

STUDENT ASSEMBLY MEETING

8/30/21

1. Call to Order

Present:

Emily Boviero

Cicille Dan-Morton

Ashley Garcia

Michelle Estrella-Dominguez

Jackson Harris

Christian Hernandez-Barragan

Eric Kopp

Cole Kuczek

Dewayne Martin

Maya Matthews

Wriley Nelson

Raymond Ni

Subin Myong

Fatima Olivia

Natalia Reboredo

Sapphire Ruiz

Ele Sorensen

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel

Felix Tager

2. Land Acknowledgement

Sapphire Ruiz read a [land acknowledgement](#) created by the Shenandoah-Kirkland Initiative (SKI).

3. General Public Comment Period

Joel Adade '22 (he/him) wrote:

“Dining at commons is at its worst. The food options are often subpar in taste, which is not new for food at Hamilton. It seems like the dining staff is struggling and I don't blame them. They work very hard to provide for students, but are just understaffed. Some of the food served on the first day of classes was the same food that was served at the tent the previous day following Convocation. I have not seen this happen at Hamilton before. Again, I do not blame the staff and am not insinuating that food should be thrown out at the end of the day/cant be repurposed for another meal. I just think that students are noticing that something is different about dining at Hamilton and dining staff are struggling to make things work, for which I am very grateful.”

Malik Irish '22 (he/they) wrote:

“I wanted to comment on the food situation we've seen these past two weeks. To say it's not startling is an understatement and we cannot pretend as if this is a normal occurrence. For the previous two years I've been on campus, I've never seen there be this much chaos to eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Why is commons running out of food by 6 pm while students are rushing to dinner? Why are dining hours reduced and halls closed when needed the most



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especially on weekends? Why is it that each time I'm talking to someone and food is brought up, we question whether we are gonna be able to eat for the day? A lot of us know the answer including the fact that non appetite is understaffed and trying their hardest to keep up with a campus that is bigger than we anticipated. However, what we don't know the answer to is why the college has yet to take steps to fix the problem and has instead sat back and pretended it doesn't exist. Excuses such as "it's always this hectic during the first week" should not be a crutch to live ignorantly to concerns. It also shouldn't be administrations priority to continuously speak over and downplay problems brought up by students and dining hall staff. We know what the dining are suppose to be like, however I'm not sure if those higher up know equally as much."

Izzy Rutkey '22 (she/her/hers) wrote:

"I'm writing to share a little bit about my experience with the dining halls this semester. I'm no stranger to a long line in Commons, McEwen, or Diner during the 12pm lunch rush and 6pm dinner rush. However, this semester has seen an almost constant rush with no time being conducive to short lines and a quick meal. The closing of McEwen on the weekends in particular creates a lot of problems because all 1,900 students must go to one dining hall for the most part (Diner isn't open for breakfast or lunch on the weekends) and this leads to long lines and waits and food shortages at Commons.

Yes, all of these things are frustrating and inconvenient for me as they have affected my schedule and negatively impacted my eating habits. However, I am most worried for the staff that works at the dining halls. Yesterday at Commons there was only one person working at each station during lunch. I was there for over an hour and the rush never slowed, the lines were through to the drink room the entire time. It is not sustainable for Bon Appetit employees to be constantly on their feet in the overwhelming heat with no time to rest. Nor is it sustainable for the entire campus to be eating at one dining hall that is still offering reduced options as compared to pre-Covid semesters (i.e., no pasta station, the grill isn't fully operating, no taquiera, no sushi, no noodle station).

I greatly appreciate that you're doing whatever you can to ameliorate this situation and to advocate for better pay and working conditions for Bon Appetit employees."

Samuel Lieberman '23 (he/him/his) wrote:

"The dining hall situation is unconscionable. The email today..."Labor Shortage"? really? or is there just a shortage of people willing to work for paltry wages in a toxic environment where so many students treat them so poorly. The solution here is pressure Bon Appetit to pay dining hall workers more. And to quickly address the inevitable "Where will we find the money?" question. I am confident the school can find it and IF I am wrong in that assumption, the school can simply increase the cost of its meal plan. At an institution where the average student comes from a family that is on average over three times wealthier than the national average, such a policy



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would redistribute money from the prosperous to those less fortunate and thus be just. Thank you for your time.”

