

STUDENT ASSEMBLY MEETING

10/18/21

1. Call to Order

Present:

Gabriel Bit-Babik
Emily Boviero
Isa Cardoso
Nickie Conlogue
Cicille Dan-Morton
Ashley Garcia
Michelle Estrella
Jackson Harris
Abigail Hagan
Christian Hernandez
Lena Klink

Cole Kuczek
Maxwell Lee
Ryley McGovern
Raymond Ni
Subin Myong
Natalia Reboredo
Eric Santomauro-
Stenzel
Felix Tager

Excused:

Nickie Conlogue

2. Land Acknowledgement

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel read a [land acknowledgement](#) created by the Shenandoah-Kirkland Initiative (SKI).

3. General Public Comment Period

There are no public comments.

4. New Business

- **Approval of Minutes 10/11**

Dewayne Martin objected to approving the Minutes from 10/11 as he was marked as an unexcused absence last meeting.

Raymond Ni clarified that he was told he was unexcused and therefore marked him as unexcused, but this matter can be resolved.

The motion to approve Minutes 10/11 by e-vote passes via voice vote.

- **Guest: Vice President for Administration and Finance Karen Leach**
 - Presentation



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Karen Leach mentioned that it was important to understand the college's finances and how the money flows through. She is the Vice President for Administration and Finance. These include managing the Business Office, College Events & Scheduling, Environmental Health, Safety & Sustainability, Facilities Management, Human Resources, and Procurement & Sustainability. She noted her experience being at Hamilton College for 21 years and being at Colgate University previously.

They start a budget process, which is a cyclical process where the budget creation process starts in September and eventually gets proposed to the Board of Trustees in March. The board decides on any input which can be brought up from Student Assembly, Staff Assembly, budget managers, senior staff, on-campus budget committee, trustee budget committee which recommends final budget to the trustees, and the trustees who decide on the budget. They are balancing the budget year to year with a five year forecast of what is going to happen and also looking at the college a hundred years from now.

She then presented a list of budget goals for the college which included balancing the budget, providing need-blind financial aid, paying faculty and employees. The endowment spending formula is used to figure out how much is going to be spent on the endowment per year. It is predetermined and based on intergenerational equity to not overuse the funds today and benefit the future. The student activity fee is 1% of tuition. Tuition is going up gradually each year. She mentioned that they cannot be charging twice as much as all the colleges in Hamilton College's peer group. If they charge more than many other colleges, they will need to think about personal priorities. Facilities are always funded to avoid deferred maintenance along with funding extracurricular needs. Strategic initiatives are being proposed to keep Hamilton College competitive.

She emphasized that making decisions about resources is not easy because no matter how much money one has or doesn't have, there is never enough to do everything that you want to do. Decisions are constantly made regarding the best shape of the budget, what it would look like, and the inevitable trade offs. Requests will always exceed the amount of money that the college has available to spend which will require some requests to be cut. Some things they are working on include maintaining need blind financial aid (raising money for scholarship finds), Alex (adding/reallocating positions, programming funds, and gift-funded internships, DEI (adding Chief Diversity Officer and Hamilton Academy, and Digital Hamilton.

She then presented a graph showing where the money came from each year. The three sources of revenue include Student Fees net of Financial aid (approx. \$95 million), Endowment Support



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(approx. \$45 million), Annual fund (approx. \$7 million), and others. The money is spent on three different areas: People, Programs & Admin, and Plant (utilities). More than half of the budget goes to paying employees (approx. \$82 million). Programs and Admin total to \$44 million and Plant maintenance totals to \$24.5 million. Contingency spending, which is spending reserved out in case problems arise total to about \$1.9 million.

She noted that last year, because it was an unusual year for the college, there were some positive things that occurred on the revenue side. Tuition (\$2.9 million) was over because students were not studying abroad. The financial aid budget (\$1.3 million) was less and support in money was given from the government (\$3.1 million) to help pay higher education expenses. However, on the negative side, there was no revenue from programs abroad (\$4.5 million not received), money from Room & Board (\$2.3 million) was lost because students were studying remotely, and summer programs and miscellaneous revenue was not received. In total, 1.3 million dollars were spent below the budget.

