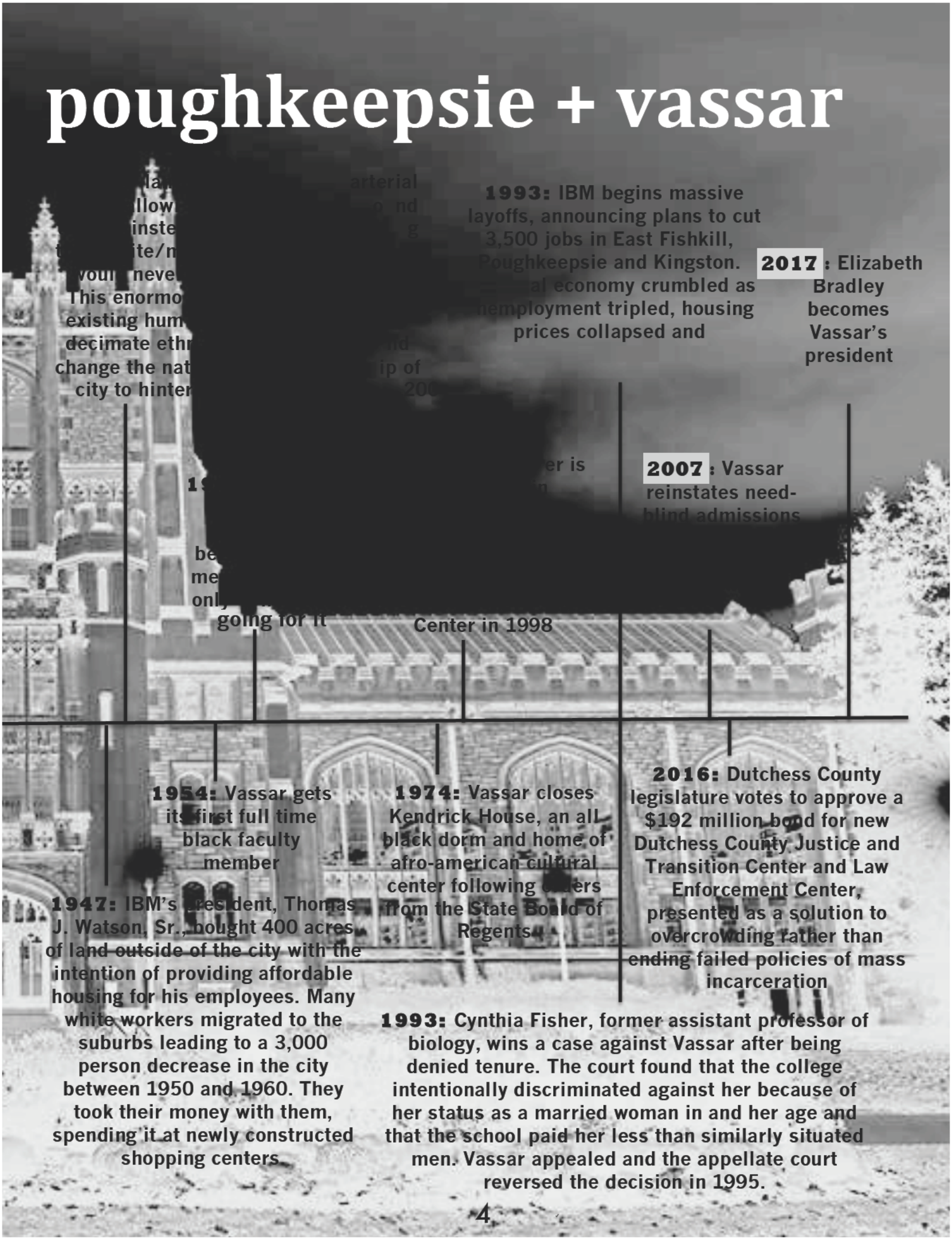
westward of Vassar College with upper-middle-class residents and businesses marketed towards Vassar students.

1940: First acknowledged black student enters Vassar. Vassar maintains very small population of students of color in following decades

poughkeepsie + vassar



1947: IBM's president, Thomas J. Watson, Sr., bought 400 acres of land outside of the city with the intention of providing affordable housing for his employees. Many white workers migrated to the suburbs leading to a 3,000 person decrease in the city between 1950 and 1960. They took their money with them, spending it at newly constructed shopping centers.

1954: Vassar gets its first full time black faculty member

1974: Vassar closes Kendrick House, an all black dorm and home of afro-american cultural center following orders from the State Board of Regents.

1993: Cynthia Fisher, former assistant professor of biology, wins a case against Vassar after being denied tenure. The court found that the college intentionally discriminated against her because of her status as a married woman in and her age and that the school paid her less than similarly situated men. Vassar appealed and the appellate court reversed the decision in 1995.

1993: IBM begins massive layoffs, announcing plans to cut 3,500 jobs in East Fishkill, Poughkeepsie and Kingston. [illegible] economy crumbled as unemployment tripled, housing prices collapsed and

2007: Vassar reinstates need-blind admissions

2016: Dutchess County legislature votes to approve a $192 million bond for new Dutchess County Justice and Transition Center and Law Enforcement Center, presented as a solution to overcrowding rather than ending failed policies of mass incarceration

2017: Elizabeth Bradley becomes Vassar's president

HISTORY OF STUDENT ACTIVISM @ VASSAR

1969: 34 black female students take over and occupy Main Building calling out anti-blackness on campus after the Vassar college president fails to respond to demands of the student Afro-American society. Their demands included expanding the Black Studies program into a degree-granting department, hiring more black professors, a black housing facility, and a renovation of the urban center. The occupiers nailed doors shut and sealed off the main lobby. 300 students and faculty gathered in Main Circle in support and criticism of the occupation. After 3 days, the sit-in ends when a motion is passed to meet the demands of the students.

1972: Vassar Gay Liberation Front established, the college's first acknowledged gay organization

1974: Black students march to house of the vice president of student affairs in protest of the State Board of Regents' order to desegregate Kendrick House, a black student residence.

1990: Students take over Main again following the appointment Senator Patrick Moynihan to a special "Humanitarian Chair" During his visit to campus, a Vassar professor questioned him about his racist "Moynihan Report" on the state of the African American Community in the 60's, and he responded by taking the woman by both shoulders, shaking her, and telling her that if she didn't like it here in America, "Why don't you go back to where you came from!" A number of student organizations came together under an umbrella called the Coalition of Concerned Students to protest not only Moynihan's remarks, but the college administration's response to those remarks. Events culminated in a takeover of Main Building and a list of extended demands including the creation of a Black Student Center, an Intercultural Center, a task force on racism, and divestment from South Africa. Later that year, 26 black seniors sign statement about "consistent neglect" of black students during senior week.

1997: The Vassar Daily publishes satire about ebonics and controversial drawing, leading to a speakout and confrontation

2004: Four students are arrested in an anti-Iraq War demonstration in New York

2006: Six Vassar students are arrested protesting "Don't Ask Don't Tell

2012: Vassar Divest passes their first fossil fuel divestment resolution

SPRING 2014: Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) is in full swing, protesting a campus trip to Israel, leading an Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW), and really stirring the pot. In March, 39 faculty members write an open letter supporting ASA academic boycott of Israel. In May, it's revealed that a student is being paid by a Zionist organization to harass SJP. The SJP Tumblr posts an image with anti-Semitic iconography, and within hours SJP removes the image, immediately removes the member who posted it from the org, and issues a school wide apology. President Cappy sends out an email about the anti-Semitic graphic --this is her first condemnation of campus racism ever. The Vassar Conservative Libertarian Union (VCLU) installs a "Wall of Truth" outlining racist bullshit about Israel/Palestine.

SPRING 2014: Vassar Security calls the Poughkeepsie Police on Black boys from Poughkeepsie who were in the Vassar Library. They later accuse one of the boys of stealing iPods from campus. This sparks a larger conversation about Vassar Security and racial profiling on campus. Students speak out at an event about their experiences with racism on campus, but Security Director Kim Squillace refuses to admit that racial profiling happens here.

FALL 2014: A first year publishes an article in Boilerplate about their experience with sexual assault and navigating the Title IX Office. The article leads to some organizing and a rally.

FALL 2014: Student/Labor Dialogue organizes a rally at the deece in support of deece workers who were negotiating with management over issues of understaffing.

FALL 2014: Following the announcement of Darren Wilson's non-indictment, students join folks in Poughkeepsie at Black Lives Matter rallies. Cappy sends out an all campus email about Black Lives Matter, this is the first time the school has said anything about BLM or Mike Brown's murder.

SPRING 2015: Student-Labor Dialogue organizes an action in support of Kemar Williams, a deece worker who was fired for attempting to address a racist comment by another worker.

FALL 2015: Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) kick off the beginnings of a BDS Campaign by calling upon campus dining to stop selling Sabra. Initially campus dining declares, "WE WONT SELL SABRA," and within days sends a follow up email, "I need to let you know that my earlier decision was made in error, and we are now carrying two kinds of hummus, Cedar and Sabra."

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your email. I need to let you know that my earlier decision was made in error, and we are now carrying two kinds of hummus, Cedar and Sabra.

Thank you

[redacted]

SPRING 2016: Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) initiate a BDS Campaign attempting to pass a BDS Resolution through the VSA. The BDS Resolution passes the VSA and later loses in a school wide vote. It was a heated semester and zionist students said a number of racist and islamophobic things throughout making it an especially hostile campus for Muslim students, Middle Eastern Students, and other students of color.

FALL 2016: Trump elected. Some students attend a rally in Poughkeepsie and others travel to NYC.

