

STUDENT ASSEMBLY MEETING

SEPTEMBER 21ST, 2020

1. Call to Order

Present	Excused	Unexcused	Tardy
Tatum Barclay	Dewayne Martin	Jenny Tran	Savannah Kelly
Emily Boviero			
Johanna Bowen			
Jeffrey Bush			
Olivia Chandler			
Lóri Fejes			
Emily Fienco			
Ashley Garcia			
Christian Hanna			
Jackson Harris			
Christian Hernandez			
Gianni Hill			
Jiin Jeong			
Tommy Keith			
Savannah Kelly			
Stephen Kelly			
Amanda Kim			
Eric Kopp			
Cole Kuczek			
Emma Liles			
Omar Lopez			
Maya Mathews			
Dylan Morse			
Adina Mujica			
Jessica Parsons			



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Dorothy Poucher			
Mariam Saied			
Caroline Ullem			
Seámus Wiseman			
Jessie Gross			
Lilia Harlan			

2. Public Comment Period

Malik Irish '22 (Co Chair of the Black Latinx Student Union (BLSU)) expressed his support for Resolution 20-1. As a student organization leader, he found it was important to have students on the Board of Trustees with voting power. He said that during his time at Hamilton, the college's transparency had been continuously "horrific" with a major gap between the students and administration. He stated the issues concerning Posse and issues with BLSU and FCC over the summer have not received an official apology by the college. He stated that the Advisory Council had only met one of BLSU's demands and that BLSU is still waiting to hear from the college about the other demands that concern the college's most marginalized students. He stated that when the college fails to meet students' needs, it's up to student organizations to build community and support for students. He expressed his frustration of having to constantly battle to be informed by how students will be affected by the policies and initiatives created by the college.

Lea Barros '22 (Chair of Feminist of Color Collective (FCC)) also expressed her support for Resolution 20-1 and agreed with what Malik had to say.

Jessica Sanchez '23 (Vice President of the Sunrise Movement Hamilton and member of FCC) supported Resolution 20-1. She believed that students should know how the institution operates and how decisions are made. She spoke about an issue that occurred last March, while the trustees were present, where students protested for carbon neutrality, divestment from fossil fuels and declaration of a climate emergency. The statement was passed unanimously by Student Assembly on Monday March 2nd. The first of these protests was scheduled on Friday, March 6th in front of the Buttrick Hall at the president's office. The knowledge of the location came from an anonymous source which stated that trustee members were to have a lunch meeting. Jessica then presented a [screenshot](#) of the email that stated where the meeting was going to take place. Jessica explained that later, the location was changed to the Bristol center. She explained that students were grateful for President Wippman joining the protests and when asked about why the location of the trustee meeting had changed, he stated that the trustees had not met for many years at Buttrick Hall. She explained that in a follow up email, the board of Sunrise asked again why the meeting location was changed and President Wippman did not address it. She said that



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this was a sign of the Board of Trustees purposely avoiding the voices of students and then lying about it. She said that this was not the first time student organizations had been ignored. The Sunrise Movement further expressed their support for the resolution.

Eric Stenzel '23 thanked Cole Kuczek and Mariam Saied for the creation of Resolution 20-1 and said that he was proud they were representing his class. He said that over the past year, he has seen that students are not properly involved in the decisions that the college makes. He believed students had a right to have knowledge of and influence over the decisions that the college makes. He said that when he was applying to Hamilton, he thought the college would make an effort to incorporate students' values into the way the campus functions but it did not seem to be true. He expressed his frustration with the Board of Trustees' meeting last year where Student Assembly had only 10 minutes to address student issues. He expressed his disappointment in the college for continuing to not have student representation in the decision making process especially with the recent Advisory Council. He mentioned that it did not make sense for the college to not include organizations led by students that focused on racial justice on campus and on black and brown issues. He said that those actions made it seem that student input was a secondary concern to the college. He stated that those actions are a disrespect to students. He believed that after the resolution was passed, it would hopefully allow an active partnership between students and the administration.