On the expense side, employee wages & benefits (\$2.4 million) was under budget. Raises were not given to any of the employees last year. \$1,000 was given to each employee in thank you pay. Positions were frozen in an effort to save money. Department (\$10.5 million) and Athletics expenses (\$1.1 million) were lessened due to the lack of events and speakers on campus. Budget expenses went 1.4 million dollars over the budget. Due to the nature of the year, money had to be spent on COVID expenses (\$9.8 million) which included testing, PPE, and hotels for quarantine. \$3 million was spent on the Glenview temporary housing and \$1.8 million was provided more for food service due to the spreading out of food sites. The budget broke even last year and all the contingency budget was used.

In terms of Student Fee, it was set at 1% of tuition about 15 years ago. Total budget for student activities comes from the sum of all the student fees of the students on campus and divided between the student organizations and activities. Budget challenges for this year include inflation in the economy which means the college will have to pay more for items and wages and unfunded and important strategic initiatives. Furthermore, many employees also had no raises July'20 despite taking on more work and will need pay adjustments.

The endowment can only help with the current budget issues if the endowment goes up, however it consists of many small funds with restrictions. When the endowment goes up, the college doesn't just spend it because they have a smoothing formula. The college uses the mixed rule which means spending 70% of the prior year's spending adjusted for inflation, plus 5% of the average four quarters endowment value weighted at 30%. If endowment grows, it grows more



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gradually and if endowment goes down, it will go down with it. Endowment has never gone down. In recent years it's been pretty flat, which is good because then the college does not have to cut back on any programs.

If students have any input on the budget process, conduit can be made through Student Assembly and the Student Activities Office. Furthermore, students can email the on-campus budget committee which includes Professor Debra Boutin and Student Rep Felix Tager. If anyone has opinions about college funding, now would be a good time to voice their opinion.

■ Questions

Abigail Hagan asked if they use 5% more per year when the endowment goes up.

Karen Leach clarified that it's spending 5% of the endowment value each year. This would mean, in the case of the endowment being \$1 billion, \$50 million being spent this fiscal year.

Abigail Hagan asked what happened to the rest of the money.

Karen Leach answered that the rest of the money is getting invested, so it can grow over time akin to how building in retirement works. It is important to keep the buying power of endowment.

Jackson Harris asked if it was possible for Raymond Ni to get a copy of the presentation for the minutes. He further asked how much of the budget of fiscal year 2021 has been spent thus far.

Karen Leach does not know exactly, and mentioned that they were planning on running the testing center but they do not have government funding. This will accrue costs of about \$1.5-\$2 million for the rest of the (budget) year. The budget year is July 1st of the previous year to June 30th of the next year.

Isa Cardoso asked whether she had any suggestions for the Student Assembly to implement the democratization of the student activities fee.

Karen Leach replied she hasn't seen a formal proposal concerning Student Assembly's ambitions. If the Student Assembly wants more funds for activities, they should consult the Campus Budget Committee.



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Karen Leach clarified that the contingency budget is not a slush budget. If the Campus Budget Committee does spend a certain amount of money, it is used and invested in facilities maintenance. This is generally where the funds go if it is not spent on emergency items.

Isa Cardoso mentioned that there was a slide of [Karen Leach's presentation] where the money went and also provided ways for suggestions, but in terms of where the money went, she asked if, for instance, a student didn't know whether something was under or overfunded, how they can advocate for change in the system.

Karen Leach mentioned that it is hard to see whether something is over or underfunded. It is best to make the case through the Dean of Students with a presentation of the benefits of providing more funds and what areas to replace. Not everyone may agree with the areas that are over or underfunded, but if there are concerns regarding this, they can make compromises.

Felix Tager asked about Student Activities, which oversees both clubs and club sports, and how club sports take a large portion of the fund that they would like to allocate to clubs. He would like to know how the Assembly could take action to have this change happen.