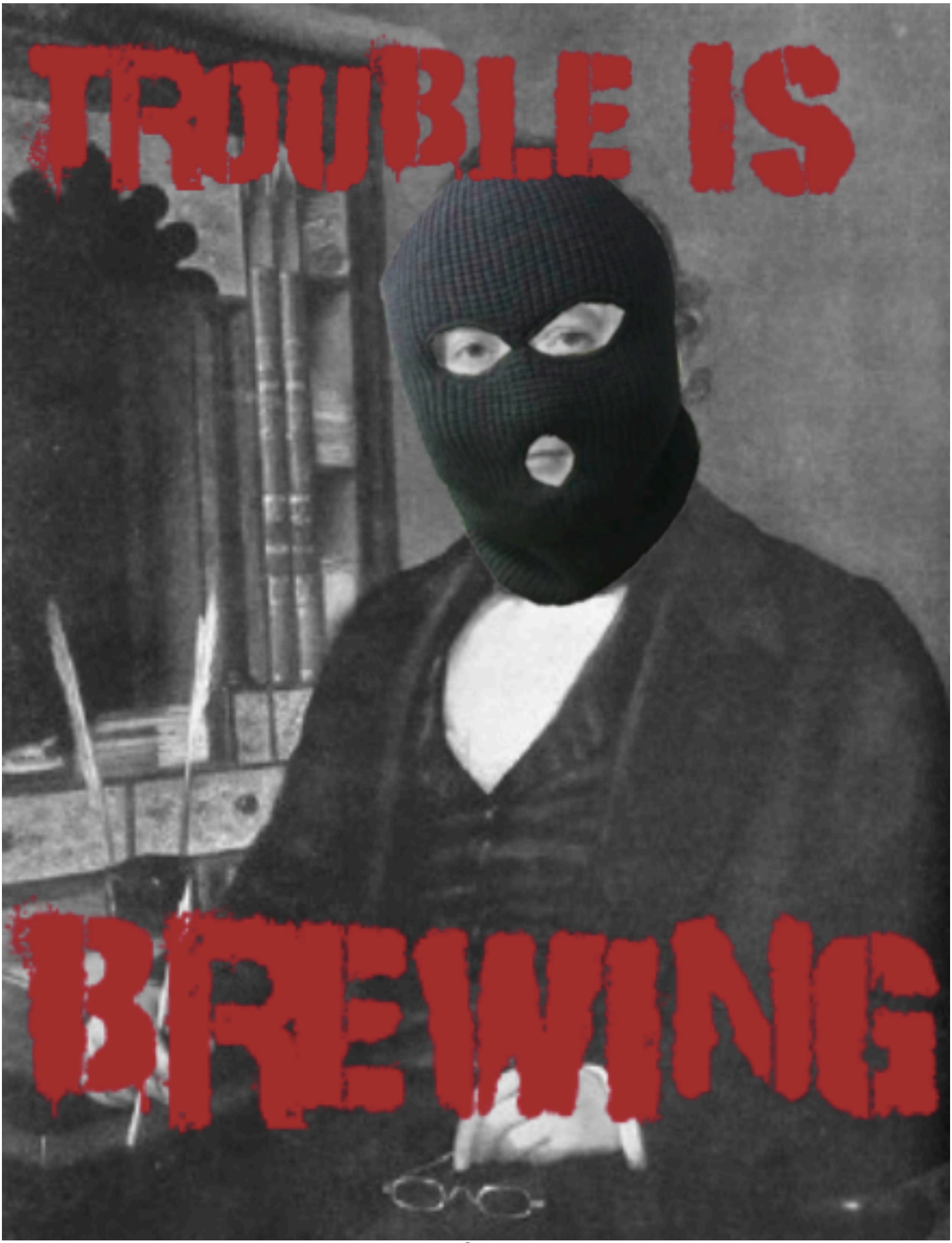
SPRING 2017: Heal to Action leads a campus protest called "Rally, Resist, Rise," making space for students to grieve, heal, and organize.

SPRING 2017: Someone wrote an anti-black homicidal message, "Kill the Blacks," in a library bathroom stall. The graffiti called attention to the anti-blackness embedded into our institution, and the hesitance for administrators to every actually label these actions as anti-black. Black students organized a library blockade and shut down the library for a day. Vassar Security responded to the incident by increasing patrols in the library and adding cameras around campus.

FALL 2017: Student/Labor Dialogue organize a rally in hand with campus dining workers over campus dining's horrible roll out of the new all access meal plan. Workers were frustrated with their unsafe working conditions, understaffing, and outright disrespect from management.

FALL 2017: Conservative and zionist law school professor William Jacobson speaks on campus with a lecture titled "An Examination of Hate Speech and Free Speech on College Campuses" Healing 2 Action (H2A) coordinates two really well attended planning meetings to plan some sort of protest of the event. Students established their own campus security force for the day of the event, alternative events were hosted in the library and other spaces around campus, and 150+ students actually attended the event. Rocky 300 was overcapacity, and students asked "tough questions," but did not disrupt the event.

SPRING 2018: Crafts Not Bombs hosts CeCe McDonald and Chelsea Manning to speak on campus at an event titled "No Prisons, No Wars." Read event co-coordinator Sessi Blanchard's reflection "Holding Each Other: Reflections on "No Prisons, No Wars," in Boilerplate.


TROUBLE IS
BREWING

your college is a corporation

"Modern capitalism and its spectacle allot everyone a specific role in a general passivity. The student is no exception to the rule. He has a provisional part to play, a rehearsal for his final role as an element in market society as conservative as the rest. Being a student is a form of initiation."

- On The Poverty of Student Life

The model of the university has always been one of mass-producing workers for the needs of capital. It aims to stabilize and civilize the student, fulfilling the need for a professional managerial workforce. But for decades this underlying motive of the university was obscured as the Golden Age of embedded liberalism, a fortuitous mix of steady economic growth, cheap housing, and abundant cultural funding, all of which were indirectly sustained through worker repression at home and imperial interventions abroad, allowed intellectuals to exist on the fringes of the university and of capitalist economy in general. Prevailing neoliberal forces destroyed this space on the margins of academia and spurred a further corporatization of education.

By corporatization, we simply mean management's increasing application of a corporate model to govern places of education. Across the globe, this has produced an administration with a myopic, economic analysis without any meaningful political analysis. Many of us are familiar with this analysis; it is the one that sees education as human capital accumulation, as an investment. Thus, like all good investments, it is expected to make a decent return. In many circles, this justifies the astronomical debt that students shoulder (since you will make a return in the long-run) and placing employment as the predominant concern of education.

Consider the Science Center, which opened in January 2016 at considerable expense. While Vassar's science equipment was likely due for an upgrade, according to former President Hill, a major reason for this building was to secure Vassar's place at the forefront of a modern economy where STEM fields play an increasingly important role. Students had no real power to determine whether or not this building was to be constructed. Yet, we bear the consequences of the construction costs.

To emphasize, the issue is not the sciences or wanting a nice job, but instead when the administration's desires to keep Vassar relevant for our future economy has completely overridden any political concern. Thus, when we are told we must choose between protecting worker's rights or our financial aid, we must point out that the choice was already made for us!

When we are told that we have no money for mental services, we must tell administration that we see everyday where the money went! The administration cannot hide—they chose to have a state-of-the-art science center rather than devote our finances to racial awareness training for security; they chose to produce leaders of a future economy rather than the citizens of a liberated society.

Underlying these grievances is the claim that students, workers, and faculty have a right to determine the conditions under which we live. However, alongside this corporate analytic framework, the corporatization of higher education has also imposed a corporate power structure. This is a top-down structure, where administration and the Board of Trustees make nearly all major, substantive decisions.

This is not a secret.

As Alex Voynow revealed in his article "Vassar is a Corporation: An Exposé on Institutional Logic" in Boilerplate Magazine, for one Finance Administrator he interviewed, students have **no legal control over Vassar's investments**. Rather students must exercise "influence and persuasion, not voting and power."

Nor can we trust our influence and persuasion to work. This is again evidenced in Voynow's article where Finance Administrator's claim that many students fighting for divestment are "people I can't reason with", or by calling student protests merely "a great educational exercise" or "a marvelous learning opportunity."

Let's be clear. Protests against racism, sexism, and ableism are not educational exercises or fucking marvelous—they are a fight for our right to exist. They are a fight for the right and freedom to control our lives.

And it is not just at Vassar, but across the country and the world—by ignoring our claims, fining us, suspending us, and all while saying that they are simply doing what is in our best interest, administration treats us like petulant children, while covertly eroding our right to simply have control over our lives. Despite living at college for up to 4 years, we are told that we have no right to directly determine the manner in which we will live and grow. This is even more ridiculous for workers and faculty that work (and for many faculty, live) for

We are faced with an administration that rarely will have or understand our aims. We are faced with an administration that will not recognize our right to democratic control. Then, we must face the necessity of struggle—for the administration will not fight for us.

From the Quebec student strike of 2012, the South African divestment movement, peace activists during the Vietnam War, May 1968 French university occupations and Civil Rights activists of 60s—we must know that students have struggled before and that Vassar students have always been a part of that struggle. We must never forget 1968, when 34 Black women occupied Main Building and won the Africana Studies major. We must never forget the Vassar students who faced $1000 fines and disciplinary action for protesting our investments in South Africa.

And we must remember that the educational system is the site where the economy's next generation of workers and citizens are produced. It is where we can begin to imagine a new society. Vassar wants to prepare us for the economy of our present society; we wish to be prepared to build a new and better society. Thus this struggle is greater than us; **the struggle for power in our schools is part of the struggle for liberation**, nationally and internationally.

ORGANIZING AT THE MODERN UNIVERSITY: REFLECTIONS ON THE 2015-2016 BDS CAMPAIGN

The college campus is a crucial sphere for organizing and struggle. Students are given time to think, debate, and learn from each other and our professors. As such, organizing is one response for those of us who grow increasingly frustrated with the world. We should and we must struggle against racism, colonialism, heteropatriarchy, and capitalism at large. In calling for such, it's important to understand and interrogate the modern university and what it means to organize at an elite college that was built on native land, with black labor, and as an institution to prepare the next generation of bourgeois white woman. And a college that continues today to produce the next generation of "leaders" who will facilitate and perpetuate state violence and other forms of exploitation and dispossession. What is actually possible for those of us who want to organize on this campus? And how do we act in ways that actually disrupt Vassar and the modern/colonial university and the carceral logics that mark our campuses, while simultaneously joining a greater struggle for international solidarity with Palestine and others who continue to live under colonialism?

Briefly, the first colleges and universities in the United States were built in hand with European colonialism. They were necessary for educating and training elite families was crucial to establishing leaders to facilitate the slave trade, westward expansion, and justify indigenous genocide. Vassar is closely tied to that history, and today continues to educate students who will fill similar roles today. Without an analysis that sees the university as part of the colonial project, we legitimate its logics and mark injustice as exceptional to the otherwise "safe" and "just" campus. This not only normalizes liberalism and coloniality, but it marks each harmful act by the college a single act separate from the structures of the university or the state.

The student is crucial to providing a critique of the modern university. Our As such, our movements must be understood as being part of the long tradition of student organizing and decolonial work in the United States

We successfully convinced the activist milieu and the VSA that this was ridiculous. We convinced those people that we were not sowing discord but simply advocating for Palestine and that the main agitators were outsiders. We never personally attacked J-Street or tried to engage in mud-slinging and remained focused on the politics and facts. However, we failed to convince many outside the activist milieu or VSA. We should've focused harder on more small public facing events that attract non-political students. We began doing things like dorm "Town Hall"-style meetings, and should've pursued those more aggressively. Materially, it would've been impossible for us to engage in Palestinian cultural nights, since none of us were Palestinian. Nonetheless, J-Street won many of non-political because we simply did not reach out successfully.