America Grafton ‘24 (she/her) wrote:

“Hamilton is my home away from home for 8 months out of the year. I have come to love the campus community, my professors and classes, and the dining options especially. As a vegetarian, I’ve noticed that over the last year, Hamilton has expanded its options so I am able to eat more than just cheese pizza and undercooked vegetables- it’s been great! However, recently, the dining options have been limited, and with Commons only open on the weekends, this means most of Hamilton’s 2,000+ students are forced to overcrowd and overwork the Bon Appetit servers and cooks. This environment is extremely hot, stressful, and a long wait. I’ve skipped breakfast several times; ordered food from outside Hamilton to avoid eating under the Dunham tent with everyone after Convocation; and I’ve chosen lines that offered fewer options, but were less of a wait so I could still make it to class with something in my stomach. I have wanted to avoid the dining areas at peak times, but that’s been near impossible since every hour is packed with students. I know this is also very hard on the workers. I’ve seen them wiping sweat from their foreheads between orders, asking students if it’s all right if they pause for a drink of water, and becoming fatigued from the overwhelming heat. None of this is okay.”

Alexander Weremchuk ‘24 (he/him/his) wrote:

“The state of the dining halls is astounding. For some reason my expectation that the dining hall on my side of campus would be open turned out to be a lofty one when I discovered that it is for some reason standard for mcewen to be closed on the weekends. "Ok," I say, "I'll go to Commons." What a nightmare. How is it possible that anyone truly and honestly believes that the entire school can eat at one dining hall when there is only one person serving food at the home line. Apparently my expectation that we'd be eating on plates and with reusable utensils was also a lofty one, since Commons has regressed to basically last-year dining just with tables. The email we received today from the GM of Bon Appetit was insulting. The notion that students can go at 'off-peak' times is a fantasy that has no reflection in the dining situation at Hamilton. It's clear that the people calling the shots are wildly disillusioned about what is going on.”

4. New Business

- **Class of 2022 Confirmations**
 - Subin Myong, Class Representative
 - Jackson Harris (he/him), Class President

Jackson Harris commented on his belief that he is the best person for his position as class president.



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Eric Kopp expressed his support for Jackson Harris as class president.

The motion to confirm Jackson Harris as class of 2022 president and Subin Myong as class of 2022 representative passes.

- **Class of 2023 Confirmations**
 - Maya Mathews (she/her), Class Representative

Maya Mathews expressed her excitement for being back in the assembly.

The motion to confirm Maya Mathews as class of 2023 representative passes.

- **Executive Board/Cabinet Confirmations**
 - Felix Tager '23 (he/him), Treasurer

Felix Tager mentioned his experience working with nonprofit organizations in the finance field. He expressed his goal in having SA have a functioning role in the college's budget going forward which would include the democratization of the student activities fee in which he hopes the assembly could achieve this semester. He also explained that he is trying to work with clubs and meet with every organization leader in the next few weeks because he feels like many clubs are underfunded.

- Natalia (Nat) Reboredo '24 (she/her), Organization Relations

Natalia Reboredo commented that she has had experience working with Hamilton organizations as last semester's Deputy of Organizations under Savannah Kelly '21. She expressed her desire to work with organizations to ensure that they are sticking to their goals of advocating for the student body, living up to their constitution and mission, and simultaneously working towards equity and inclusivity.

Questions/ Comments:

Jackson Harris asked Natalia Reboredo if she was going to have a deputy this semester as she was previously a deputy for Savannah Kelly.

Natalia Reboredo replied that the cabinet is currently in the process of looking at applications for deputies.



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The motion to confirm Felix Tager as student assembly Treasurer and Natalia Reboredo as student assembly Director of Organizations passes.

