



The Independent

Community College Students' Source for Philadelphia News

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How The Independent Became Independent

Vanguard, the student news publication for the Community College of Philadelphia, had been a continuously running publication since 1965, the same year the College opened for classes, until 2022 when a former faculty advisor, Eva Blackwell stepped down in lieu of a promotion. The publication meagerly resumed in 2023 under the direction of Administrative Advisor and Vice President of Enrollment Management & Strategic Communications Dr. Shannon Rooney. In May of 2024, Vice President of Enrollment Management & Strategic Communications Dr. Shannon Rooney stepped down as administrative advisor of Vanguard.

The funding and platform for the Vanguard resides under Director of Student Engagement Jenavia Weaver and Dr. Rooney. Faculty are reluctant to take up the substantial duties of advising the publication without the minimum concession of release hours, meaning a full-time faculty member, who is required to teach 4 to 5 classes per semester would teach less and paid for advising the club as if it were a class.

Until the systemic dysfunction of administrators entirely disconnected from student life ameliorates, we will serve as community college students' source for Philadelphia news, independent from the Community College of Philadelphia.

Where's The Money? Student Life Budget at CCP

M.P. Hassel
August 1, 2024

As former editor-in-chief of Vanguard student newspaper, I know that \$13,000, which was the funding within the CCP [budget](#) for the publication last year, was not fully apportioned to the writers of the newspaper, nor was it encouraged we spend all that money. The funding for 2024 has increased to \$17,000 and the budget for faculty advisors has similarly increased, yet the newspaper waits in limbo as no faculty member is willing to take the meager pay in exchange for hefty additional work on top of their busy class schedules.

The situation with Vanguard highlights the confusing and often frustrating nature of budget allocations within the college. The lack of clarity and proper disbursement of funds is not unique to the newspaper but extends to other student organizations, including the Student Government Administration (SGA).

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Vision Zero, not speed cameras, is the solution to cars that kill cyclists

Jayson Massey
July 25, 2024

From Chestnut Hill Local:

Barbara Friedes was riding a bike on July 17 and was hit by a speeding Volkswagen so hard that she flew around 20 feet. That's the length of four park benches. The same day, a man was struck and killed while standing on a corner.

Almost 30 people have been killed while riding bikes in Philadelphia since 2019. Last year, pedestrian hit-and-run fatalities climbed to 118 people, an all-time peak.

Mayor Cherelle Parker's statement about this angered me a great deal. She suggests that the solution is speed cameras. Speed cameras are not a panacea, and in fact, can do more harm than good. Some motorists drive erratically near speed cameras, which can increase collisions. Nor does a speed camera prevent accidents like the one that killed Friedes. The camera doesn't protect bike riders or pedestrians when a car goes out of control.

Several solutions-oriented policymakers have stated that these fatalities are avoidable by investing in Vision Zero. Vision Zero shifts the ultimate responsibility for road safety from the individual to the designer of the transportation system, while individuals are responsible for following the law. Sweden cut the number of road accident fatalities in half with Vision Zero, even with increased traffic on the roads. In New York, fatalities are down, and \$90 million in health care costs were saved over a five-year span.

Meanwhile, our mayor has slashed the budget for Vision Zero by 60%. This decision may have cost several people their lives. My ask of you is to contact your district councilmember and tell them to fully fund Vision Zero to make streets safer for everyone – pedestrians, cyclists and drivers alike.

Interested in writing or reporting about CCP?

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Where's The Money? Student Life Budget at CCP continued

The President of the SGA, Frank Scales, shared his perspective on the current budgetary situation, and his concerns about the impact administrative policies have on SGA's autonomy and campus life:

"To give my opinion on SGA's current budgetary situation, I would first have to address deeply rooted issues in how the administration and its 'policies' affect SGA and campus life. The administrative red tape, or what the administration calls 'policies and procedures,' undermines any autonomy SGA could have and, quite frankly, is strangling the SGA and campus life as a whole to death. Administrators in the Student Life Department say the red tape is meant to protect students, but it is meant to maintain absolute control and justify their existence."