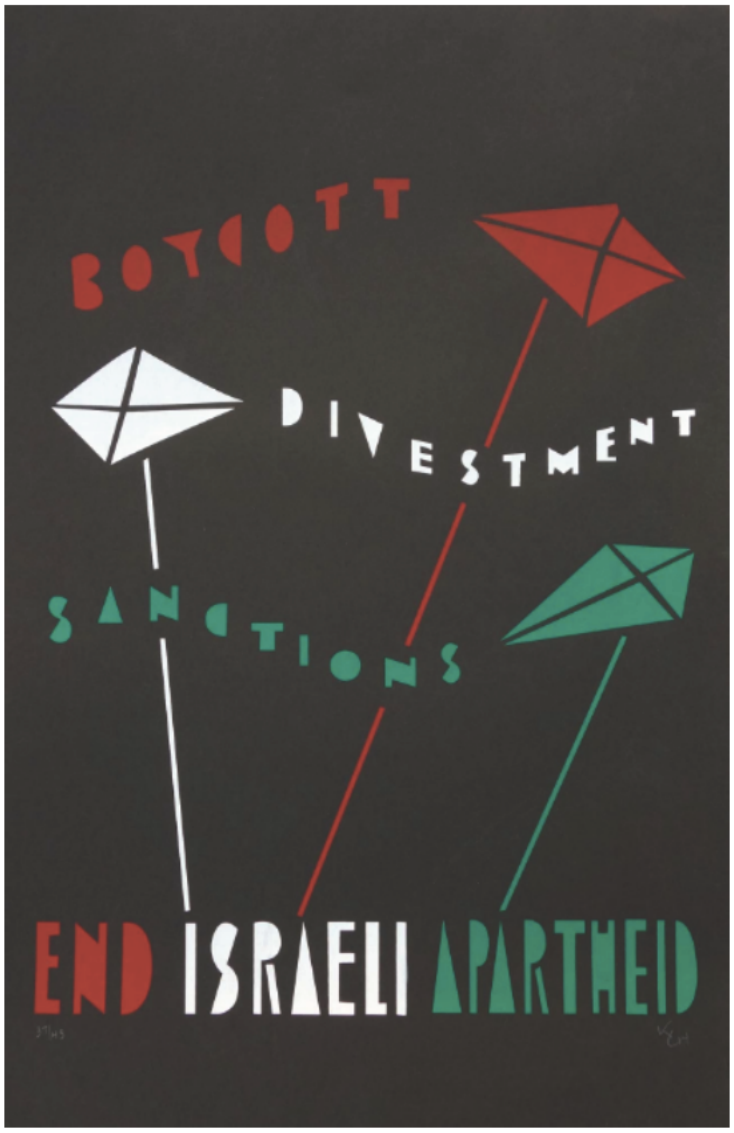
Posters like this one were pasted up around campus by an off campus zionist organization fall 2017 (after BDS Campaign) with names of student organizers listed on them as Hamas Terrorists. All campus emails that went out about the postering did not call the posters racist or islamophobic but simply mentioned that some unknown group was targeted. It's naive to expect Vassar to do anything for us here, and it's not worth our time to beg them for further protection. Yet, that doesn't make it any less frustrating. History Professor Joshua Schreier also was targeted by posters "exposing" him as anti-zionist and labeling him a Jew Hater.

Our second enemy was the administration which launched a full on counter-BDS campaign. All specters of student power and democracy drain away when we threaten Vassar money. There was little we could do here. The main strategy in directly combatting the administration is mobilizing professor, staff, and alumni support. Unfortunately, Vassar professors have a laissez-faire perception of their role in student politics: defend students right to politics, support existing struggle, do not actively engage in building up student struggle. Until this culture is broken, professors are primarily important as a way to defend only the most basic rights of students. Regarding staff and alumni, the capacity was simply not there to organize on these fronts. A strong Student-Labor relationship would've been a massive help in this fight. Additionally, organized alumni support would've been a useful counter-weight to the overwhelmingly Zionist bloc within the alumni.

Our third enemy was outsiders. Here we could do nothing more than damage control.

However, what devastated this struggle was the inability to carry on militant BDS organizing beyond this campaign. While a handful of organizers graduated, it was intra-organizational strife that drove apart Vassar SJP.

Inculcating amongst the activist milieu an understanding of basic healthy intra-organizational practices should be paramount. Allowing egos to proceed unchecked, bad identity politics to command attention, or for coalition members to act without accountability to the collective, these are practices that need to be taught in Vassar activist circles.



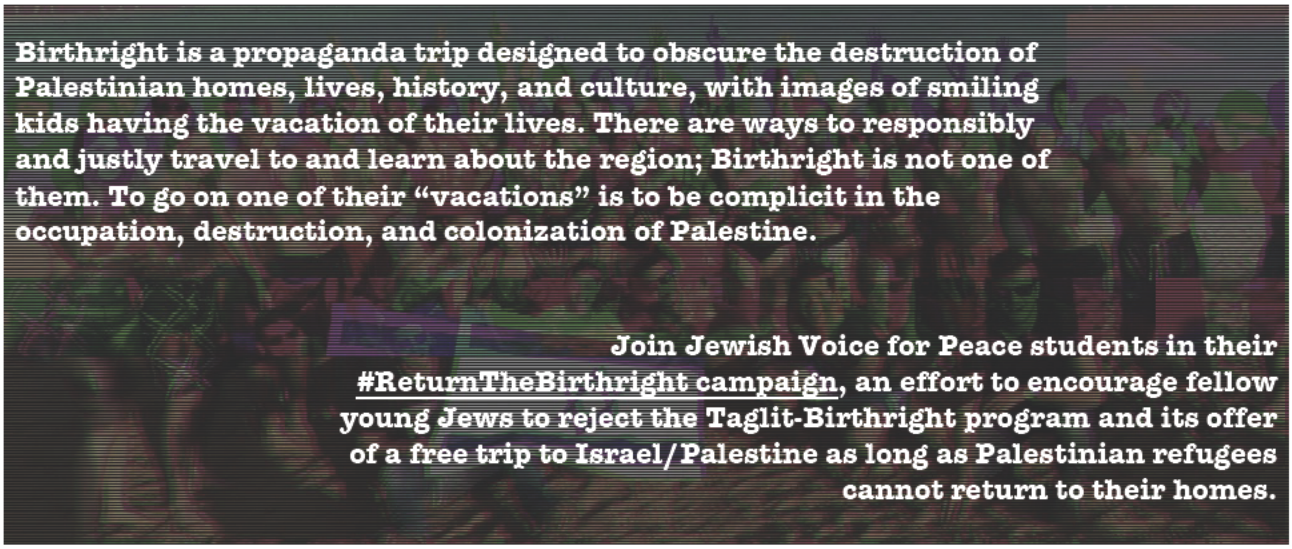
The 2016 BDS campaign opened up a lot for our campus: snakes were exposed, relationships were ruined, many students were radicalized and tons of minds were changed, but of course students were also extremely hurt. The campus was exposed as being much more committed to stifling conversation and pretending it is a progressive sphere because these conversations were not only "too difficult and divisive," but threatened a significant amount of alumni donations. In other words, racism is crucial to sustaining Vassar, and there's no interest in actually disrupting that. Former President Cappy Hill went as far as to tell the VSA that if it voted to support BDS and agree to no longer use VSA Funds for items on the BDS Consumer Boycott list, she would take away the VSA budget entirely (VSA has a ~$750,000 annual budget that we are allowed to distribute insofar as what we're spending it on is not actually threatening to the college...). Again, it's easy to see all of that and believe that we were doing a significant amount, we knew the Board of Trustees were scared and remain scared of future BDS campaigns, it's an issue that forces them to confront their contradictions, and ultimately shows their fucked up allegiances. It was a hugely impressive effort, but did it actually do much to disrupt Vassar and its relationship to racism, colonialism, and the like?

It's easy to "feel political" as you're doing this work because you end up deep in the controversy and are actually constantly attacked online and in person. Where you stand on the issue becomes tied to your social relationships and the fact that it's trendy to "be political" in college. Very few of the students who filled the VSA

meeting during the BDS vote continue to organize today, nor were they thinking about this campaign as being broader than simply a resolution in support of Palestine. The question here is how to change our work from simply being a question of where Vassar stands on this issue, and how we instead do the necessary and crucial international solidarity work while simultaneously disrupting the modern university and ourselves as its subjects.

We are open to the possibility of running another BDS Campaign, or any other international solidarity effort, and encourage folks to absolutely not be scared of bringing about another all campus conversation that draws lines and potentially isolates people. With that, we do think that there needs to be greater analysis of how Vassar is already implicated in the colonial project both historically and currently. And how a campaign not only asserts international solidarity and educates about those issues, but brings that into efforts here to decolonize our schools and communities.

We cannot simply sit on the sidelines and write statements of support for Palestinian resistance, nor can we be so invested in how Vassar student government votes on this issue. In many ways that decision matters little to liberation in Palestine or decolonial work at large. Instead of simply having a conversation about where Vassar stands on BDS, we must see ourselves as tied to their resistance, as potentially perpetuating the violence Palestinians face, and as comrades in struggle against racism, cisheteropatriarchy, and the settler colonial state. We think about Aboriginal activist Lilla Watson's comment that, "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." Understanding this allows for those of us who wish to organize for ourselves and in solidarity with international struggles against coloniality, modernization, and military violence to see the need to do more than simply pass resolutions in support of Palestinians, but to actually disrupt the daily forms of interpellation, hegemonic understandings of "excellence," and other liberal, carceral, and colonial logics that are all perpetuated by the modern university.



VSA'S MONOPOLY ON LEGITIMACY

Student government has been established as the "legitimate" sphere for political activity to take place on campus. University Administrations see student government as the representatives of the student body and look to such students for advice and guidance. Because administrators legitimate student government, those students act with a sense of professionalism and fidelity to the university at large. They become committed to the policies and procedures of the college, and look to resolve controversy as opposed to themselves being agents of discursive behavior. At large student governments extend the university and grant it, as well as it's modernizing project, a sort of validation.

In the spring of 2017, Jane Nichols, the 2016-2017 Chair of Academics, wrote an open letter addressed to "the incoming 2nd VSA Senate, and all others who care about the Vassar student body." They argued,

> Vassar College is a capitalist institution founded for the purpose of maintaining class distinctiveness amongst white, upper-class (or aspiring middle-class) women and built on land stolen from the Wappinger. It is an immoral (though not a uniquely immoral) institution, and will remain so for as long as it exists. The residential houses can pretend to be egalitarian spaces, but the memory that some of the rooms were built as servants' quarters cannot be erased. This might not need to be said, but it is important to premise an understanding of the VSA and of student responsibility on the fact that we are members of an immoral institution, and despite our motivations, we help keep it running.
>
> The VSA is the mechanism that Vassar uses to ensure that their actions will go largely unchallenged, or at least will not be disrupted. If the VSA did not exist, then the only recourse students would have to administrative action would be disruption of college functionings. In order to preserve order, the college allows for nominal student authority and participation with functionings. This decision has two primary effects: (1) it creates a dynamic where the students who know the most about administrative actions and procedures become themselves invested in them, and (2) it establishes those students (or rather the structure they populate) as the only legitimate venue for student input or complaints.
>
> As members of the VSA — particularly of the VSA executive board — we are expected to play the role of *petits administrateurs* and begin to think and behave like the administration. The most practical manifestation of this is our gradual tendency towards order and procedure over the needs of our fellow students. We are expected to treat all talk of change above the most superficial level with skepticism, and act primarily as downward mediators — explaining to students why the college simply cannot do certain things — rather than representatives of the students — refusing excuses and demanding that those things be done.

that those things be done.

The VSA, then, cannot be assumed to be a student-controlled venue for enacting change, it must be seen as a tool used by the Vassar administration to constrict "legitimate" student action within narrow and rigidly maintained parameters. Members of the VSA's governing body are not representatives of students, we are student-chosen representatives of the administration *to* the students. The administration of Vassar College has maintained a structure whereby it can define "proper" activism as solely arising from one structure of limited size, and from there it has taught the members of that body — the VSA — to consider the College and not the student body as their constituency .