Saphire Ruiz '22 (Co Chair of BLSU and FCC, Student from Posse Boston) expressed her support for Resolution 20-1 saying that it would hopefully create a better future for Hamilton, future students, and its most marginalized students. She mentioned that Hamilton has provided very few institutionalized structures for students to practice critical thinking and problem solving despite it being one of the values that Hamilton emphasizes. She said that when the school actually provides these opportunities, they do not hold enough weight to make real change. As a junior, Saphire mentioned that most of her issues in relation to the college stemmed from the lack of transparency. She mentioned that in May of 2018, the college decided to terminate the Posse Boston program. Posse Boston scholars and the office were unaware of this change and since then there have been many meetings, some of them with Terry Martinez and Monica Inzer. She mentioned that students asked for clear reasons for the termination of Posse Boston and a written statement. She mentioned that students had made their questions, expectations and demands clear to the administration and there was still no written statement addressing the issue. She mentioned that a member of the Board of Trustees told students that the reason for the termination of Posse Boston was due to the lack of performance of those students. She emphasized that some of the most traumatic events in her life are because of how marginalized students are treated at Hamilton. She emphasized that getting the resolution passed was the bare minimum but hopefully would set the college in a new direction.

3. New Business

- **COVID-19 Community Standards Violations - Jeff Landry**



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Jeff Landry (Associate Vice President for Student Affairs) reported that 77 violation cases involved violating COVID-19 regulations. He stated that 23-24 students received a point or two for reasons like failing to sign up for the Eموcha app or not completing the COVID-19 Modules. 26 students received a first COVID warning for not wearing masks or being in a large group and not social distancing. 3 students were suspended for severe violations like bringing outside people onto campus or visiting off campus and not quarantining. He stated that the college has had over 100 COVID-19 violation cases. He stated that students are doing well with the COVID-19 practices since there have been 0 student positive cases so far. He emphasized that he doesn't want students leaving off campus or bringing people into residence halls.

Questions/Comments:

Lori Fejes asked whether the college has any policies/restrictions for faculty members who live off campus since that was a major concern last spring.

Jeffery Landry said that the college offers testing twice a week for all faculty/staff. Staff who occasionally come on campus are tested once a week. He also stated that faculty and staff members who travel to a restricted state must quarantine for two weeks. If they travel overnight to a non restricted state they must have two negative tests in order to be on campus. As of right now, faculty and staff do not have restrictions with which counties they travel to but recommend they don't travel unless it is necessary.

Gianni Hill asked to clarify whether or not students who violate COVID policies are sent home or suspended.

Jeffrey Landry said that there is a section in the community agreement that describes egregious violations and in those circumstances students are suspended or expelled.

Tatum Barclay asked whether or not there were plans for the larger section of the library to reopen until midnight.

Jeffrey Landry said that he will bring up that suggestion to the next meeting on Wednesday.

○ **Resolution 20-1: Student Trustees - Mariam Saied & Cole Kuczek**

Mariam Saied explained that the resolution's purpose is to increase student voices on the Board of Trustees in a more formal/meaningful way. Mariam explained that Article 1 of the Resolution asks for the President and Vice President of Student Assembly to be a member of the board of the trustees and be able to attend meetings. It also states that the President or Vice President have the ability to appoint someone to take their place if needed.



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Cole Kuczek explained Article 2 calls on the release of the minutes from meetings with the Board of Trustees. He explained that after a meeting with President Wippman, some of the meetings are confidential, which in that case, an official summary of the meeting must be provided. He then explained that Article 3 encourages the Board and/or the secretary of the board to respond, in writing, to this resolution.

Mil Fienco emphasized that it's crucial for the Board of Trustees to be transparent and that she fully supports the passing of the resolution.

Gianni Hill also expressed his support for the resolution saying that this allows students to have a hold on their education journey.

