

STUDENT ASSEMBLY MEETING

10/31/2022

1. Call to Order

Muhammad Ahmad Rao
Bethany Fell
Gael Javier
Emily Jiang
Lena Klink
Alexandra Kropaneva
Ryley McGovern
Ting Mei

Quentin Messer
Kiara Nelson
Raymond Ni
Jacob Piazza
Mason Schroeder
Nicole Soret
Felix Tager
Katrinah Tejada

Prim Udomphan

Excused:

Adan Corea
Max Ganem
Ailis Hayden

Unexcused:

2. General Public Comment Period (TIME: 01:24)

Yi Shi '23 (she/her) commented:

“Though the pandemic is over in Hamilton, it is still not over in many other places of the world, and travel control policies are still in effect in many places. International students will face overwhelming difficulties if there is no winter housing provided by the school. For example, I personally have no relatives in the U.S., and the flight back to my country is extremely limited with unreasonable prices. Even if I were successfully back at home, there is still the risk that I will not be back on campus on time if another potential covid lockdown occurred at home. Therefore, I strongly hope that the school can take these concerns into consideration and I appreciate that.”

Alvin Xu '24 (he/him) commented:

“Regarding a recent notice from Reslife about the winter break dorm closure, I notice this is in contrast with another notification I and other international students received from Dr. Bonike at the international students' office. Dean Bonike is telling us that break housing would be offered, despite being on an "extremely limited" basis, while Reslife does not even imply any availability at ll.

I understand that the school might have some difficulties like a shortage of staff. But no residence allowed during the break or "extremely limited" allowance is still a very disappointing outcome for international students and many others who have difficulty returning to their homes. The pandemic is still not over and travel control policies are still in effect in many places. Just as far as I know for Chinese students to go home, we need to go through at least 10 days of quarantine, purchase a plane ticket at an unreasonable price due to limited available airlines between China and the US, and take the risk of not being able to get back on campus on time if another potential covid lockdown occurs at home. Finding somewhere to stay here is not easy, either. We have only been here for a year or two and are very unfamiliar with the region.



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I truly appreciate the fact that Hamilton has done a lot to support international students by letting us stay on campus during breaks in the past. But our difficulties are still around. I hope the school can reconsider this decision and make as many rooms available as possible for students who need them during the winter break. I am sure that the international student community and potential international applicants in the future will appreciate a continued effort to support our study here at Hamilton.”

Toby Weissman ‘25 (he/him) wrote:

“Can SA ask Res Life to renegotiate vending machine prices. They seem to be taking advantage of their monopoly and going above and beyond inflationary pressures with the increased prices. Thank You!”

Yunuo Yao ‘26 (she/her) wrote:

“I hope I can stay in campus for winter break”

Yuxuan Xu ‘26 (he/him) commented:

“The washing machines are small and expensive to use. I hope that residential life can be more considerate of student needs and improve the quality of laundry services in dorms.”

Ting Mei noted that she will follow up with him and inquire about the specifics about the situation.

Shanbairong Nie ‘26 (she/her) wrote:

“As an international student, it is really hard for us to come back to our country in one month. The time is so limited and the covid in my country is so harsh that will not give me any chances to go back. If I come back to my country, I need to stay at hotel for two weeks and one week at home. After that there is only one week left for me to truly spend time with my family or friends. The time and money cost is so large. However, I received an e-mail said school will not allow us to stay at campus or the room is so limited that it cannot be a guarantee. Then, where I should go in this winter break?”

Ting Mei noted that she has received comments about this issue and that it has been brought up in the ResLife and Safety Committee meeting today with Dean Card. She shared that for students who cannot return home, housing will be provided. Housing is limited and there will be a strict application process. Students who just want to stay for a few more days on campus will not be allowed to do so.