The 1st VSA Senate was praised many times by multiple administrators for its leadership and action. What leadership? What action? Our tenure has been one of the most dysfunctional and passive in recent memory. It is not *our* leadership and action which the administration has been praising, it is our acquiescence to *their* leadership and action. Former president Ramy Abbady led the 30th VSA Council through record levels of student–VSA engagement, and refused to stifle the ensuing discussions when the College threatened the existence of an independent, funded VSA. He put student concerns at a higher level than administrative concerns. When upper-level administrators praise the 1st Senate's executive board for being "better" than previous years, they are commending us for once again placing their concerns over those of our fellow students. We should be ashamed to have merited such "praise," and even more ashamed to have accepted it.

Jane's letter lays out the dynamic by which student government becomes the only legitimate outlet for student complaints and where student government representatives become an extension of the college administration. They operate as downward mediatorts of campus policies and ultimately act as handmaidens to the very systems that many student government officials claim to hate. What would it look like to organize in a way that refuses student government as the legitimate outlet for student activism? And what would it mean to actually threaten the control of administrators and the logics which sustain such control?

the board of trustees holds tremendous power in shaping vassar.
get 2 know the assortment of villains who control your life.

ard "Lil Uzi Advert" Feitler '85

is the president and Chief Operating Officer of TPN, a retail ng agency and division of Omnicom Group, Inc. At TPN, Richard works ote corporations like Bank of America, 7 Eleven, PepsiCo, 3M, y, Walmart and Amazon and oversees 300 employees across 9 offices. e isn't branding corporate exploitation or aestheticizing toxic erism, he enjoys funding arts. Richard serves on the board of Steppenwolf Theater and is chairman of Smart Museum of Art.

2. Anthony "Joey Uppercla$$" Friscia '78 , Board Chair

Tony is currently a director at Forrester, a research company providing advice on existing and potential impact of technology. From 2014 to 2016, Tony was the CEO of Eduventures, a higher education research and advisory firm that aids colleges in creating a corporate education model. He founded AMR Research in 1986 which focused on global supply chain and served many Fortune 500 companies. AMR sold for $64 million in 2009. He spent three years at The New School as a consultant and special advisor to the President.

. Lisa "Meek 60 Mil Net Worth" Kudrow '85

isa is an actor and producer most known for playing Phoebe Buffay n *Friends*, a role that earned her a Primetime Emmy. She produced nd starred in the Showtime series *Web Therapy* and is now an xecutive producer of TLC reality show *Who Do You Think You Are?* which traces the family trees of celebrities.

4. Eve "Waka Flocka Pharma" Slater '67

Eve is a physician who was the Assistant Secretary of Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services from 2002 to 2003 under George W Bush. In 2007, she became the Senior Vice President for Worldwide Policy at Pfizer Inc, the world's research-based pharmaceutical companies known for price hikes, unethical drug testing, corruption, bribery, evading taxes and general evil practices. In 2017, she published an article comparing Obamacare to "colonialization" Despite having questionable big pharma connections, Eve also likes to make some sick flute music on the side.

President Elizabeth "Med Prez" Bradley

was elected the eleventh president of Vassar in 2017. Elizabeth came to Vassar from Yale where she served as Director of the Brady-Johnson Program in Grand Strategy, Faculty Director of the Yale Global Health Leadership Institute and Head of Branford College. More than anything Elizabeth should not be trusted. She'll have you over for cookies and do an amazing job pretending to listen to your frustrations, but she will not even try disrupt the violence enacted by the corporate university. Elizabeth must prioritize the desires of the board of trustees, wealthy alumni, and federal policy around higher education over the well- being of students or workers. Her welcome party cost close to $1,000,000, but yet she has the audacity to explain to us that the need blind admissions policy might have to end. Ultimately that's the job description of the President, and simply replacing her will not make that significant of a difference to the students on campus. Don't trust PB and her "Grand Strategy." And remember, she's not the only snake among us.

6. Jeffrey "Mr. Worldwide Bank" Goldstein '77

Jeffrey was the Managing Director of the World Bank from 1999 to 2004 promoting neocolonialism, exploiting the global South and sustaining global capitalism. He specifically helped lead the World Bank's relationship with G-8 countries, a platform for advancing globalization and making decisions among powerful nations, and subsequently imposing them upon all. From 2009 to 2011, Jeffrey was the Under Secretary of the Treasury for Domestic Finance, advising on issues related to U.S. banking systems, regulatory reform and financial stability. He is now Senior Advisor to Hellman and Friedman LLC, a private equity firm. Jeffrey also serves on the board of the Central Synagogue of New York which states "Israel is central to what it means to be Jewish, and [they're] committed to an Israel that's strong, vibrant, and at peace."

7. Debra Fagel "Trey Bondz" Treyz '74

Debra worked for JPMorgan Private Bank for 36 years where she was a Vice Chairman and CEO of the European, Mid-East and Africa division. JPMorgan Chase is said to be the nation's largest bank and is known for their villainous practices. JPMoragn's deceitful and illegal activities spurred the 2008 financial and the bank faced a $13 billion settlement for mortgage fraud. JPMorgan Private Bank's CEO paised Debra for her dedication to the making the rich richer and "through "helping wealthy families and individuals develop wealth strategies to meet their very personal and often complex

8. Linda "Hoax Malone" Fairstein '69

Linda is a former prosecutor who was the he
the Manhattan DA from 1976 to 2002. Her off
wrongfully convicted Central Park Five accu
and attempted murder of a white female jog
evidence against them, Linda coerced false
young black and Latino teenagers using lies
torture. Her malicious prosecution led to the
to 13 in prison. Despite the five's eventual e
perpetrator confessed, Linda defended the i
maintained that they were guilty of park mu
million settlement with the city in 2014. An appellate court judge specially called out her manipulation saying, "I was concerned about a criminal justice system that would tolerate the conduct of the prosecutor, Linda Fairstein, who deliberately engineered the 15-year-old's confession....Fairstein wanted to make a name. She didn't care. She wasn't a human". During her time at the DA office, Linda was also part of the decision to not prosecute Dominique Strauss-Kahn, an IMF managing director, for sexual assault. More recently, Linda worked to defend Harvey Weinstein in a 2015 accusation of groping. Despite funneling innocent black and Latino teenagers into prison while shielding powerful white rapists, she has faced no repercussions and now enjoys a successful career as a novelist, publishing crime books

9. Stephen "Busta Union" Hankins '85

Steve is a founding partner of the Riley Safer Holmes & Cancila, LLP (RSHC) national law firm, specializing in intellectual property and labor and employment disputes and stating. His accolades includes representing a multi-national Fortune 200 company defending all claims of discrimination and harassment, training his clients on strategies to prevent union organizing, representing employers in bargaining agreements, and defending businesses against claims of wrongful discharge. Despite absurdly claiming he is committed to serving the underserved in employment and civil rights matters", Steve appears to near exclusively represent the interests of the corporate bosses, attempting to keep workers powerless and unable to organize or fight workplace discrimination. When he isn't protecting the wealthy and destroying employees' livelihoods, Steve is an avid endurance athlete and has completed four Ironman distance races.

10. Eric "Gucci Inhumane" Beringause '80

Eric is the CEO of Gehl Foods, a leading manufacturer of dairy based sauces and beverages. Last year, Gehl Foods distributed nacho cheese linked to a botulism outbreak at a California gas station that killed a man and hospitalized nine others. Prior to this he was CEO at Advanced Refreshment and Sturm Foods He previously held product management positions for Nabisco Brands and Nestle. Eric supports the Student Conservation Association and set up the first program for Native American participants at Vassar yet Nestle's bottled water brand "Arrowhead" has an extensive history of environmental degradation and stealing water from Native land.

When people say “Poughkeepsie is sketch” ...

DECONSTRUCTING FREE SPEECH RHETHORIC ON CAMPUS

Like many 'liberal' colleges, Vassar has found itself embroiled in claims that free speech is under attack and conservative voices are suppressed. Following backlash to conservative blogger William Jacobson's speech on campus, he published an article titled "My pro-free speech views made me the target of a smear campaign at Vassar College". Jacobson denounced "anti-free speech progressives" and claimed the criticism he faced sent the message "that support for the 1st Amendment and freedom of speech is not welcome". Other articles like "It's Tough Being Conservative At Vassar" and "Charlottesville 2.0? Leftists smear peaceful free speech activists" have furthered the idea of the intolerant left at Vassar and stirred up fear of liberal censorship.

My pro-free speech views made me the target of a smear campaign at Vassar College

My lecture against restricting free speech in colleges got me smeared. The students who smeared me got a safe space complete with coloring books.

USATODAY.COM

Let's break down these tired myths of free speech and pleas for a diversity of thought.

Open expression is absolutely worth promoting as an ideal and all should stay vigilant in combatting government censorship. But this is nothing more than a utopian hypothetical. Free speech has only existed as a national myth. While the law may protect the 'right' to openly spew bigoted speech at any chosen demographic, threats of subversion and sweeping critiques of the state are thoroughly suppressed. A review of COINTELPRO, the Espionage Act, the Anarchist Exclusion act or McCarthyist policies reveal speech is only permitted when it maintains present power dynamics. In academia today, it is voices from the left that face the bulk of institutional backlash -- professors with pro-Palestine views are fired while white nationalists and far-right provocateurs are invited to speak at campuses across the country. It's not about whether hate speech is free speech. Free speech is a fantasy altogether.

Beyond government intervention, claiming that free discourse can occur among the general public glosses over massive power imbalances. When donations to political candidates are legally considered speech, the amount of wealth one holds determines how much "free speech" one has. An open exchange of ideas is only possible between those with near equal societal standings. Free speech cannot exist between an employee

and a boss who can strip them of their livelihood at any time. Free speech cannot exist between a group with access to corporate media networks and those unable to afford printing costs. Free speech cannot exist when one side, vested with state power, is actively incarcerating, deporting and killing the other.

At the core, Jacobson and other outraged conservatives do not care about free speech. They are merely upset that reactions to their continuation of oppression are not presented in a palatable manner. Their argument is a poor effort to try to mask their perceived entitlement to respect and civility and undermine disruptions to the status quo. Any attempt to reduce negative reactions would contradict their argument of free speech. Communities are justified in fighting back against a hateful agenda or debating countering ideology. Advertising civility or politeness to invalidate emotional responses to bigotry is a harmful way to shut down valid reactions from directly affected students. No matter how nicely presented your racism is, it's still racism.

At Vassar, conservative ideas may be met with resistance, but it is crucial to recognize that the college is not isolated from the country's political landscape. To suggest that conservative ideas are being marginalized is to ignore the immense institutional power that these voices hold. The Koch brothers are spending hundreds of millions annually to fund projects that amplify right-wing agendas on college campuses. The funding schemes and media backing of these opinions should not be taken lightly. Opposition to conservativism does not equate to the systemic oppression that marginalized groups experience.