- **Elections and Deputy Applications Update from Vice President Eric Santomauro-Stenzel '24 (he/him)**

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel noted that the role of the Vice President is in part to manage the elections every semester in precedent but he believes that this role should change. He explained that having the Vice President run elections is a conflict of interest as he now has to work with people making decisive decisions and is also far too much to put on one's plate. He explained that there are currently two candidates for class president and eight candidates for class representative for the Class of 2025. He mentioned that elections for these positions will run for 24 hours on September 1, 2021 where one candidate wins class president while the top four voted candidates for class representative receive the role. He further mentioned that SA will also have cluster treasurer elections and emphasized that the assembly only had one candidate for five open spots. He mentioned that the assembly will discuss bylaws for this in the near future. He then noted that the assembly received 14 applications for taking a deputy spot by the Class of 2025 with Raymond Ni eventually having three deputy secretaries and Natalia Reboredo eventually having two deputies.

Eric Kopp asked why Secretary Raymond Ni was going to have three deputies while other cabinet members had two deputies.

Raymond Ni noted that in the past the secretary had two deputies but he wanted to expand the number of deputies to three to both help take notes for outside committee meetings and allow completed minutes to be sent out quicker.

- **Brief Discussion of Postponing Cluster Model Bylaws**
 - Full discussions will occur at the SA retreat on Saturday, September 4th. An official decision will be made during the Monday, September 6th SA general meeting after an opportunity for public comment.

Felix Tager noted that he only had one cluster treasurer in office currently with one person currently running for a cluster treasurer position for an estimated 6 to 7 clusters which is too much work for the current amount of treasurers. He emphasized his belief that the cluster should be postponed because of the lack of staff alongside an unprecedented amount of funding



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requests. He mentioned that there were many budgets that he could not account for because the assembly is not sure what their past spending was. He mentioned that the assembly was currently spending less than they normally would so he is currently trying to create a budget plan to figure out how much money to request from the general fund to offset the decreased spending. He mentioned that there is an increased amount of funding requests from the clubs which would make starting the cluster model unwise.

Jackson Harris asked if the increase in funding requests was from last year or the year before that.

Felix Tager replied saying that the trend happening is a general trend in which many clubs feel an increased need to request for money now that COVID restrictions have loosened.

Maya Mathews asked if the assembly was going to resort to the old funding model.

Felix Tager replied saying that the current goal is to go back to the old funding model and to prepare to go into the cluster model in this current semester.

Eric Kopp asked if the council could pass a bylaw that states that cluster treasurers could be appointed by class presidents if there was a vacant spot.

Wriley Nelson answered that from a practicality standpoint, if the assembly cannot get people to take on the role, then it is up to the president. He mentioned that in terms of the constitutionality of the bylaw, it should be feasible.

Saphire Ruiz mentioned that the assembly would be open to appointing people for the vacant treasurer roles if that is something the assembly is open to doing this semester. They also mentioned that the council is trying to shift how the cluster treasurers are elected because they believe that the cluster treasurers must be representative. They mentioned that they were trying to find a way to update the system to be representative of the students. They explained that many clubs were worried that these treasurers were going to be appointed based on a system and have no knowledge of the organizations within the clusters. They then mentioned that there was a lot of miscommunication and misunderstanding about how the cluster model works so they did not want student organizations to use the system without extensive knowledge about how it worked.



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Felix Tager reiterated the fact that the current rules state that the cluster treasurers must have never served on the executive boards of any organizations in which they are overseeing funding for.

Cole Kuczek asked if they would still need to appoint treasurers if they do not go on with the cluster model this semester.

Wriley Nelson answered that the role of Treasurer does indeed need to be filled. If the cluster models do not happen to come into fruition this semester then the assembly will have to revert to the original Treasurer models (one Treasurer per class).

Eric Kopp mentioned that they could work to transition the cluster model into the spring but if the assembly continues to not implement it, they might just as well not do it.

Saphire Ruiz mentioned that on Saturday during the SA retreat, they can further discuss the implementation of the cluster model.