Eric Kopp thanked Mariam and Cole for their work on the resolution.

Tommy Keith also thanked them and expressed his support saying the resolution will hopefully allow future students to make change at the institutional level.

Amanda Kim also expressed her support for the resolution and proposed that the Assembly think about a resolution that will put a couple of graduating seniors on the Board of Trustees as other institutions have done.

The motion to proceed with the resolution passes

○ **Remarks on Current, Upcoming Semester - President David Wippman**

President Wippman thanked everyone for expressing their concerns during public comment. He recognized that transparency is an issue for the student body. He said that part of the meetings have to be confidential as the board deals with issues like tenure promotions that cannot be released in the minutes but he said that they will try to release general summaries out to the community. He said he will share students' concerns to the board at their next meeting in October where they will vote on the resolution as well. He mentioned that he would not address any of the comments made during public comment and said he disagreed with some of the comments.

President Wippman said that the college prepared for the Fall by striving for three goals which were: providing the most complete and rich educational experience, protecting the health and safety of the communities, and to keep employees working. He stated that Hamilton has had some advantages for staying open which include the size of the college, the residential nature of the campus, and that Oneida county has a low positivity rate. He said that partnering with the Broad Institute, a non profit, based in Massachusetts, has been beneficial in distributing COVID-19 tests. He said that a big part of the success is due to the student body following the protocols. He believes if we continue, we can end the semester strong. He stated that there will be challenges moving forward with winter approaching but he hopes everyone can continue to be



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diligent. He stated that most of the NESCAC schools are doing great as well. He said that many of the rules in place right now will carry over in the spring semester but everything will ultimately be based off of state and federal guidelines. One of the changes to the spring semester is that there will be no spring break and instead the semester will start two weeks later.

Christian Hanna expressed his concern for the racist, homophobic, and transphobic comments made on the app Jodel and asked why there was a delayed response from the college considering many students expressed concerns for two weeks.

President Wippman said that he and Terry Martinez have released statements condemning the racist actions on apps like Jodel and said that the college does not have control over what is said on anonymous apps and wishes that students would stop using them.

Christian Hanna asked President Wippman to address his question of why students don't receive timely responses considering it has been an ongoing situation especially recently with the George Floyd protests.

President Wippman said that he did not know what incident was being talked about and that to his knowledge, he and Terry Martinez released a statement quickly. He said that there are many incidents involving the anonymous apps and that the college cannot be releasing statements every time there is an issue. He said that soon after George Floyd's death, he released a statement that did not receive much attention and even after the statements released on social media, he still released further statements.

Christian Hanna stated that the issue of the administration not responding to students' needs has been ongoing even before George Floyd's and Breonna Taylor's deaths. He stated that this issue needs to be addressed.

Johanna Bowen asked whether or not the college will be distributing flu shots to students this year.

President Wippman said that they will continue to give flu shots and that the college is looking at making the shots mandatory if possible.

Christian Hanna asked why cultural and identity based organizations like the Black Latinx Student Union and Feminists of Color Collective were not asked to join the Advisory Council.

President Wippman said that members of the Advisory Council are not representatives of certain organizations and are instead a cross section of members who bring a wide range of perspectives.



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Christian Hanna asked why the college wouldn't reach out to student groups who actually represent marginalized students on campus.

President Wippman stated that the college has reached out to all organizations and everyone on campus to participate.

Christian Hanna asked whether or not the President was referring to the listening sessions. After it was confirmed that it was in reference to the listening sessions, Christian said that these acts seem performative and that the administration was not actually listening to students considering the listening sessions only allowed a certain number of students to express concerns for a limited amount of time. He said that students would be appreciative if these ways of participating and expressing concerns were more substantial.

President Wippman said that there are many student groups who can help and that he feels there is a tendency to think that the Advisory Council is the only way to achieve change when that is not true. He said that students, faculty, and alumni have different groups and ways to listen to concerns.