The cry that one's "free speech" is being infringed upon is often employed as a tool to distract from analyses of oppressive structures and promote a reactionary agenda. The far right is quick to draw attention to the seemingly outlandish responses they garner. In doing this, they divert from legitimate critiques of the deeply embedded white supremacy and fascist undertones of their movements. Playing up a narrative of the "intolerant left" and masquerading as victims, they gain space to further grow their organizations and terrorize vulnerable populations. In their call for a diversity of opinions, oppression is masked as just another different point of view. To consider alt-right rhetoric simply another perspective worth hearing out is to give fascism a platform. At a time when right-wing terror is spreading, allowing regressive speech to go unchallenged only spreads danger.

As of right now, we are in a struggle for control, not a dialogue. Vassar does need a diversity of thought. It needs to be dismantled. Making room for reactionary voices will further legitimize hate. Instead, let's start having critical conversations and get to work dismantling power imbalances. Only then in the absence of hierarchy, will we have the equal footing that is fundamental to speech that's truly free.

Get Your Money's Worth: A Brief Guide to Vassar Finances

"It cannot be denied that the university is a place of refuge, and it cannot be accepted that the university is a place of enlightenment. In the face of these conditions one can only sneak into the university and steal what one can. To abuse its hospitality, to spite its mission, to join its refugee colony, its gypsy encampment, to be in but not of – this is the path of the subversive intellectual in the modern university."

The Undercommons, 26.

Vassar has an enormous amount of money and other resources for your taking. Do not pass up the opportunity to use and abuse those resources.

A few years ago an org called "Student Class Issues Alliance" (SCIA) made a guide titled "Navigating Vassar" that's similar to this guide. It can be found here: https://vsa.vassar.edu/downloads/NavigatingVassar.pdf

There is money all over this campus. Literally just email admin offices and departments and see if they'll support your project or organization. The VSA has an annual budget of about $750,000. Most of that money is allocated to VSA Organizations that you can collaborate with and secure funds. And about $150,000 can be accessed through funding applications to the VSA Finance Committee. The Dean of Studies has the Marks Travel Fund and the Academic Enrichment Fund, applicants can get up to $500/year for work that's done in hand with an academic course. There are new funds popping up all the time. Get more out of this school than you put into it. And share those resources beyond these walls.

Other ideas for swooping resources:

- The Career and Development Office (CDO) has a fund called "Dress for Success" where you can get money to buy nice clothes for an interview or internship. Ask for funds! Ask for $200 or $300 and you might be pleasantly surprised.
- The CDO also has random funds to help with things that will further your career or post grad goals ie. conference funds, paying for testing fees, applications for grad programs, and so much more. Again just ask!
- Ask for more financial aid! (they will probably cut your financial aid package each year). Explain briefly why you need more and frequently you will get more.
- When the VCash Machine, washer/dryer, copy machine, etc. steals your money complain to the card office and they'll reimburse you. Email card@vassar.edu.
- Your TH/TA needs toilet paper. Steal from the deece, borrow

- The bike shop will fix your bike for free and can potentially help with the cost of bike parts if you ask. They also sometimes have bikes that you can borrow or even have. Visit them in Strong Basement to see what's up! Or message them on their facebook page: facebook.com/vcbikes
- SPOKE Poughkeepsie is a local bike group and they can help you get a bike! Normally they charge $50 or ask you to volunteer with them for 5 hours to earn a bike. facebook.com/spokepoughkeepsie
- The bike shop has corporate sponsorships from Oasis Discount Beverage and Guayaki, they also got discounted Soulcycle classes, they've had food donated, and they just ask for things at discounted prices and are frequently told yes.
- Become a "campus rep"! Random companies, sports teams, and other groups want campus reps and frequently you can just get free energy drinks and other merch for doing very little work.
- Vassar is a non-profit, you can get tax receipts for donations to your organization. Ask folks to give you free or reduced priced donations!
- The student discount is still a thing!! Bring your student id with you (even post grad our id's don't have our grad years on them)
- S H A R E -- disseminate knowledge, resources, money, anything.

Push resources out:

- Cover printing costs for local organizations.
- Pay folks to speak on campus, and put them on rad setlists or panels, help younger or more independent musicians/artists/activists in networking with other folks, network yourself (but only in non-slimy ways --fuck y'all using these resources for yr actual career development), and continue to build with people, share ideas, and collaborate after the event/action/conference/etc.
- Share our button makers, bullhorns, folding tables and canopy tents. Share sound equipment, board games, circus equipment, and outdoor gear. It's more than money. Bring people on air with WVKR to talk about their work, cover the cost of lunch to connect folks from different organizations in the POK area, and let folks take advantage of the resources this campus has.
- Make all your events open to the public. And do your best to not have security at them --fuck vc security and their role to racially police the campus walls.
- Host your events off campus. Do it in hand with local groups. Begin to disrupt Vassar's bordering practices.
- Cover the costs of trainings and then do "double header" events --have one training on campus and negotiate to have one off campus as well.
- Share this info with friends and comrades, share what this institution can offer in all its forms, and do your best to "be in but not of the university."

Do not let "Robin Hood" style work replace real organizing. The revolution will not be funded, and we frequently devote too much time working on speaking events/panel discussions/concerts/ in ways that harm our organizing. Vassar wants us to see panel discussions as the way out as opposed to direct action. It's a way of making us non-threatening to the daily functions of the campus, and we all too frequently fail to move from the discussion to the action that's necessary.

Fuck 12: Understanding Campus Security

In the case of Vassar, a historically women's college, the discussion of security has always been one of patriarchal protection for white cis elite women. With the assertion of a gendered narrative, sex and sexual violence are at the center of the narrative of safety. Vassar looks to secure the campus from outside "threats" to their students, and being located in Poughkeepsie, NY, a predominantly Black working class town, those threats are understood as the Black men looking to potentially violate these women.

Vassar was built with a paternalistic commitment to "security" for these vulnerable white women. The college began as one building, Main Building, where students were able to live upstairs, take classes downstairs, get their mail at the mailroom, eat their dinner in the dining space, and live with a curfew ensuring little access to the world beyond. A wall was built around the campus, the single entrance through the Main Gate ensured that the school knew just who was entering, and strict rules regarding signing guests in ensured the school knew exactly who was in the Main Building. Her violability warrants such security, and her commitment to her education/ reproduction of her wealth/ position as a future leader in this nation, makes her worth protecting.

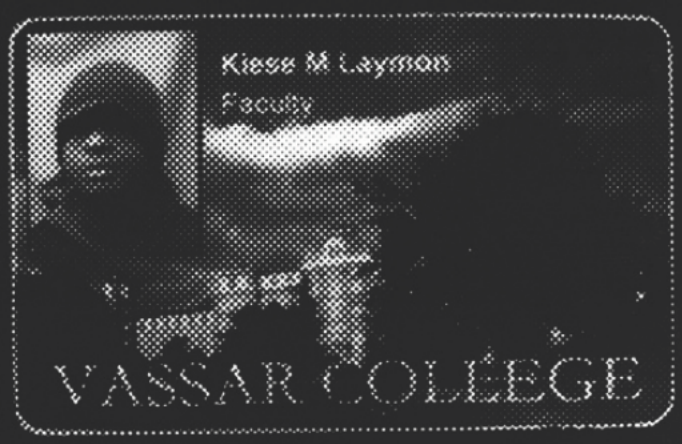
As the school expanded, went co-ed in the 1970s, and became more liberal with policies surrounding curfews, guests, and the like, it's managed to sustain itself as a "white space." Yes, campus populations are much more diverse today, however, insofar as they commit themselves to the university, professionalism, and white civil society, they're not necessarily threatening to our community. With that, anyone with a Vassar ID is said to deserve protection from our campus security. Of course having a police force that's role is to police the campus from potential "threats," a concept that is of course racialized, leads to questions surrounding of how folks from Poughkeepsie, and Black, Indigenous, and other students, faculty, and workers of color are treated on campus by other students, administrators, and of course our campus police force.

My Vassar College Faculty ID Makes Everything OK

An excerpt from former Vassar professor Kiese Laymon's 2015 essay describing his experience with anti-blackness and overpolicing at Vassar

Like nearly every black person I know from the deep South who has one of these faculty ID's, I anticipated reckoning daily with white racial supremacy at my job.

But I didn't expect to smell the crumbling of a real human heart when I went to the police station to get my student, Mat, who had been missing for days. Mat was a beautiful Southern black boy suffering from bipolar disorder. I didn't anticipate hearing the hollowed terror and shame in my student Rachel's voice at 2 in the morning after she was arrested by Poughkeepsie police for jaywalking while her white friends just watched. Rachel went to jail that night.



I didn't expect to feel the cold cracked hands of administrators when we pushed the college to allow Jade, a black Phi Beta Kappa student from DC, back into school after they suspended her for a full year for verbally intimidating her roommate.

I didn't expect to taste my own tears when watching three black women seniors tell two heads of security and the Dean of the College that they, and another Asian American woman, deserve to not have security called on them for being black women simply doing their laundry and reading books on a Sunday afternoon. I didn't expect the Dean of the College and the heads of security to do absolutely nothing after this meeting.

I didn't expect to have to wrap my arms around Leo, a Chicano student who stood shivering and sobbing in front of Poughkeepsie police after getting jumped on Raymond Ave by kids he called "my own people." Didn't expect to take him to the police station and have the questioning officer ask Leo, "Why do you use the term 'Latino'? Can you tell me what country the boys who jumped you were from?" The officer told Leo that his

partner was Colombian and could tell where a person was from just by looking at them. Leo told me that he felt "most Chicano, most Latino, and most like a Vassar student" that night. I didn't expect that.

I didn't expect to see my student Orion, a black boy from Boston, sitting palms down on the sidewalk in front of a police car a few Thursdays ago on my way from the gym. I got in the face of the two interrogating officers telling them, "He didn't do nothing" and "Leave my student the fuck alone," when I found out he was being accused of trying to steal a security golf cart.

I didn't expect the same two security guards who'd stopped me for walking in front of the President's house to tell the officers interrogating Orion that the golf cart was theirs and Orion was "a good kid, a Vassar student" who was just going to get a slice of pizza.

By the time one of the heads of Vassar security, in the presence of the current Dean of the College, told one of my colleagues and me that there was "no racial profiling on campus" and that we were making the black and brown students say there was, I expected almost everything.

I expected that four teenage black boys from Poughkeepsie would have security called on them for making too much noise in the library one Sunday afternoon. I expected security to call Poughkeepsie police on these 15 and 16-year-olds when a few of them couldn't produce an ID. I expected police to drive on the lawn in front of the library, making a spectacle of these black boys' perceived guilt.

A few days after Vassar called police on those children, a police officer visited one of the boys while he was in class and questioned him about some stolen cell phones and iPods at Vassar. When the kid said he didn't know anything about any stolen cell phones, the officer told the 15-year-old black child, who might have applied to Vassar in three years, to never go back to Vassar College again.

I didn't expect that.

Vassar College, the place that issues my faculty ID, a place so committed to access and what they call economic diversity, did its part to ensure that a black Poughkeepsie child, charged with nothing, would forever be a part of the justice system for walking through a library without an ID.