Scales emphasized that funds allocated to student life should be managed by the democratically elected student government. He stated that administrators claim, "student government has not been active enough in the past, but the student government's purpose has been usurped by the administration for as long as the school has existed."

The Student Life budget is partially allocated to SGA, which they in turn distribute to clubs, organize events, and cover expenses. However, Scales noted, "We do not have access to the money we were allocated and neither do clubs." We cannot give clubs money without administrative oversight, and then clubs are subject to further administrative oversight when they attempt to spend their allocated money. Not only do administrators have total control over the money, but they have responded slowly, if at all, to SGA and clubs in the past."

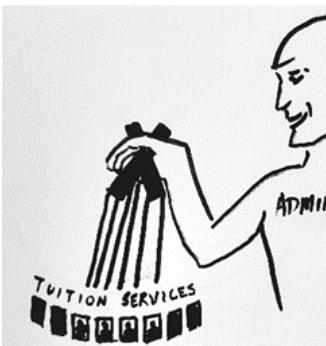
SGA discovered a budget line of \$42,000 designated for hosting events. Scales said that currently, seven salaried administrators are paid from the student life budget to manage it. Despite inquiries to SGA advisors Richard Kopp, Brad Koveleski, Jenavia Weaver, and Jeff Markowitz, no clear answers were provided about the whereabouts of these funds. Richard Kopp has not responded to multiple emails. Markowitz reportedly told Scales that funding was approved for SGA last year but was blocked by higher-ups. Associate Vice President of Budgets and Risk Derek Sawyer stated that SGA should be informed about the money and involved in the process.

"We want access to the money we have been allocated and want more say in how much money we are allocated. The lack of transparency and respect for students is gross. The administration exists to serve us, and they need to remember that. As SGA President, I do not intend to be anybody's puppet and will fight for the students in all financial matters. I will get you your money."

As comparison, Temple University, though operating with a considerably larger budget than CCP, is much more transparent with their funding for Temple Press and Student Government. According to the Temple Student Government [website](#),

"TSG Allocations are funded by the General Activities Fee (GAF). The GAF is part of every student's annual university fee. Each year, the GAF Committee determines the amount of GAF money Allocations will receive for the upcoming school year. For the 2023-2024 fiscal year, TSG has been allocated \$155,000."

This ongoing issue of budget transparency and administrative control begs the question of whether the funds set aside for SGA last year were used by students. With the former President of SGA Kahneef Martin attending Drexel University, leaving his office hours as "TBA" last year, and not providing any significant appearances to the student body, where did the aggregate funding of "sga pool," "Student Government," and "Sga Specia Events," a total of \$62,500, end up?



The 2024 Community College of Philadelphia budget has designated funding for student activities and athletics. Athletics will enjoy great budgetary increases from last year. A \$25,000 budget increase is designated for "Athletics" on the books. This extra funding is hopefully intended for updating the workout equipment in the fitness center.

According to Melvin Brown, the CCP fitness center supervisor, while the gym is expecting upgrades and refurbishments, the funding will doubtfully bring about change this academic year.

Does the extra funding mean that we will have more than basketball offered as [sports at CCP](#)? Will a new pep band be formed this year from a rogue \$5,000? According to the CCP [website](#), "our Athletics logo will not change" as the rest of the school's branding has. One can assume the cost of new jerseys is too high of a price tag to approve for a relatively forgotten athletics department.

Men's and women's volleyball teams are receiving a nascent \$34,000 this coming year. A new women's team is expected to kick off its inaugural season this fall after first-week recruitment, brown says, but the men's team is still in search of a coach. Men's and women's basketball are the only sports to have schedules posted for this coming fall; cross country, track & field, tennis, and women's volleyball are all listed as "TBD." Faculty advisors and supervisors alike are waiting until "the second week in August" for responses from administration. Sources say they are out on vacation.

Wherever they are, it's time for the administration to open the books and involve students in these critical decisions. Only then can we ensure that the funds are truly serving the needs and enhancing the experience of the student body. The students of CCP deserve answers and the assurance that their tuition is making a tangible difference.

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