

**STUDENT ASSEMBLY MEETING**

**APRIL 1, 2018**

**1. Call to Order**

- Nadav Konforty
- Julian Perricone
- Gillian Mak
- Jake Engelman
- Jordan D'Addio
- Penelope Hoopes
- Noam Barnhard
- Jonathan Stanhope
- Marquis Palmer
- Zach Oscar
- Ysabel Coss
- Ben Rhind
- Giacomo Cabrera
- Ben Katz
- Nani Suzuki
- Connie Lorente
- Keith Ruggles
- Elizabeth Groubert
- Diana Perez
- Amanda Kim
- Jiin Jeong
- Gavin Meade

Excused

- Lilly Pieper
- Karthik Ravishankar
- Casey Codd
- Sam Gordon
- Ian Chen
- Rachel Sutor
- Alex Stetter
- Gianni Hill
- Maria Valencia
- Eseosa Asiruwa

**2. Public Comment Period**

**3. New Business**

- **Co-op events follow-up--***A note from Travis Hill:* The Co-op has begun hosting events this semester and all seems to be going well with those so far. There was an issue in regards to socializing outside of what we have defined as an "event," that required some conversations and



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adjustments. We have gotten back onto the same page with the understanding that future issues may result in consequences that could include cancellation of the pilot program. Both the residents of the Co-op and Res. Life are optimistic that this was just a bump in the road and there will not be further issues.

- **An Open Letter to the Hamilton College Community- Response from Dean Martinez and David Wippman**
  - *Note: The letter in its entirety has been attached to the minutes email for your reference.*
- **Nadav Konforty:** The next order of business will take up the rest of the meeting. I was made aware of a letter from a friend of Graham's. After talking about it with Jake, Gillian, Julian, Zach, and Noelle, I decided that it would be in the best interest of the student body to know about that letter. That is a decision that I take full responsibility for. My job is to do what is best for the student body, and I believe that this was the best decision that I could have made knowing the letter existed. That is my rationale for that. The letter is included in your packets, as is President Wippman's email to the student body as well. I think we are going to take talking order, but a few people will start as well.
- **Gavin Meade:** First off, it is really great that there are a lot of people here that don't usually come. It's good to see the community coming together. My big concern is that this meeting can very easily turn into a blame game, or casting aspersions, or doing things that are not actually constructive towards any kind of actual change. It is easy from the outside perspective to say what the administration should or should not do. We have to remind ourselves that we are a student body, we only have as much information as we are given, and that's a point of conversation. I just want to make sure we are all on the same page as far as we are students coming together. We are not here to blame an individual and we are all here for the same purpose.
- **Nadav Konforty:** With that we are going to hand it off to Ian. He had an email that also circulated with some questions, so we are going to pass them out.
- **Ian Lunn:** I have been working to conform to sanity for some time now and yet am still often treated like I am crazy, so please forgive me if I sound crazy tonight. Firstly, earlier today I was told this issue is more complex than I realize and should therefore only speak on it as myself. So I will say now that I am not here as a representative for the Mental Wellness Collective. I am here as a fifth year senior who has invested a disproportionate amount of emotional and material capital into my education to make up for the institution's inadequate accommodations. But I consider myself lucky, in a certain sense, because I am in a unique position. I have experienced Hamilton as a student with mental illness and found a voice to critique it before I failed out, graduated, or was consumed by my illness. I also consider myself lucky to be alive, suicide is nothing to be glorified. That said, I don't personally believe staying silent for fear of copycat suicides is going to result in the most net good. Now, I mostly just have questions. I want to ask if anyone could elucidate the complexities that I have yet to realize. Because in my position as intern to the Dean of Students office, working to make progress on the front of mental health awareness, I feel if I am lacking understanding, most all of my fellow classmates are. So before we begin a discussion about this issue, I ask that the complexities which might discourage someone from sharing the Open Letter to those that it was addressed to are made public knowledge.
  - **David Wippman:** Are you asking why we didn't share the open letter?
    - **Ian Lunn:** I'm asking what the complexities are that students don't understand. I can read the rest of the questions now. (1) Why did it take 5 days for the administration to



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address the open letter? (2) Why do we currently have more students on Leaves of absence than ever before? (3) Where did the money to hire a full time psychiatrist come from during a hiring freeze and why are further reforms unable to overcome the same bureaucracy? (4) Why are faculty surprised when they hear that statistically, in the last 12 months 130 Hamilton students have seriously considered suicide? (5) Why focus reform on increasing help-seeking behavior if the administration isn't willing to offer that help? (6) How is an hour long suicide prevention training for a portion of our faculty considered enough? (7) What specific reforms does JED's audit recommend Hamilton make? Why are these not public? (8) Why weren't Graham's parents contacted? I don't think we can answer all of these, honestly. I'm just saying things I've been wondering. I don't have much to say other than that. These are just things that I'm wondering.