Karen Leach replied that they could charge a lower student activity fee but in terms of straight up giving the club money, that would be an incremental expense chart that goes through tuition. Any incremental expense means more tuition whether it is more funding for programs or giving employees raises.

Jackson Harris mentioned that part of the question was that club sports were within the student activities fee from the 1 percent of student activities fees. It is a drop in the budget in the annual budget of the college but is a significant amount in terms of college. If fees were moved to athletics, money could be given to athletics to cover that but that money is then freed up for clubs and other activities by the Student Activities office.

Karen Leach replied that the issue is that each department controls each of its budgets. There is no central slush fund; each area has a slice of the budget. The only way the college can allocate more money to athletics would be to increase tuition unless they want to cut expenses from another department (DMC, maintenance, etc. for instance). The college has already to manage expenses and allocate to each organization accordingly.



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Jackson Harris asked if there is remaining money in the contingency fund, what is the decision making process between a proposal to, for instance, pave lots and the person in charge receiving funding for such a plan.

Karen Leach replied that they do a seven year capital plan. A certain amount is allocated to the student budget and some money is given for large projects. Parking lots are very expensive. After hearing the request, they would have conversations. Anything over \$100,000 needs to be approved by the board of trustees.

Jackson Harris asked what would happen if it was under \$100,000.

Karen Leach replied that the Campus Budget Committee can move around money in the budget. Conversations would still take place.

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel mentioned that investments are continuing on fossil fuels and he asked whether fossil fuels are a beneficial investment in the long term for the college.

Karen Leach replied that a small portion is going to run out so they are not planning more. She stands with the statement online, clarified to be the 2014 page. But she does not make these decisions.

- **Addressing Recent Resignations and Structural Issues of Student Assembly**
 - Short Term Proposals

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel listed the three main goals for the remainder of the semester. He mentioned that in terms of core functions of the assembly. His goals are to continue the core functions of the assembly with minimal interference to ensure that issues that affect a large number of students continue to have priority. He also mentioned that the assembly needs to work towards fixing structural issues within it and define what the role of student government at Hamilton College is. This will maximize the influence the student body has over college decisions. Regarding committees, most committees will remain as they are as they are mostly unaffected by the resignations. However, he mentioned that Academics, Enrollment, and Development and Sustainability and Facilities can be combined into a Student Governance Committee because of the small number of members respectively. The role of the new committee is to consider the long term changes of the structure of SA. He also mentioned adding more members to the assembly; everyone on the assembly who is interested in the committee is welcome.



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Emily Boviero asked what would happen in terms of chairs of the current committees such as the Sustainability and Facilities committee and the Academics, Enrollment, and Development committee.

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel mentioned that Sustainability and Facilities only has Cole Kuczek as a vice chair and Academics, Enrollment, and Development has its chair position filled. Thus, chairs could remain the same if the members of the new committee agree. He also mentioned the creation of a subcommittee of this body which includes members of the Honor Court and Judicial Board which will develop amendments to the judicial process. Codifying committees and departments is also something that his proposal would tackle. He mentioned that there is a lack of continuity due to the lack of written words which can allow the President to create or dissolve communities at will. He mentioned that there is a longstanding problem where students are not fulfilling spots. He reiterated a spectator article concerned with the lack of people willing to run for Student Assembly.

■ Long Term Proposals

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel acknowledged that the composition of the assembly requires a lot of work citing a lack of people willing to run for Student Assembly. This issue is not new but has been long standing. He sees it as part of his responsibility to address it and mentioned reasons for why this issue exists. One issue is the modeling of elections based on class year which is not the most representative. He mentioned that all elections can represent different constituencies (for instance, light side, dark side, gray side) and that there should be an increased relationship with advisors and faculty. He also mentioned that a lot of people think they are unable to allocate sufficient time to the Student Assembly and that the assembly needs to work on finding solutions to this problem. He states wanting to make meetings and information more accessible to the student body (i.e. find a larger meeting space, set clearer expectations of what works on the assembly looks like and define it in the bylaws, and make the website a more useful resource). Regarding elections and confirmations, he mentioned that the Vice President should not be responsible for running elections. He mentioned opening a new position which concerns overseeing the voting processes. This also ensures that the personal opinions of the Vice President are not influencing the process.