Lori Lejes asked what type of engagement the college plans to have with the Shenandoah-Kirkland Initiative and Oneida county and when the Hamilton community can expect a land acknowledgement on the website.

President Wippman said that he does not have enough knowledge to address the question but would like to meet with the group if there is something needed from the college.

Lori Lejes asked what are some effective ways for groups to create change on issues they are passionate about.

President Wippman said that students can set up meetings with him during office hours.

Stephen Kelly said that on June 14th, President Wippman sent an email stating that BLSU would have a listening session for the Advisory Council. He asked why this was said if neither the President nor the Advisory Council reached out to BLSU about the listening sessions or the Advisory Council.

President Wippman stated he was surprised that it was interpreted that way when he wanted to create a dialogue with BLSU.

Stephen Kelly asked whether or not President Wippman has actually reached out to BLSU.



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President Wippman said that he asked for a meeting and that BLSU would not agree to one without a set of pre-conditions though he wanted to have a dialogue with the group first.

Adina Mujica asked when the Board of Trustees would respond, in writing, to the climate strike demands.

President Wippman said that there are partial answers on the college's website. It will address how the college invests, how the college takes into account environmental social and governance factors, and the divestment issues. He stated that the college has been moving out of fossil fuels and that they have not made new investments in over five years, which is down to 2% of the endowment.

Jackson Harris asked how much has been discussed to the Board of Trustees about students' demands during the protests.

President Wippman said that the board takes these issues seriously but also are concerned with the governance of the college and the management of the college's resources. He said that the college is trying to preserve intergenerational equity.

Jackson Harris asked how President Wippman represents students and their concerns, how much influence the student voices on the board will have, and how much the agendas of certain trustee members overshadow the needs of the students.

President Wippman stated that he and the rest of the board represents the entire college including faculty, staff, and students. He said that the board has a conflicts policy which prevents members from making decisions that might conflict with aspects of their background.

Jackson Harris asked in whose interest is it to preserve the planet.

President Wippman said that there wouldn't be anybody on the board who would disagree that climate change is an important issue. However, he stated that there would be a difference of opinion on what policies to enact to actually address the issue.

Jackson Harris asked whether the President could pledge to contribute more financial resources into helping the environment.

President Wippman said that he would await reports from the sustainability working group until making a decision.

Jeffrey Bush expressed his support for the resolution and encouraged the president to bring up a discussion to the board on how the college can have better transparency.



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Cole Kuczek asked whether the college has any formal process to address student resolutions.

President Wippman said that the college does not have a formal process but he does meet with the student president and vice president.

Mil Fienco asked why the college continues to give similar responses and refuse to release a statement about the termination of Posse Boston.

President Wippman said that he recognizes the frustration of students with this issue and he stated that he's talked about it on multiple occasions but that students are not satisfied with the explanation. He said that at this point, everyone should move forward and that he is convinced it was the right decision.

Mil Fienco stated that the college has still not addressed what the Board of Trustees member said about Posse Boston scholars not performing well. She stated that the president should not be happy about terminating the program when college devotes itself to diversity and inclusion.

President Wippman stated that the college reallocated some of the resources from Posee Boston to other programs like QuestBridge. He stated that since he's been on campus, the percentage of students of color has never been higher.

Eric Stenzel said that the claims of being transparent are false considering the Board of Trustees changed a meeting location and then lied about it. He asked what the president and the college will do to prove to students that they actually care when students feel ignored.

President Wippman said that the board does care about these issues considering they devote so much time and energy into the college and want it to be as successful as possible. He recognizes that sometimes some of the members might have different ideas on how to approach certain issues but the overall goal is one that students want to achieve as well.

Eric Stenzel asked what is the full time profession of the member who chairs the committee on investments. Eric said that the member manages fossil fuel companies and donates hundreds of thousands of dollars to anti-climate political candidates. He expressed his concern with how students can't trust members of the board who have other interests in mind.