Emily Jiang added that they spoke with Travis Hill, who works with the Dean of International Students, this morning and he explained that a form and email has been sent out to international students, separate from the email from ResLife to the entire campus. International students’ situations will be assessed on an individual basis. There will also be an additional form sent to the entire community which will ask about students’ specific situations and need to remain on campus. The College wants as few students on campus as possible since a lot of the services and



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resources will be shut down over break. For example, if someone has a health emergency, not many workers who are trained to aid in this situation will be available. If someone has more concerns or questions, they can send those to Student Assembly at sa@hamilton.edu, or directly contact Residential Life at reslife@hamilton.edu or the Director of International Student Services at oodegbam@hamilton.edu.

3. Old Business (TIME: 09:22)

- **Minutes from 10/24**

The minutes from 10/24 pass as written by unanimous consent.

4. New Business (TIME: 09:36)

- **Appointment: 2025 Class Representative Ashby Howard**

Ryley McGovern read out the following statement from Ashby Howard noting that Ashby will be in attendance next week.

"I'm Ashby Howard, a sophomore on the squash team from Louisville, Ky, looking to major in public policy or religious studies. My ideas: Working to bring the campus closer together by hosting more all-campus events and bringing back the late-night jitney. I also would like to work on making Hamilton College a more sustainable and equitable place for students. I have experience working for the Office for Performance Improvement for the Louisville Metro Government. I worked on a citywide sustainability task force where I wrote and analyzed surveys. I also have experience writing ordinances and worked with the Louisville Cabinet of Equity on revising a racial equity toolkit and creating strategic plans for the department."

Ryley McGovern noted that in case anyone had more questions for Ashby, they should email him directly.

The motion to confirm Ashby Howard as Class of 2025 representative passes unanimously via voice vote.

- **Guest: Sustainability Director Brian Hansen (TIME: 11:26)**

Brian Hansen gave a presentation on Hamilton's Sustainability Program. The presentation is attached to the same email as the minutes.

Jacob Piazza noted that a quick fix to the overflowing garbage cans would be providing bigger garbage cans.

Brian Hansen responded that while this is a good point, the New York Fire Code forbids trash cans bigger than 35 gallons. He added that some of the challenges he has been facing is that he wants to talk to people who are not geared towards sustainability, and not just students who



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are dedicated to sustainability to gain a wider range of opinions. He cited the example of students geared towards sustainability advocating for trash cans in suit-style dorms to be moved outside but other students have not been receptive to that. He also noted that some spaces on campus are already self-service and students have to take their trash out themselves. However, the system is not working well, because students do not recycle and the College has to pay penalty fees for trash and recycling being mixed together.

Felix Tager noted that the reason for there being so much paper towel waste is that the paper towels we have are of low quality; better paper towels would be a worthwhile investment. He added that part of the argument for paper towels is that they serve many purposes in a residential space. Higher quality paper towels would produce less waste as students would need to use less of them to get a certain job done. He also added that food waste is incredibly high because people are unhappy with the food. The first step towards addressing a lot of the waste is addressing the underlying systemic issues.

Brian Hansen replied that Hamilton just changed their paper towels to a much softer brand.

Felix Tager replied that the paper towels have been the same since he was a freshman.

Mason Schroeder mentioned that he has one small can for recycling and trash which makes it difficult to separate trash and recycling.

Brian Hansen answered that at his son's college, there are trash chutes rather than garbage cans. The buildings are designed for self-service and are an example of how a less affluent school gets by and how labor and responsibility for waste can be shifted from custodians to students.

Felix Tager asked if the cost for room and board would be lowered if Hamilton were to move to a self-service system and therefore have reduced custodial service costs.

Brian Hansen commented that it would be a hope to cut the cost, however, at the moment the concern is to plan for future pandemics. Pandemics are not over and Hamilton wants custodians to be more focused on non-contact policies. At the same time, the waste needs to be dealt with. He noted that the Cram & Scram program used to take care of some waste that students leave behind in dorms but the issue of things left behind in dorms should be avoided entirely; there should be less coming in and out. He also noted that sustainability should be a bigger factor during the course of the year, not just in August and May during move-in and move-out.

Bethany Fell added that students only get one "trash can" which is the recycling bin, because they don't want to buy a trash can; this results in students not sorting. They wanted to know if there would be an option of offering trash cans as well as recycling bins.



