The Audit and Action Council, Hamilton College

Audit and Action Council Meeting
March 16th, 2021

1. **Introductions and in Attendance**

Saphire Ruiz (they/them) - Student Assembly President
Eric Stenzel (he/him) - Student Assembly Vice President-Elect
Luis Lopez (he/him) - La Vanguardia Treasurer
Emily “Mil” Fienco (she/they) - Student Assembly Justice & Equity Committee Chair
Sacharja Cunningham (he/him) - Class of 2019, LITS Instructional Designer
Julio Demb (he/him) - Black and Latinx Student Union Social Activist Chair
Jonathan Dong (he/him) - Asian Student Union
Felix Tager (he/him)
Angelica Ramos (she/her) - Class of 2020 Alumni
Raymond Ni (he/him) - Deputy Secretary for Student Assembly

2. **Finalize Survey**

**Eric Stenzel** reviewed the survey draft regarding feedback for the Advisory Council

**Felix Tager** asked if the survey is only going to be sent using the Google form or the Hamilton form.

**Eric Stenzel** replied saying that the survey will be sent using a Google form.

**Felix Tager** asked how long the form will take to fill out as he is worried the length will scare people off from filling the form out.

**Saphire Ruiz** responded saying that the length of the survey will depend on whether the student took part in the process or not.

**Saphire Ruiz** mentioned that number 5 on the survey is used in response to a listening session where the members of the Advisory Council asked about Posse, QuestBridge, HEOP.

**Eric Stenzel** asked the board if general students of the college will be able to understand what that specific question means.

**Luis Lopez** replied saying that they could put “ie.” and put in the categories or put in a link as Kavya suggested.
Saphire Ruiz replied saying that there is a word limit which could interfere with that idea.

Julio Demb replied saying that something to help the word count would be to put the answers (very effective, etc) in the answer choices.

Eric Stenzel asked if the current gradation for the answer choices makes sense.

Luis Lopez mentioned that a neutral option can be added within the responses.

Julio Demb stated that one thing to think about is that students may not know how to answer some of the required questions and will answer incorrectly.

Saphire Ruiz replied saying that these questions are specific to the people who take part in the Advisory council so it should not be a significant issue.

Luis Lopez asked whether the further questions will relate to whether the student had answered saying that they took part in the Advisory council.

Saphire Ruiz replied saying that questions only depend on whether the student answers saying they took part in the listening sessions.

Julio Demb mentioned that there are some required questions towards the end that even he would not know the answer to. He believes that the questions should be optional.

Felix Tager agreed saying that the question related to police is tough because most of the issues are related to Campo. He believes that these issues should be addressed in a follow up as he is concerned about the length of the survey turning people away.

Sacharja Cunningham mentioned that one thing to think about is that there should be a way to make the documents more accessible. The fundamental problem is that the pdf’s are long and will likely turn people away from reading.

Eric Stenzel reiterated what Saphire stated. He says that the publicity department can potentially help. He asks whether question 19 and 20 belong in the survey at the current moment or whether they should be included in a follow up.
Luis Lopez agrees that including these questions can be an overload and should be included in a follow up.

Sacharja Cunningham mentions that another problem that could be faced is the student population needing to fill out multiple surveys and them having to make a decision of the “lesser of two evils.”

Eric Stenzel gives context to the conversations and mentions that on policy-related issues, he wants more direct conversations with people and student organizations to get policy answers. He asks whether these questions should be asked before they send out the survey. Julio Demb asks what the board will be doing with the information as he doubts how much information yes or no would give for question 20.

Eric Stenzel asked whether students would be comfortable with the current survey as it currently is and explains that it will be sent out to all members of the Audit & Action council. He mentions that he is trying to see if LITs allow the survey to be sent by the Audit & Action so everything does not have to be sent via SA.

3. Initial Feedback Process
Eric Stenzel opened the conversation by sharing the proposals of the Advisory Council and asked for general thoughts regarding it.

Sacharja Cunningham mentioned that there were some solid points in the recommendations and some points where he had some resistance to.

Luis Lopez added that the recommendations sounded corporate.

Julio Demb mentioned that the recommendations were very vague and are worded to make holding the board accountable difficult.
Saphire Ruiz mentioned that the recommendations in general weren’t bad but were unspecfic and had some things that the faculty could have done on their own. Calls to racial justice as they believe should have more action steps and ways to hold the board accountable.

Eric Stenzel reiterated the recommendation’s themes of vagueness, lack of implementation, and non-specificity within the policies.

Sacharja Cunningham mentioned that the document says that moving forward is a shared responsibility and that there is a constant expectation that the community will cooperate with the council despite the mistrust between the two.

Eric Stenzel liked that point and asked whether the document acknowledges the concerns of students and faculty. He then explained that they wanted to draft an email explaining the board’s initial takeaways from the recommendations. He further reiterated the general themes stated within the board.

Julio Demb emphasized that the one thing the board shouldn't say is that the document is meaningless as they would lose leverage if said. The council should be acknowledged for their work but should be told that more could be done/ that this is the bare minimum.

Eric Stenzel asked if there is anything to give the document credit for.

Saphire Ruiz mentioned that the separation of the chief of diversity officer position was a good point that should be mentioned in the email.

Julio Demb believed that the enhanced communication with Student Assembly and student organizations is a point that should be highlighted.

Eric Stenzel asked whether the Audit & Action council should be the primary council now that the Advisory Council is dissolving and asked what the most negative aspects of the proposal were.
Saphire Ruiz stated that they believed that there is not enough recognition of how the college is leaving out the voices of marginalized groups and that the college has not acknowledged how it has not acknowledged its role in that. They also mentioned Wippman’s possibly intentional non-mention of the Audit & Action council and the email should emphasize how the administration has not explicitly mentioned this council.

Julio Demb stated that the board should steer clear of mentioning the fact that Wippman did not mention the Audit & Action council as it was most likely a higher order decision not influenced by the advisory council. He stated that the advisory council is something to work from now that it is dissolving.

Eric Stenzel replied to Julio saying that they did invite Amari but realized she was at capacity.

Sacharja Cunninham mentioned that the recommendations regarding body cameras and working with police officers ignores the global conversation about abolishing the police. He felt that the Advisory Council didn’t give the issue enough thought.

4. Working Groups

Eric Stenzel mentioned that the bulk of the work will be in the working groups instead of the A and A council so it is essential to finalize the working groups.