President Wippman recognized that the issue is very important to many but attacking a member of the Board is not the way to accomplish change. He said that it is not clear why there is an attack on a member if that same person is helping the college diverge from



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investments in fossil fuels. He stated that these types of investments can't be easily fixed as other investments.

Eric Stenzel stated that students have approached this issue in the kindest way possible since 2014 and since then the college has failed to commit to a solution which has led to students addressing the issues more firmly.

The motion to extend the meeting to 10:30 PM passes

Stephen Kelly asked why President Wippman has not met with the Class of 2024 delegation.

President Wippman said that he was not aware that the delegation was seeking a meeting and said they could do so easily by contacting him or his assistant.

Christian Hanna asked what the college is doing to replace the enrollment of minority students that came from Posse Boston and whether students can expect a statement or list of solutions.

President Wippman stated that the college has over dozens of community based organization partnerships which help recruit diverse students and that there are many ways of accomplishing that goal.

Christian Hanna asked where students can find this information.

President Wippman said they can contact the admissions office and that hopefully Dean Inzer could address this process more clearly.

Tommy Keith thanked the president for attending the meeting and reminded him that according to a resolution passed in 2017, the Board of Trustees must respond to the resolution in 72 hours.

President Wippman said that many of the members have other obligations and that a response would probably not be released in 72 hours.

4. Old Business

- **Plan for Sadove Basement**

Eric Kopp mentioned that they still need more SA members to oversee groups of no more than 4 people (including the SA member) at the Sadove Basement. Groups will be allowed to work in 30 minute increments and more information will be released soon.

5. Acknowledgements

- **Virtual Students!**



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Tommy Keith acknowledged the virtual students who are attending classes with different time zones and different circumstances.

6. Funding

Amount Remaining: \$61,500

Organization	Items/Services Requested	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended	Resubmit
Minds For Change	Journals and accessories	\$97.63	\$93.76	no
Sustainability Committee	Reusable utensil collaboration	\$2,096.83	\$0.00	no
Mock Trial	Tournament fees and essential printing	\$630.00	\$630.00	no
Lawn Game Society	Essential lawn games for club launch	\$528.17	\$528.17	no
The Monitor	Website fee	\$69.00	\$0.00	no
Aquaponics	Expansion and repairs	\$1,503.40	\$1,503.40	no

Amount Requested: \$4,925.03

Amount Recommended: \$2,755.33

Amount Remaining if Funding Passes: \$58,744.67

Maya Matthews reported:

- Minds for Change is hosting an event on September 30th and need to purchase materials. They requested \$97.63. The format in which the request was submitted overestimated and the actual amount needed is \$93.76.
- The Sustainability Committee requested \$2,096.83. However, the Dean of Students office has offered to cover the cost requested.
- Mock Trial and the Lawn Game society will be funded in full.
- The Monitor requested \$69. However, the Student Assembly does not fund publications because there is a separate allocation for funding.



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Jonathan Dong, from Aquaponics club, said that they are looking to expand the aquaponic's tilapia breeding facility and diversify the vegetables in the systems. He said that the club is open to anyone and everyone is free to come look. If interested, students can email the E-board.

Maya Matthews thanked Jonathan for reporting on how the funding will be used.

The motion to pass the recommendations passes

7. Announcements

- **Have a question/concern about campus life? SA President Tommy Keith has office hours from 7pm-9pm every Wednesday. Schedule an appointment [here](#).**
- **The Movie Channel has opened voting for October Movies! Link to vote is [here](#).**
- **LITS Announcements:**
 - Students who have a broken laptop can reach out to Dave Roback and receive a computer loan.
 - There is a new remote in feature that allows students everywhere the ability to access any of the computers on campus.
 - If students are having technological problems they should report to the help desk.
 - Students can use the remote in feature to access the movie channel off campus!