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Brian Hansen replied that they could make that happen but it would have to work. They have tried so many things but nothing has worked. For example, last year the College spent \$90,000 on composting bins that were put into residence halls; the program had to be stopped after a month.

Bethany Fell followed up that she would not walk outside to recycle a singular thing. People use recycling bins as trash cans which makes recycling difficult.

Brian Hansen answered there is a rationale behind providing a recycling bin; the College wants to encourage students to recycle. Students can bring their own trash container or walk to the trash. Recycling can be kept in rooms for a while until the bin fills up but people generally would walk to the central trash area to dispose of their half eaten sandwich or moldy orange as no one wants to keep that in their room. There could be a different model but that model had to actually work.

Quentin Messer acknowledged that Hamilton students, himself included, have a hard time recognizing privilege, and asked how as freshmen, they could help to craft a new message or perspective on the waste issue at Hamilton.

Brian Hansen began his answer stating that he will not answer the question specifically. However, he noted that he and his office spoke to Tessa Chefalo about meeting and meeting with orientation leaders to put this information out to freshmen as they walk into the door. This did not happen this year, but they plan on implementing this as people get back from break, and are working with Residential Advisors (RA) to address the issue. He also spoke about dorm outreach and how to improve messaging regarding recycling and waste. From experience, messaging has to be simple, to the point, and color coded.

Ting Mei asked how students could be made aware of how to sort trash and if there could be an email to make the student body aware about how much money is spent on waste management. She also wondered where trash and recycling goes after it is tossed here, because sometimes trash and recycling are combined in the end regardless.

Brian Hansen replied that expensive infrastructure is effective in sorting recycling. For example, mixed recycles go into a \$14 million recycling assembly line. First lasers recognize different types of trash and then blow it into certain categories, metals are separated using magnets, and non-magnetic waste is sorted last. This combats some of the mixing that happens. In regards to food waste, it used to go to local farmers so it could not be bagged. The current system includes a debuggging process. He closed his answer stating that there is a rhyme and reason behind a lot of what is being done.

Ting Mei followed up by asking if sorting trash would decrease the workload of the machine.



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Brian Hansen replied that it does to some extent. He noted, however, that throwing trash into recycling bins is not acceptable. During his tenure at Hamilton, custodians have been stabbed by a syringe four times from handling student trash. He noted having evidence of trash being thrown into recycling bins. For the custodian's safety, they do not sort student's trash.

Felix Tager stated that needles are not recycled and they have to be discarded at hazardous waste drop-off points. Reminding students of the existence and locations of hazardous waste drop-off points would be helpful. Additionally, making trash areas more accessible would be helpful. Even if the College would be self-service and student's take trash out to the dumpster, having a collecting bin that is more centralized and accessible would help.

Brian Hansen hoped that this is the first of some conversations and that action will be taken.

Emily Jiang mentioned that if anyone wants to join the Sustainability Committee, they should let them know.

- **Contingency Funding Requests: Treasurer Prim Udomphan '26 (TIME: 45:34)**

Organization	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended
Finance Club	\$3,500	\$0
Mock Trial	\$5,150	\$0

Prim Udomphan read aloud the contingency budget requests. Finance Club is requesting money for an off-campus finance trip to New York City. The reason she recommends \$0 is because she contacted Kaity Stewart and it turned out that the event was supposed to be hosted last April but was canceled because of COVID. The original trip money was turned into credit, which can be used this year so Finance Club does not need more funds. Additionally, the club did not apply for the annual budget. However, if they can provide more reasons or adjust their request, they can reapply with a more reasonable request. The second funding request is from Mock Trial. Mock Trial is asking for \$5,150 for tournaments they will be attending in the spring. Right now, Mock Trial has \$1,600 left which is enough to cover the \$900 registration fees for the next semester. The earliest registration fee they would have to pay would be in January. Furthermore, Prim sent out an email stating that the annual budget will be opened again after new clubs have been approved. There is a surplus of money due to the new funding system, so every club will be able to apply again. For those reasons, Prim recommended \$0 at this time, but encourages Mock Trial to apply again after new clubs have been approved.