There is no way on earth that a 15-year-old child visited by police officers at his school for walking through a local college library while black is going to be OK.

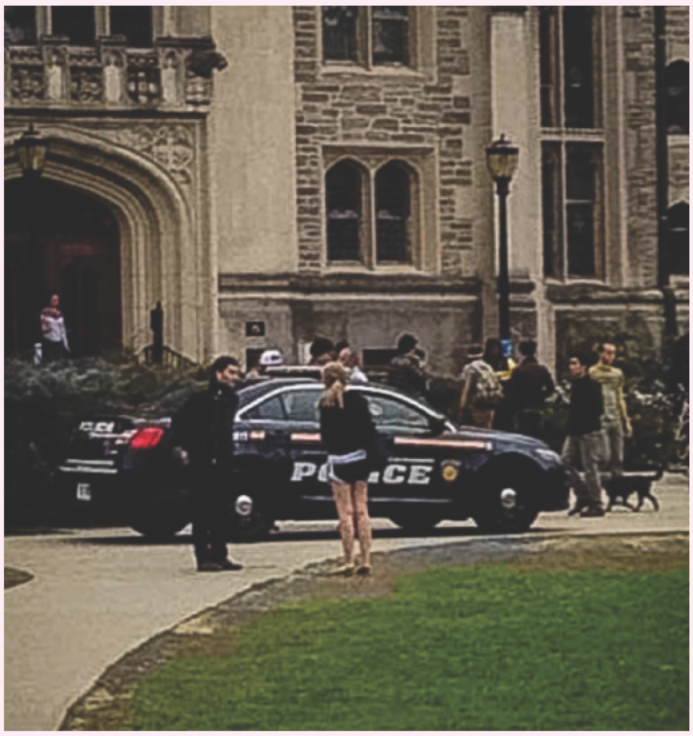
And neither are we.

But. My Vassar College Faculty ID affords me free smoothies, free printing paper, paid leave, and access to one of the most beautiful libraries on Earth. It guarantees that I have really good health care and more disposable income than anyone in my Mississippi family. But way more than I want to admit, I'm wondering what price we pay for these kinds of ID's, and what that price has to do with the extrajudicial disciplining and killing of young cis and trans black human beings.

MILITARIZING SECURITY

In recent years we've seen a significant change in the people "securing" our campus. Vassar's Safety and Security Department continues to morph and becomes more militarized each year. Instead of simply having "workers" and "managers" the department insists on calling its workers, "officers," and managers, "sergeants." The number of sergeants continues to grow, as does their fleet of security cars, the size of their office, and their security budget. The majority of the sergeants and workers are former police officers, state troopers, and prison guards --this experience is said to qualify them for campus security jobs.

Many of these changes to campus security follow an investigation of racial profiling by campus security and recommendations made by "Margolis Healy and Associates," a private firm that specializes in "safety, security, and regulatory compliance." They investigate campus security departments, police forces, and militaries like the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) and help colleges remain "secure" while remaining compliant with federal anti-discrimination laws.



In fall 2014, Margolis Healy presented their findings. Despite numerous students describing experiences of racial profiling, Margolis Healy concluded that racial profiling by campus security was not something that happened at Vassar. We see Margolis Healy's work as obviously more committed to legal understandings of racial profiling, meaning a security guard might have to specifically be caught voicing their fear of a black person entering campus, as opposed to "someone suspicious." In other words, they made a number of recommendations on how to best remain compliant with federal policies and civil rights legislation, and a new Director of Security, Arlene Sabo, was hired to carry out these new tasks.

"See Something, Say Something" Policing

Within the last few years Vassar has changed its approach to campus security. It became an open campus under Cappy, meaning anyone could enter and walk around without showing ID --something that is hugely important in tearing down campus walls. Yet, that openness, partnered with demographic changes of students more broadly, means the campus is thought to be more difficult to police from this sort of unknown threat to "our community." The threat is understood as already being present on campus, whether it is students who do not carry themselves with the same sort of professionalism as Vassar wants, or be those who are now allowed to enter the campus walls without ID. As such, campus security needs new ways to determine who the threats to campus are.

The risk of being sued for not complying with federal policies pertaining to racial profiling, sexual violence, and other ways in which the school becomes liable for the well being of students becomes the thing to manage by our campus security. Knowing that these policies create an additional requirement for campus security, securing the campus becomes a project of knowing the threats in all new ways. Campus security looks to practices originating with the War on Terror and Homeland Security in order to find ways to best navigate this always present threat.

Students, workers, and faculty are called upon to support with policing efforts. Every Vassar Security email now includes a "See Something, Say Something" statement: "we ask you to keep in mind that you play an integral role on campus. You are urged to report behavior/activity/situations which may pose a safety risk or be criminal in nature."

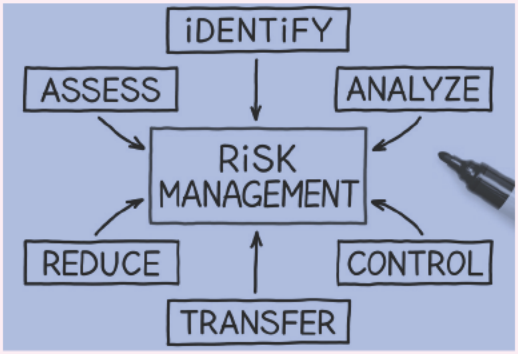
Don't say something, watch it burn <3

Risk Management and Campus Security

What is the "something" that we're supposed to be looking for? The candle in the dorm room? Or the amount of illegal drug use on campus, underage drinking, and all other forms of "illegal activity"? Or are we called upon to do the racial profiling for them? To expand their grasp on the campus by becoming volunteer cops and baby administrators? And to create a false idea that we are collectively purifying our campus from all harm?

The college creates the procedures and increases surveillance for mass data collection, they map the campus with that information, and look to further police it in relation to such. In the last few years Vassar decided to add names to the campus streets, numbers on all of the buildings, and has changed their approach to monitoring campus activity.

Collecting a report or writing a student up becomes the task at hand for VC security, even if that means writing students up for a candle in their room as the student asks for Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Or breaking down a student's door because she's not responding to their initial knocks. Or actually tackling a student who was tripping acid on founders day and already receiving medical support from EMS. These are all actions taken by "Safety and Security" in the last few years at Vassar and are done because "if I didn't report the candle and the dorm burned down the school would be liable." The conversation is no longer actually about what student safety looks like, but how to ensure security has done everything necessary to deny responsibility when something does go wrong.



Safety for whom and from what?

What do we actually mean when we say "is this campus safe?" What do we actually want in a safe campus? And how do we address actual threats to our peers? VC security will only call Poughkeepsie police into campus in cases where they believe theft is taking place. The "threat" is a question of private property. And these potentially threatening people, the "something" are anyone who doesn't look like a Vassar community member i.e. anyone who isn't white. Our Latinx activist friends in Poughkeepsie talk about how they've been approached by Vassar security when they've been on campus to speak or meet with students. Students call security on other Black students who are doing their laundry. Is racially profiling people and protecting private property what we mean by safety?

In spring 2017, someone wrote, "Kill the blacks" in a bathroom stall in the library. The homicidal anti-black statement was unsettling for many, and calls to question, how do we actually address anti-black racism and all that threatens Black students? The response by security was that security workers would expand their patrols in order to include every library

bathroom. Is looking in a bathroom all that's required in disrupting the threat of anti-black racism? And why on earth would we trust a Vassar security guard who has a background in law enforcement to actually defend Black students? These are the same cops who are attacking students of color within our communities. We do not want more police in our libraries or on our campus.

Currently Vassar Security finds itself straddling neoliberal risk management efforts in order to remain compliant with federal policy, and an increasing commitment to military style policing efforts. For many of these ex cops, the goal is additional policing and incarceration. What they promise in security is not actually going to protect us from all that threatens our well-being, autonomy, and daily lives on and off campus.

Campus security, like all police forces, has been and always will be a racist project that works to defend private property and the colonial settler state. "Safety" and "security" have simply become terms of propaganda that work to justify racist policing practices. We cannot see Vassar as our ally or protector, and we refuse to let our stories become justification for additional cops on campus. Ultimately, we will face different forms of harm and violence; our task is to reduce harm on campus, something that will not be done by Vassar security nor our administration. Refuse to be an extension of campus surveillance and policing apparatuses. Find new ways to better take care of each other. And always already fuck 12.

STOP POLICE BRUTALITY

against women of color and trans people of color

Artwork by the amazing Cristy Road, croadcore.org

LET'S BUILD VIOLENCE FREE COMMUNITIES!

WHAT DO...

- RACIAL PROFILING
- "QUALITY OF LIFE" & "ZERO TOLERANCE POLICING"
- POLICE BRUTALITY
- IMMIGRATION RAIDS &
- BORDER PATROL

HAVE TO DO WITH VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN OF COLOR & TRANS PEOPLE OF COLOR?

EVERYTHING.

WE CAN'T TRUST THE COPS TO KEEP US SAFE.

Get to know your local law enforcement

Arlene Sabo, Director of Security

Arlene comes from a family of law enforcement agents and earned an executive police leadership certification from the FBI National Academy. She is deep in the "lean in" policing feminism acting as the current VP of New York State Women in Law Enforcement. And before Vassar she served as the Chief Police Officer at SUNY Plattsburgh --a campus whose police forces are simply armed cops. She was pushed out of SUNY after being accused of leading a "malicious' and 'reprehensible' campaign of harassment and abuse of power" towards a campus security worker.

Ultimately Arlene is harmful to our campus, she's incredibly out of touch with campus on-goings, as showcased in her inability to navigate questions of racism and policing following the anti-Black homicidal graffiti in the library, and has gone as far as to assert "the need for police to be apolitical," as if that work isn't inherently racist. She is ultimately responsible for

Heidi Hunsberger, Sergeant

Sergeant Heidi Hunsberger is one of main security guards to look out for. She moved from officer to sergeant incredibly fast, and we think it's fair to assume that her background as a prison guard might have had something to do with her "success" in campus safety and security. Heidi managed to lose her state pension from her prison guard job, something insanely difficult to do considering that cops can get away with anything, but the reasoning remains unclear. However, what we do know is that her militant policing efforts, showcased in her history of tackling students and fighting with Emergency Medical Service (EMS) as they try to provide medical aid to students, are being rewarded.

Sal Incorvaia, Sergeant

Sal Incorvaia showed his true colors while meeting with VC Bikes last fall. In a conversation about disrupting bike theft. VC Bikes proposed to improve bike racks, to get more students better bike locks, and to distribute more information about how to lock bikes was met with hostility. Sal already had a plan; he had already subcontracted more workers who were to literally drive around on golf carts from 11pm-5am to call Poughkeepsie police on "suspicious people." "We almost got someone arrested last week!" cheered Sergeant Incorvaia. Sorry Sal, but contrary to what your probably learned in your Criminal Justice courses at Marist, harsher punishments do not stop crime, and calling police could mean life or death for someone. Please work through your racist understandings of "security" and join us in setting fire to the prisons.