- **Jon Stanhope:** Thank you to Dean Martinez and President Wippman for coming to the meeting. I just wanted to ask the first question here: how come the open letter March 27th when you received it?
  - **David Wippman:** I can address that. The open letter was not sent to me directly, it was sent by counsel for the Burtons to the college's counsel. And I felt that it was up to the Burtons to share the letter if they chose to.
- **Gavin Meade:** I want to speak to #8 on the list of questions: "*Why weren't Graham's parents contacted?*" Obviously I don't pretend to have all the knowledge but there comes a point when the administration can only be so accountable. They can't read minds. When we have fragmentation and when we have people who are not properly communicating, which is indicated by this letter, we can talk more about that when we get there. At the end of the day though, when it comes to compliance, we have to remember that we are 18 years old, we are adults. Our health is our own privacy. It's the same reason why the Dean of Students office cannot contact the counseling center unless they have explicit permission from the student. Issues like that may seem like they get in the way of progress but they are legal requirements that are in place for a reason.
  - **Jake Engelman:** This comes off that nicely, in terms of the mind reading comment. I want to read a part of the letter that I found most shocking, which is the last bullet what the Burton's found in email messages that were sent to them after Graham killed himself. It reads: "*on November 2, Graham's advisor wrote the Associate Dean, saying that he was still unable to reach Graham, and that 'Obviously what's happening here is a complete crash and burn. I don't know what the procedures/rules are for contacting parents but if this was my kid, I'd want to know.'*" So I don't know the legal technicalities, and I'm sure there are lots of things I don't understand. But what has to happen and who has to be alerted, what point does it have to get to for parents to be notified?
  - **Terry Martinez:** The standard that I use, and I can't speak to Graham's situation certainly, but the standards that I use and are being employed now by our staff are that when I believe that a student is at risk to themselves or others then we work with the student to contact their family. Legally the Counseling Center cannot share any information that they find out in the Counseling Center, but if I or Dean Chase believe that a student is better off taking some time off, we do make some contact with their family, so that is what we currently do.
  - **Jake Engelman:** So if Dean Chase receives an email from an advisor saying that a student is "crashing and burning," is that not cause for concern?



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- **Terry Martinez:** It is, Dean Chase was not here last year.
- **Jake Engelman:** Okay, and you said that the standards you are using currently, so does that mean that there is no formal policy on this?
- **Terry Martinez:** A policy? No, it's a practice.
- **David Wippman:** There is a federal statute, FERPA, which addresses certain instances in which the college can notify parents about a student's academic record.
  - **Ian Lunn:** I'm interested, can you waive your rights to FERPA? Is that where we get instances, like when the one student was sent home against their will since 2003 happening last semester contacted a parent, is that what happened there??
  - **David Wippman:** You can waive your FERPA rights, but I want to be clear about one thing, as much as I might like to discuss the specific circumstances of any given student, I can't for privacy and other reasons. It's not appropriate for me to talk about any specific student's mental health situation or what the college recommends with respect to any given students. We can talk about what the college's mental health policy and practices are. And we can talk about what has happened over the last year and a half and the steps that the college has taken.
- **Nadav Konforty:** I am going to interject quickly, that when we are talking, cause we are talking about a community, earlier in the semester we had an issue where we were talking about someone who was not in the room. If someone is not in the room, please try to keep their name out of discussion. I don't want someone being talked about when they are not here to stand up for themselves.
- **Marquis Palmer:** Just in response in Ian's questions, is it possible for you, Dean Martinez or President Wippman, if it is possible for you to speak to or clarify any questions that Ian has asked in this paper, just so that we are as informed as we can be as we continue to break this down in our discussions, that we are as informed as we could be.
- **Terry Martinez:** Sure, #2: *Why do we currently have more students on leave of absence than ever before?* I think because we have a new case manager on campus, that wasn't the case in the past. That was based on recommendations from an external review, was that we approach our student of concern methods with a case manager involved, so we hired Dean Chase in an effort to do that. It is our belief – hers and mine jointly – that we are work with students who are struggling, who may not be able to function here effectively when their mental health issues are interrupting their daily lives. We work with them to take a leave of absence, to take some time off, and to get the help that they need away from campus. And so I think that approach has led to an increase in students 1.) being reported to our office and 2.) coming in to seek that help. And I see a leave of absence as a really good thing for students. It allows them permission to take a break, Ian, and to address the issues they need to, and to come back prepared to handle the stressors of any college or academic school. And I firmly believe that.
- **David Wippman:** Question #3: *Where did the money to hire a full time psychiatrist come from during a hiring freeze and why are further reforms unable to overcome the same bureaucracy?* So although it's commonly assumed that there's a hiring freeze or FTE cap in place, there is no actual hiring freeze or FTE cap as such. What we have is a set of budget constraints and a set of practices around hiring that any new hire has to be justified and we have to make sure that the resources are in place in order to pay that person. So we considered hiring a full time psychiatrist to be a priority of the college, and it went through the budget process and it was approved. And that's why we have the funding for it, just as we approved a number of other positions at the same