- **Dining Hall Questions - numbers, not names, to be tallied**
 - How many of you have skipped a meal since arriving on campus due to current dining conditions?
 - 23 out of 30 people voted yes
 - How many of you have needed to seek food off campus due to current dining conditions?
 - 20 out of 30 people voted yes.
 - How many of you have needed to choose less nutritious food options to keep to your schedule?
 - 28 out of 30 people voted yes.
 - How many of you are experiencing some level of covid or social anxiety as a result of large dining hall crowds?
 - 18 out of 30 people voted yes.
 - How many of you feel your mental AND/OR physical health has been damaged by current dining conditions?
 - 14 out of 30 people voted yes.

Comments/ Questions:

Dewayne Martin asked if the Student Assembly had the opportunity to speak to the dining hall staff directly.



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Saphire Ruiz replied that they sent an email to the entire dining management staff and the assembly asking questions regarding the pay of the dining hall employees and the possibility of increasing the pay for the workers.

Dewayne Martin asked if anyone had the opportunity to speak to the dining hall employees themselves considering that the assembly is taking their work conditions into consideration.

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel replied that he has not talked to employees yet, only students so far

Dewayne Martin further replied but due to the lack of a livestream, audio at this point is indecipherable.

Maya Mathews mentioned that the assembly could send suggestions for other food alternatives to help the dining hall situation such as DoorDash credits for some portions of the student body, having food trucks on other days than Fridays, subsidizing ingredients for students who have kitchens on campus, or buying in bulk from Bon Appetit for people.

Jackson Harris mentioned that the council should invite one of the top administrators in dining into a SA meeting. He expressed his agreement that the council should talk to some employees but added that the assembly should not speak with them in a big public setting as he believed it wouldn't be as constructive. He mentioned that the assembly should reach out to the committee that works with Bon Appetit.

Saphire Ruiz mentioned that they did not want to put the dining hall employees at any risk.

Eric Kopp commented on the treatment and labor shortage. He stated that he heard that Bon Appetit was hiring student workers to supplement the shortage of staff. He noted that employees at the dining hall, even in a non-COVID, are oftentimes treated negatively. He suggested increasing the pay for dining hall staff.

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel mentioned that he contacted both the student employment office and the dean of students office and there have been conflicting answers to the pay of employees for food workers. He explained that student employment stated that the pay was minimum wage while the dean of students office stated that the pay was the maximum bracket towards student pay.

Cole Kuczek mentioned that for many of the meal plans, there was a \$400 discrepancy to go from the unlimited meal plan to the 14 meal meal plan. For the seven meal plan, it is half of the unlimited plan which was a major problem. If this is going to continue, he commented that he could save a lot more money by buying food off campus. After speaking to his friends, Cole reported that most of his peers would appreciate having dining halls open later for late night dining as happened in previous years..



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Ele Sorensen expressed a concern about students with accommodations. Ele shared an experience about having accommodations to live on the dark side and had to walk to the other side just to get a meal due to the limited availability of dark side dining.

Subin Myong wanted to ask about the possibility of encouraging people to open more of their dorms. She explained that the reason why many dorms do not let their students drop their meal plan is because of a fire code which does not allow someone to go down to the 7 meal plan because the stoves are not on par which makes them a fire hazard. She then asked the possibility of talking to Residential life about this issue

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel commented that Jackson Harris, who chairs the Residential Life committee, can be sure to include Residential Life in these conversations about dining and improving cooking materials.

Christian Hernandez-Barragan asked why McEwen was not open and asked for reasoning.

Saphire Ruiz replied saying that the closures are because there were not enough staff to work McEwens and the Bundy Cafe. Furthermore, because FoJo Beans is not open yet and Euphoria is no longer available on campus, there are no options outside of the main dining halls provided by the college.

Eric Kopp mentioned that he spoke with Dean of Students, Terry Martinez, and noted that she was receptive to changing the stoves. Though he mentioned that this is something that the assembly would have to include Residential Life in.

Emily Boviero suggested the possibility of installing an air conditioner in the dining halls as it would encourage applicants to work in the dining halls, especially in Commons.

Travis Hill provided some clarification on meal plan appeals as he is responsible for them. He noted that the issue is not with the stove tops, but that the contract with Bon Appetit is set that in run services fully, there is a certain number of students required on the 14 and 21 meal plan. The problem in the suites is not the stove tops but rather, the case is that the number of students that live in Babbitt or Millbank could potentially drop the required number of students needed per plan. Stoves do not need to be changed in order for this to be adjusted.