A Note on Accountability and Care

To our peers, professors, staff, and community members alike,

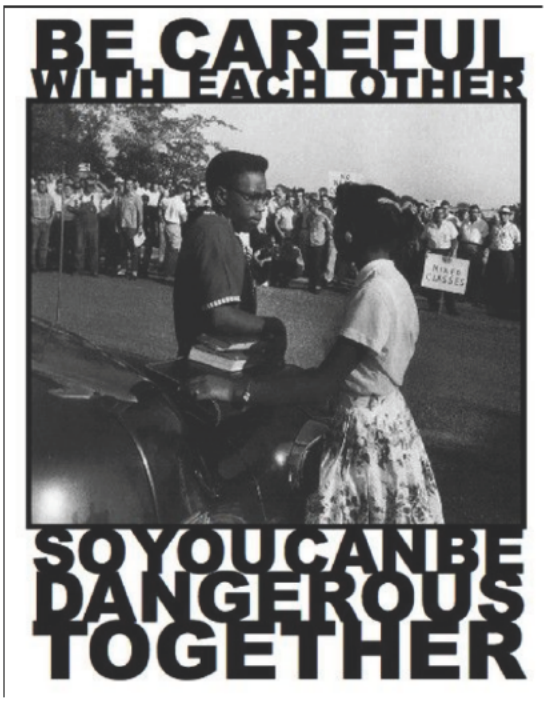
We are a group of current Vassar students who know that a tenured Vassar professor raped a Vassar student and kept his job.

We know that the professor we're writing about isn't the only man who will read this and think it's about him. This isn't a call to out a rapist or a victim. We're all implicated here, no one is innocent. To act like this could never be you, to think that rapists are evil monsters is to deny the ways we all always have the potential to hurt each other. When we exceptionalize the rapist—like with a Title IX process that gives a verdict of innocent vs. guilty, white and black—we dismiss how fraught our relationships under patriarchy are. Instead of confronting his bad habits, his violent tendencies, his misogyny and racism, he becomes intent on proving his innocence.

He denies all wrong-doing because to acknowledge having harmed would mean ruining his career and being socially ostracized. When he insists on his innocence he refuses to be held accountable for the harm he caused to the student he raped. The rest of his students are faced with the responsibility of passing along the knowledge that he raped our fellow student in a pathetic attempt to create some semblance of accountability by not letting this knowledge die.

We've heard him use our language. He'll say it's not a few rotten apples, the whole orchard is rotting. The point isn't to say that apples might be rotten in the orchard so we should accept that and get over it. Our point is that we need to be able to talk about the problems in our orchard, commit to radically transforming it, holding ourselves and each other accountable when we see the first signs of rot to prevent it from spreading as much as possible. Our problems are patriarchy that at its most violent becomes clear abuses of power like rape, but also that relies on carceral logics— expelling "problem people" to maintain the illusion of safety for the innocent and avoid lawsuit— that forecloses any real possibility of accountability or justice. This is a warning that that the orchard has been rotting and will continue to rot; we can't abandon it.

We've been spreading this warning among ourselves by talking about what he did, not because life doesn't go on and we won't have to deal with him, but because what he did was serious and bad and shouldn't be forgotten. Forgetting about it won't make it disappear. We think that at least we're attempting to transform our community by acknowledging between ourselves that that behavior is not ok. Vassar deemed it ok, we know that they were wrong.



But when the stakes are so high, when lives, reputations and careers are at risk, when he and Vassar lawyer-up and threaten to sue, we can't have a conversation in the open. Our whispered conversations border on gossip. We won't stop, but it's not enough. Our conversations don't lead to his commitment to transformation.

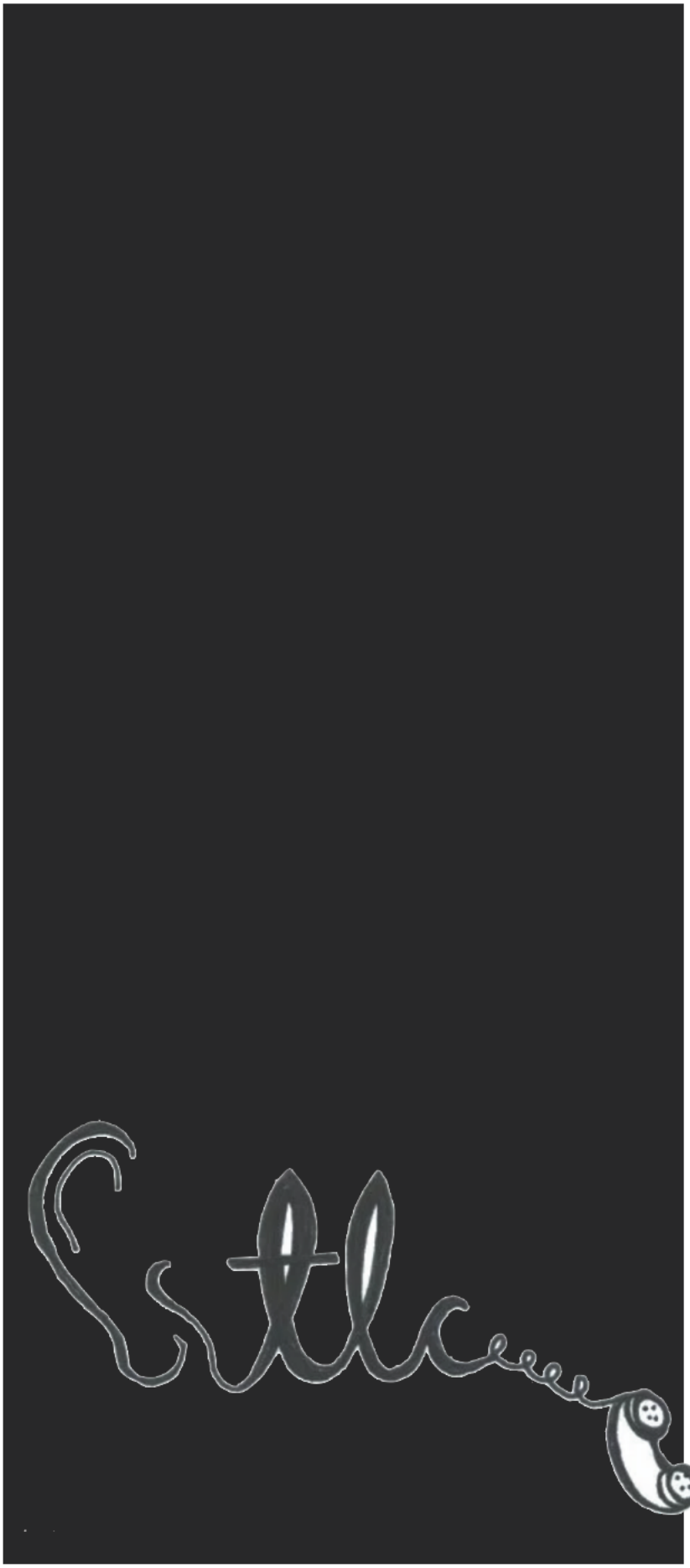
We— his students— can't have a conversation out in the open about how he abused his position of power and raped a student. Not being able to have that conversation forecloses the possibility of a just and satisfactory accountability process, it's an agreement that things should go on as usual. This makes us deeply sad, uncomfortable and angry— so much that we're unable to complete our course work, learn or work with him in the way that Vassar demands.

We're angry that our friend was raped by a professor! We're angry that an obsession with carceral logics and liability now prevent any form of real transformation, or justice for the student he raped. We're angry about where this leaves students who have to deal with him now. We need to hold each other accountable, realize how we're all upholding the system that allows these acts of violence to happen and commit to addressing this as a problem that's as pervasive as it is worth addressing. This commitment includes dealing with this professor as well as dealing with our friends. This will happen again. We will always know what he did but this shouldn't end there, we should do something about it too.

We acknowledge that the barriers to having open conversations are serious and will be just as real after this statement is published. We know that it currently would be impossible for this professor to publicly hold himself accountable while keeping his job at Vassar--not that he should keep his job. That's not to say that the stakes are too high--they never will be.

We write this statement as a call to action. Speak openly, frankly, say the thing that's hard to say and listen when it hurts to hear. Do the work, commit to actions, make plans and follow through. Apologize, empathize, be sincere. Be better than this professor; care for those around you and refuse to live according to this twisted value system that Vassar endorses. We want justice, accountability, and transformation within our community.

Dissolving our Community Supports



CARES and Community Self Defense

Cares started as an underground peer-to-peer support group operating outside of Strong Basement. It became clear on campus that students needed supports in navigating sexual violence, and that the school was not going to offer adequate resources. Instead of waiting around and demanding that the school do something that they ultimately had little interest in supporting, students simply organized their own call system and peer-to-peer support network in order to get students better resources, share stories, and make sure sexual violence and other forms of interpersonal harm were being addressed.

As the school saw the necessity for such a service, they ended up supporting the group financially, covering the cost of phone lines, as well as the cost of trainings so students had the skills to support and practice empathetic listening. This was huge for their work in many ways, but ultimately meant that they were vulnerable to school policy and funding changes. In 2016, that's exactly what happened, and students have been debating the best way to move forward knowing the limitations of working with the administration. It's become clear that what's actually helpful for students is not what administrators will base their decisions off of, and as such, we cannot trust them to actually supply the resources and support when the threat of non-compliance is what's on the line.

We learn the origins of CARES to help us think about possibilities for future action here. We can and must find ways to support each other and do so outside of the constraints of the university and concerns surrounding liability. What would it look like to actually care for each other? The dissolving of CARES shouldn't be read as an end to our work, but a call to think about who we've been working alongside, and who we really should have been in conversation with all along <3

Yet the changes to our supports did not end there, the expansion of mandatory reporters on campus coincided with the administrative decision to eliminate the work of CARES and TLC, two private calling services offered by students, for students.

Liability is the main reason named for dismantling what were crucial supports for those of us who wanted to be heard by folks who knew our campus, our student body, and who were not connected to the administration.

To this day CARES and TLC look to find new ways to create spaces to support students who find themselves implicated in sexual violence, other interpersonal violence or harm, and other instances where one would simply want someone to talk to. We support them as they attempt to navigate administrative structures and find ways to better create networks of supports for students that *actually* look to get students resources and support in ways that do not put them immediately in conversation with the Title IX office and the college's "risk management" procedures.

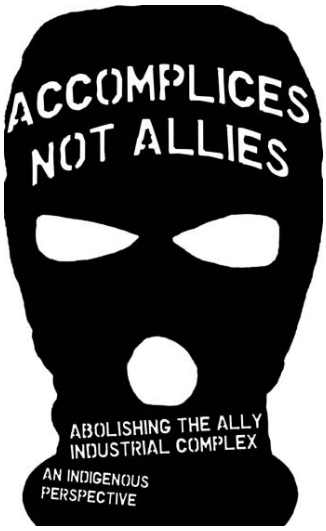
In this campus culture of insecurity, the administrative structures seek to understand and eliminate all that makes them vulnerable to each other. These procedures attempt to give every resource mandated by federal law to these students, but ultimately, there's not a single resource that will heal us in the cases of violence. Nor is there a commitment by our school to actually think about the ways we'd like to be supported, the complexities of our situations, and limitations of Title IX investigations. Since the mandatory reporter change on campus, there have been fewer reports made to the Title IX Office.