Gabriel Bit-Babik mentioned that the Student Assembly currently does not have a student body vice president so they need to appoint a temporary vice president according to the constitution in order to conduct elections.



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Eric Santomauro-Stenzel mentioned that a vacancy in the position of Vice President has been a problem within the past couple years and noted that there should be a change where the Vice President can be approved with a 2/3rds approval. He mentioned that there is a lot of confusion regarding election rules. He would like elections to be ranked choice voting instead of a winner take all system that leads to less representative results. There needs to be stronger confirmation processes. Regarding external functions he mentioned having noticed that engagement has primarily been with college administration and not with the student body. Working with college administration has led to limited results for SA. As a result, the assembly should work towards reorienting its goal and working directly with students. This leads to better representation of the student body and also encourages students to work with the assembly towards achieving the goals of it. To increase engagement with the student body, committees should meet with relevant student organizations on a regular basis to establish a more direct relationship with students. He also suggested giving students the resources to advocate for what they want themselves. Lastly, he mentioned the need to build a stronger relationship with faculty as faculty shares a lot of the same concerns as students. A lot of faculty is experiencing differently what the student body is experiencing; with a stronger relationship between the student body and faculty and increased dialogue, the Assembly can build a stronger advocacy base.

■ Discussion and Motion

Jackson Harris mentioned that he talked about switching the committees and also codifying committees. He asked if the new committee as part of Eric Santomauro-Stenzel's proposal is one of the new committees existing for continuity.

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel replied that it wasn't unless the assembly wanted it to. His goal is to codify the already existing committees.

Isa Cardoso asked if Parliamentarian Gabriel Bit-Babik would be able to run elections since he is most familiar with the constitution and therefore election rules.

Gabriel Bit-Babik mentioned that he can be an advisor but cannot share voting power. In terms of running elections, he can discuss it with Eric Santomauro-Stenzel but is hesitant because he is new to the position of Parliamentarian. The election chair involves a lot of tasks which would complicate his current role. He mentioned that he could take the role if no one else wanted but preferred someone else take on the role.



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Dewayne Martin mentioned that in terms of restructuring, they should have one SA meeting dedicated to talking about infrastructure. There are a lot of goals being presented in the current meeting but it is impossible to achieve them without a direct meeting discussing solutions.

Jackson Harris asked what specifically the proposal is for. It seems like a vision to him concerning guiding principles the assembly should keep in mind. He is unsure how he feels about a student governance committee. While it makes sense to consolidate committees, individual committees could also drop their current responsibilities and focus solely on Student governance.

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel mentioned that the student governance committee includes AED because they were already working on some of these things. The main thing he was thinking about is the number of people the assembly currently has and his belief that there will still be vacancies as it is mid-October. There is still work that needs to be done in terms of these issues.

Neveah Guiterrez expressed her concern about what SA will do about the fact that no one in the class of 2023 ran for election for the current college year as this issue will carry over to next year.

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel replied that they should consider changing how we elect representatives based on different constituencies. For example, there can be representatives based on clusters like light/dark/grey side, or student orgs, so there will be multiple class years rather than one class year represented. As a hypothetical, there could be one class president, two class reps, and a few light/dark/grey side reps, that would total out to the same number.

Cole Kuczek asked if the proposal meant there would be an uneven number of people from different class years.

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel replied that there will still be class delegation representation but some of the seats would be replaced with other cluster representatives such as geographic distribution.

Dewayne Martin asked if it was more like an at-large position. He also asked if it was possible for [inaudible].



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Eric Santomauro-Stenzel replied to the first question in the affirmative.

Noelle Juliano replied that his second question would be possible.

Felix Tager mentioned that the discretionary budget is very low so they will have to decide on what the funding is being used on.

Emily Boviero asked if geographic representatives would be integrated as voting members or if they were just there to talk about grievances.