Maya Matthews asked how the council can communicate with Bon Appetit about questions they have regarding dining or whether the assembly should contact the Dean of Students office.

Travis Hill responded that the Dean of Students office is here to support students and instead, students should contact the administration of finance position when providing feedback or suggesting regarding dining. He explained that Reuban Haag is the General Manager of Bon Appetit and that feedback can be directed to him. He further mentioned



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that Lucy Burke is the person who cares for outside contracts and outside providers-- questions regarding that should be directed to Lucy.

Cole Kuczek asked if there is any conclusion about whether Hamilton College or Bon Appetit gives salaries. He also asked whether there were any incentives for student workers to get employed with Bon Appetit.

Felix Tager mentioned that he could check in with Karen Leach for further clarification about the wages of Bon Appetit.

Emily Boviero asked if the food shortage and long lines are happening at other colleges as well.

Saphire Ruiz expressed their uncertainty but mentioned that this issue most likely has to do with the current national shortages of workers.

Eric Kopp mentioned that he was under the impression that it is actually Bon Appetit that paid their employees instead of Hamilton College but was not sure.

5. Funding (awaiting written confirmation from Student Activities)

Amount Remaining: **\$ 75,711.50 for Fall semester**

Total General Fund: **\$ 151,423**

Amount Remaining Non-Strategic: **\$ 15,142.30**

Amount Remaining Discretionary (with Rollbacks): **\$ 3,785.58**

Starting Strategic Budget: **\$ 60,569.20**

Strategic Budget (including advanced funding): **\$ ----**

Organization	Items/Services Requested	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended	Resubmit
Discretionary		\$5000.00	\$5000.00	N

Amount Requested: **\$ 0.00**

Amount Recommended (Non-Strategic): **\$**

Amount Recommended (Discretionary): **\$**

Amount Remaining if Funding passes (Non-Strategic): **\$**

Amount Remaining Strategic: **\$**

Felix Tager mentioned that the council had a little more funding this year due to higher student retention. The current amount remaining is \$75.71k for the fall semester. The general fund currently is at \$151k and \$5k for discretionary funds. He noted that although there were increases this year to the funds, this was not enough to fund organizations, so he is planning on working with the cluster treasurers with this issue.



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Jackson Harris asked if Felix could reiterate the numbers

Felix Tager repeated the numbers present in the above funding.

Jackson Harris asked to clarify what the total general fund was.

Felix Tager replied saying that the general fund number was for both semesters.

Eric Kopp mentioned that he is organizing workers for admissions in a union and asked for public support from the members of the assembly. He mentioned that this started with the spring semester when in person tours started without the consultation of the tour guides despite COVID guidelines put into place. He then noted that some tour guides were being paid with payrolls and others were being paid with gift cards for their work. Some were being paid for fewer hours than they had worked. Furthermore, the tour guides' request for a raise was denied. He mentioned that over the summer, there were about 2-4 tour guides who got sick and had to take time off.

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel mentioned that he has been hearing a lot of the mentioned concerns from other tour guides and expressed his upset with the fact that workers who are in charge of bringing more students in are being taken advantage of. He expressed his hope that Hamilton College would be the first college to successfully have a union from the admissions workers and encouraged others to support them.

6. Announcements

- Elections for Class of 2025 Class President and Class Representative, as well as student-wide Cluster Treasurer, will be occurring digitally on September 1st, starting at 12:00 AM. Contact estenzel@hamilton.edu and sa@hamilton.edu with any questions. Please vote!
- The jitney has returned and will be back on its normal schedule. An email with its schedule has been sent out and can also be found online [here](#).
- Food Truck Fridays will return for the month of September from 6pm-9pm EST. There will be three different trucks at three different locations this Friday, 9/3!
- An email went out yesterday with vote tallies on dining out of 28 students. After notification from 2 students who were accidentally left uncounted, tallies are now out of 30.