We know that violence occurs, but we're more scared to talk, to share our experiences, or maybe we simply know too well that history of Title IX investigations being re-traumatizing processes that do not necessarily have healing in mind. Any glimpse of community healing or transformative justice is lost in these administrative structures and dismantled because of the liability we are said to be to each other. We need our peers to listen, and to converse with our professors without fear of becoming implicated in data collection and surveillance apparatuses --we cannot live in this culture of insecurity.

Against Allyship, Towards Abolition

"There exists a fiercely unrelenting desire to achieve total liberation, with the land and, together. At some point there is a "we", and we most likely will have to work together. This means, at the least, formulating mutual understandings that are not entirely antagonistic, otherwise we may find ourselves, our desires, and our struggles, to be incompatible. There are certain understandings that may not be negotiable. There are contradictions that we must come to terms with and certainly we will do this on our own terms. But we need to know who has our backs, or more appropriately: who is with us, at our sides?"

- Indigenous Action Media's "Accomplices Not Allies"



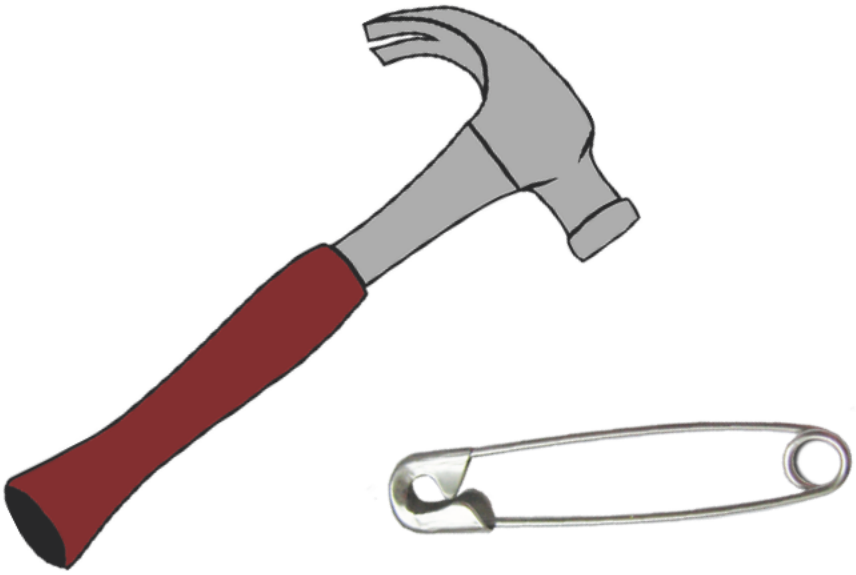
Attracted by Vassar's progressive reputation (lol), a new batch self proclaimed allies have arrived on campus. These are kids with a relative amount of power/privilege/capital who are ready to offer their (largely performative) support to marginalized groups. They're vocal and easy to spot. With their laptops decked out in HRC stickers, social media flooded with photo-ops at permitted marches, and "resist" pins fastened to their backpacks, these students have nailed down the social justice aesthetic and are eager to "get involved" (so long as they don't have to disrupt or risk anything). They avoid uncomfortable situations and are wary to directly engage with oppressed groups, instead opting to craft a vague appearance of support and call out those lacking careful leftist language. While intentions may be pure, ally politics reproduce paternalistic, self-centering and guilt-ridden modes of organizing. White supremacy will not be dismantled through expensive equity trainings, progressive lawn signs or Facebook profile filters. To build something beyond the scope of this world, we must work to abolish the ally industrial complex and base our solidarity on mutual aid and shared liberation.

The problem with allies: a brief rundown

- Ally has become an identity rather than an action, it's removed from any real struggle or organizing efforts
- It assumes racism and other forms of oppression can be combated solely through leveraging individual identities, ignoring a structural analysis
- To deal with shame and guilt, allies attempt to forfeit their political agency to blindly

- follow oppressed communities, but there is no homogenous group to take guidance from and having a mass of depoliticized actors is largely unhelpful
- Allies have an inclination to tokenize groups with politics that align most with theirs and reinforce hierarchies through latching on to the most visible leaders
- There is a self-congratulatory and elitist culture. Allies appear desperate for approval and recenter whiteness
- Allies often only providing support on a temporary basis, their solidarity is conditional
- Allyship is associated with notions of "saving" and using other people's oppression for social capital

In short, allies are counter-revolutionary. This is not a call to abandon efforts at solidarity. But it's time to throw away your safety pins, get off your high horse and give up your ally identity. Begin acting as accomplices or co-conspirators and start showing up in meaningful ways. Embrace discomfort, consistently engage with folks and avoid work that maintains whiteness. Recognize that some identities are inherently criminalized and that any fight for freedom will be unsafe. Don't take up too much space and don't try to seek praise. Be held accountable when you fuck up and keep going. Continue your own education and leverage resources. Acknowledge the complex identities we hold and and value personal experience without overemphasizing the individual. One can retain their own autonomy and political agency while knowing our liberation is interdependent and that affinity is necessary in revolutionary struggle. Don't wait for an invitation. Participate in direct action. Betray the institutions that elevate you.



THE INSTITUTION IS CRACKING

soon after the opening of the new bridge for laboratory science building, a small crack appeared on the ground. the corporate university is already falling apart; let's make it crumble faster

have fun and subvert everything!

The most important thing is that you work to constantly subvert the university. Don't wait, fuck "investigations," administrative reviews, the need for "more information," committees, and all that convince us to slow down. We know this college is a corporation, a bourgeois invention, part of a sustained colonial project; in no way can/should we wait around for someone to further prove that this place is evil. It's time to draw the lines and begin acting immediately, we need to create a culture of dissonance, where actions happen and spark further action. Without such, we stall, become complacent, and potentially perpetuate the growth and existence of the university.

This MONSTER of a college deserves to be stopped NOW. And it can/should be fun. Ideas for creating a culture of dissonance / some actions you could take:

- Change the "walkway to admissions" signs to "walkway to the propaganda center."
- TP Elizabeth Bradley's house + all other admin. Also the frat houses in the TH's + maybe even the econ department, the science building, the math lounge, etc.
- Banner drop over the "welcome class of 2022" to add "welcome TO HELL class of 2022" <3
- Register random events under "The Neoliberal Students Alliance" aka the NSA. Make them pointed, critique the business club, fuck up the Career Development Office (CDO) --none of that for our profit-seeking peers.
- Bloc up and mic check the VSA meeting lol
- Campus Activities gets so mad when people don't pre-register their chalk projects. Fucking write with sidewalk chalk everywhere they get so confused who to charge for the cost of buildings and grounds workers to clean up the chalk.

- Put up unofficial art pieces, contribute
- your own pieces when the sculptures go up, make them interactive, pointed, silly, and confrontational.
- When managers (primarily at the deece) are doing a job that should be done by a union worker ask them what they're up to. Also sit in their seats at the deece, they hate that / it means they can't as easily watch the deece workers and that's actually important.

- Start a commune / occupy something / squat dorms or th's or wtvr
- Over pay with your vsa p cards. Tip really well.
- Host a molotov cocktail making workshop
- Organize a union at Burgerfi
- Use the trustee's wifi lol hacktivism y'all figure it out with the @vc ++ boys who code
- Expropriate the vassar farm
- Slap a zionist <3 (s/o to students at Loyola in Chicago + of course Ahed Tamimi for taking the lead here)

- Sign Bradley up for tons of spam mail. Or even send her real mail? Postcard campaign through the campus post office would be fun / don't have to pay postage.
- Ding dong ditch her house. Or maybe just email ask if you can rent a room it's pretty big...
- Start a gender neutral frat
- Blame everything on "some asshole from bard"
- Advocate making vassar simply "tobacco free" instead of "smoke free"
- Dress really poorly or in really eccentric ways when attending events where we thank alums for their money. Steal the plants from those events they're really nice.
- Make vassar a women's school again.

run comrade, the old world is behind you

In all, we love college. It's an amazing place to study, converse, and think and act critically. But college cannot be the base of *the* fight. We refer to the "Vassar Bubble" to describe the relationship between Vassar and Poughkeepsie, or perhaps simply the closed campus and small student body that create an enclosed feeling between students. Yet, we cannot be so naive to believe that everything that happens here remains within these walls, nor that we're "safe" from all that haunts our world.

This guide hopes to offer a better picture of the campus politics than the one that you all probably learned about during orientation week. It's undoubtedly limited in what it offers, but we assume you got something from it. Overtime the things we're talking about in this guide will become more obvious to you all, and/or there will be other examples of Vassar implicating itself in the reproduction of racism, cisheteropatriarchy, and the settler colonial state.

We can't fear disorientation, instead, we embrace it and learn from it. We're not sure the best way out of this, but we do know that the university is fucked and we must challenge our college and society at large.

Remember that Vassar administrators will not change our school, nor the world, for us. They have different goals, a different vision, and a fucked up understanding of the conditions we live under. It's time to turn away from the university, to refuse their "help," to stop seeking their validation, and to mark them as the illegitimate actors they are. Instead, we need to turn to each other, to our friends, hall mates, campus workers, professors, and so many others who we should have been talking to all along. We need to find ways to support each other, improvise new strategies for disrupting corporate control and racist narratives about our peers and friends in Poughkeepsie, and begin to build something else.

As our hearts burn with the desire for a better world, so must our campuses.

With love,

vc brewers hellbent on nothing but destruction

recommended readings

vassar specific:

Walking While Not Black: An Account of Vassar's Approval of Violent Silencing
http://miscellanynews.org/2014/12/03/opinions/walking-while-not-black-an-account-of-vassars-approval-of-violent-silencing/

An Open Letter to the Administration of Vassar College: I Have Not Forgotten
http://boilerplatemagazine.com/?p=677

My Vassar College Faculty ID Makes Everything OK
http://gawker.com/my-vassar-college-faculty-id-makes-everything-ok-1664133077

Vassar College Security: Over-Policing the Politics of People of Color and Getting Paid to Do It
http://boilerplatemagazine.com/?p=662

Holding Each Other: Reflections on "No Prisons, No Wars"
http://boilerplatemagazine.com/?p=3682

general:

Outline of Ten Theses on Coloniality and Decoloniality
http://caribbeanstudiesassociation.org/docs/Maldonado-Torres_Outline_Ten_Theses-10.23.16.pdf

Campus Sex, Campus Security
https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/campus-sex-campus-security

The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study
http://www.minorcompositions.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/undercommons-web.pdf

Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery and the Troubled History of America's Universities

On the Poverty of Student Life
https://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/poverty.html

LIES Journals
http://www.liesjournal.net/

To Change Everything: An Anarchist Appeal
https://crimethinc.com/tce

Are Prisons Obsolete?
https://www.feministes-radicales.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Angela-Davis-Are_Prisons_Obsolete.pdf

Perspectives on the University as a Business: the Corporate Management Structure, Neoliberalism and Higher Education
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315661247_Perspectives_on_the_University_as_a_Business_the_Corporate_Management_Structure_Neoliberalism_and_Higher_Education