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel replied that in his idealized version, he would want them to be voting members.

Isa Cardoso mentioned that people from different residence halls on campus would nicely fit into committees as the place of living impacts what you're interested in, such as living halls. In terms of the Student Governance Committee, she mentioned that Sustainability and Facilities may not have goals similar to the goals of incoming students, so the absorption may not be very effective.

Jackson Harris asked whether SA had authority to hold elections for both the 2023 and 2022 vacancies and also the new administration in the upcoming election for SA president and Vice President.

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel replied that Class Presidents have the possibility to either hold an election or appoint Class Representatives so it would be up to Jackson and Cole to decide.

Gabriel Bit-Babik mentioned that he will clarify whether it will be one big election or separate elections.

Gabriel Bit-Babik mentioned his approval for staying committees. It is important regarding the Student Governance committee that the necessity is precedence. He wants the committee to be substantial and robust. He mentioned that the whiteboard meetings were a possibility but was hesitant to focus on them as meetings should be about current issues in the college. For short term changes, one committee that should be considered is an outreach committee which focuses on receiving input from the students such as public comments. By creating an outreach committee, they can maintain a better relationship with those who may not know what is going



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on on campus. In terms of composition of the Assembly, he sees creating dialogue and relationships with faculty as important. He expressed his desire for having faculty members as advisors who have input on meeting discussions as non voting members. Considering the deputies, he wants to codify the role of deputies and give them more input in SA matters. Having additional deputies will be a good idea further for the committees to alleviate workload. In terms of elections, he believes there should be a separate person for the election chair.

Emily Boviero mentioned her agreement with Dewayne Martin in terms of a single whiteboard meeting. One meeting should be dedicated to a whiteboard and talking about what needs to be fixed with input from the assembly members. Funding and other things can be done via e vote. She motioned to allocate next Monday to be a whiteboard meeting to discuss structural issues.

Dewayne Martin mentioned that 80-90 percent of SA meetings have already been spent talking about these issues.

Jackson Harris mentioned that during the whiteboard meeting, they can discuss structural ways to talk as an assembly for solutions to the problems.

Gabriel Bit-Babik asked if Emily Boviero's motion concerns next Monday's meeting.

Isa Cardoso asked if this would affect Student Activities stuff.

Felix Tager clarified that it would not.

Ashley Garcia asked if this motion would also commit themselves to the 1.5 hour session next Monday.

Eric Santomauro-Stenzel clarified that the only agenda item would be discussing structural issues.

Ashley Garcia expressed that there still would not be enough time since there are only an hour and 30 minutes. She mentioned that it might be better to hold the general meeting on Monday and find another longer time, or multiple times, to dedicate to this issue.

Gabriel Bit-Babik mentioned that the meeting could always be extended beyond 10pm, or there could be a motion to hold another meeting.



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Dewayne Martin mentioned that this would not be the only meeting for restructuring as he sees it as one of many in the future.

Felix Tager asked what the benefit of this would be outside [inaudible].

The motion to allocate the next Monday's SA meeting (10/25) to discuss structural issues within the assembly and putting funding and other approvals to an e-vote passes unanimously.

There are no funding requests this week.

5. Old Business

- **Resolution 21-4: Cannabis Legalization Response - Introduced: President Eric Santomauro-Stenzel '24, Class President Jackson Harris '22**
 - Updates from meeting with Community Standards
 - Amendments
 - Discussion
 - Voting

The motion to discuss Resolution 21-4 asynchronously and vote via e-vote passes unanimously.

6. Announcements

- Stella O'Brien '24 has been appointed by President Eric Santomauro-Stenzel '24 to the COVID-19 Task Force as one of three student representatives.
- Rep. Jungwon Kim '23 is resigning from office at the conclusion of the 10/18 meeting.
- Students interested in serving on the Assembly to represent the Class of 2023 should contact Class President Cole Kuczek (ckuczek@hamilton.edu), and Class of 2022 should contact Class President Jackson Harris (jsharris@hamilton.edu).