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Jacob Piazza wanted to clarify if Mock Trial did not get any money approved since it is not needed as of right now, and whether it would be better for them to apply later along with other clubs.

Prim Udomphan replied that Mock Trial agreed to apply later with new clubs.

Jacob Piazza asked if Finance Club could reapply with better reasoning.

Prim Udomphan replied that she had reached out to them, but Finance Club has not responded. The club also still has credit left and therefore should not need additional money.

The motion to fund Finance Club and Mock Trial as recommended passes unanimously via voice vote.

Emily Jiang noted that SA will reopen annual budget requests due to the change in budget causing a surplus.

- **Traditions: President Emily Jiang '25, Treasurer Prim Udomphan '26, Class President/former Treasurer Felix Tager '23 (TIME: 50:03)**

Prim Udomphan stated that according to the Constitution, there is an application process for events that want to pull from the traditions fund. The fund is part of the parent budget under the Student Activities Fee. In order for events to be considered a tradition, it usually has to occur annually in three consecutive years to be established or it has to be grandfathered into the fund.

Emily Jiang noted that because this is the first year, there are technically no traditions due to the fact that last year was not salvaged. However, they wrote into the proposal that certain traditions will be grandfathered into the fund, since they have already fulfilled the requirements prior to the establishment. They then proceeded to read the following parts of the constitution found under Article XII "Student Activities Fee" Section 3 "Establishment of a Traditions Fund."

"i. A Tradition refers to any class council/committee activity *{so it refers only to SA}* that is proven to service or provides specific demonstrable value to no less than 50% of a class year, is hosted with the intent of repeated occurrences over set time periods, and has occurred at least three (3) times.

1. Under extenuating circumstances by which an organization was unable to hold the tradition the Assembly shall take a vote including all voting members of the Student Assembly to override the requirement for traditions to be held in consecutive years or semesters (e.g. COVID pandemic).

d. Existing traditions shall be grandfathered into this policy if compliant with the above Section 3, Point B.b-c.



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i. In order to remain under traditions status, the event classified under tradition status must occur at least once annually for three consecutive years or semesters. If an event, after having gained traditions status, does not host the event listed under tradition status for a period of no shorter than two academic years from the date the event was last held, the organization will lose tradition status for that event and will have to petition the Student Assembly to regain tradition status.”

They then clarified the traditions that are already grandfathered under the code and can therefore pull from the traditions fund under the discretionary fund. Those traditions are the following:

1. Freshman formal, which happened last year in Spring.
2. Lighting of the Village, which will happen later this month. Any SA involvement in Lighting of the Village can pull from the traditions fund.
3. Declaration Day for sophomores, which will happen in the Spring.
4. Class Banners
5. Some Senior Week traditions even though Senior Week has its own budget.

They ended by stating that if anyone wanted to establish a SA or class tradition, the event would pull from the discretionary budget or student voted programming fund which was split last meeting. This would be a great time to get things started, as currently there are funds available. If in three years the tradition continues, then it can pull from the traditions fund instead.

5. Announcements (TIME: 54:30)

- Special elections will be held on November 16th to fill open spots: 3 Class Reps for 2023, 2 Class Reps for Class of 2024, and 1 Class Rep for Class of 2026, as well as for President and VP Elections (joint ticket) for the 2023-2024 calendar year. Since the petition deadline is almost past, please send an email to sa@hamilton.edu with any interest.
- We also have a spot open for a deputy Secretary - please email sa@hamilton.edu with interest.
- Applications are open to join SA committees! Please apply, we would love to add your voice!
- SA Movie Nights are happening every Saturday at 3pm in the KJ Bradford Auditorium (KJ 125). Send movie and snack suggestions to [@hcstudentassembly](https://www.instagram.com/hcstudentassembly) on Instagram!
- Please fill out the AED financial aid survey!

6. Adjournment



The Central Council of Student Assembly, Hamilton College

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