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time, including 4 faculty positions. So we do, and probably every year have, added at least some staff and now we're adding to faculty. We'd love to be able to add more, and we have added more in the areas that'll help. As Dean Martinez mentioned, we had an external review conducted in the Spring of 2017. And we, in accordance with that review, decided to move to a case management model and we have expanded the staff that are dealing with mental health issues on the campus, we're expanding the health center even as it's going up, and one of the things we've decided this year is that we should move from a part-time psychiatrist who's in contract with the college to a full-time, in-house psychiatrist.

- **Dean Martinez:** Question #4: *Why are faculty surprised when they hear that statistically, in the last 12 months 130 Hamilton students have seriously considered suicide?* I can't speak to why faculty members are surprised to hear that. I've been doing research on issues of mental health and suicide among college students since 2014, and so I'm not surprised when I see that number. It is alarming to see that number, not just at Hamilton but across the country as mental health issues become pretty common for college-age students. And so I'm familiar with those numbers and it is alarming, and so I guess if you're a faculty member and you don't see statistics about mental health with college students every single day, one might say you would be surprised when you hear information like that. But I can't really speak to why they are surprised about those statistics, Ian. And I'd like some clarification on Question #5 if you will: *Why focus reform on increasing help-seeking behavior if the administration isn't willing to offer that help?*
  - **Ian Lunn:** I was going off the letter, and with FERPA in consideration it makes this complicated, of course. But when it's framed as – at least the way I was understanding it – the focus of a lot of initiatives is to increase the awareness on campus about mental health, increase help-seeking behavior, such as going to the counseling center, calling hotlines, looking out for each other, bringing more education for students, more education for staff, and then I see this letter where the communication networks that need to be in place for that information to result in help being achieved or delivered, or following through, then “what is the increase in information going to do to fix the lack of communication that can get the information to the people that need it?” I guess is my question. I feel like there is a lot of focus going into raising awareness, but if we all know what the problem is but we can't talk about how to get the help where it needs to go, then it doesn't matter how much we know, it's wrong. That's what that was from.
  - **Terry Martinez:** I guess I'm still not understanding your question, but I think it really is – and I've said this before in this room and other rooms – it really is important for all of us as a community to be educated on the signs of distress and when students need to seek help so that we can connect them to the appropriate people, and I do believe that that's happening. That is the importance of making sure that we have faculty and staff members and – through a student-led initiative – students educated on the signs of distress and how students might help students refer to the counseling center or other resources. So I guess I'm still not understanding your question because that's how we are addressing it. And for students who can't see the services on campus, we also offer financial support and transportation for students to seek mental health support off-campus as well.
  - **Ian Lunn:** The letter seems to show lots of examples of people recognizing the distress of him needing help and then he did not get help, so it doesn't seem to be an issue in this instance of raising awareness about mental awareness. I'm just wondering, is the other side of the coin being addressed as well?



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- **Terry Martinez:** It's hard to speak so to one particular case when we're talking more about our systematic approach.
- **David Wippman:** I think you are making some assumptions based on the letter. And again, I don't think it is appropriate for us to discuss and certainly not for me to go into the specifics of any given case. But I will say that I think we are trying to do both things. We are trying to enhance awareness on campus and we are also trying to increase the availability of resources on campus and the coordination with which those resources are made available. We are really trying to do everything we can. No one cares more about these issue than Dean Martinez and I. Nothing occupies more of my time than these issues, for very good reason. There is really nothing more important. We are really working hard on this, and I want to give Dean Martinez enormous credit; since she arrived, she has made enormous strides. We have made very significant changes in the way that the College is dealing with these questions. So I think we are making a lot of progress. What we really would like from all of you is help: help in devising better procedures, better practices, help in alerting us when things are going on. We are not trying to do this in alone or in an adversarial way. We are really trying to enlist student help.
  - **Gavin Meade:** I want to echo that sentiment, I think the chronology is important to consider as well. In the wake of the two events that happened on this campus, there has been a lot of concrete change that has happened. It's irresponsible of us to assign blame of steps have ocured since an event took place-- you can't retroactively do that, I don't think that makes sense. I think that the statement that they are not willing to offer help is a little bit unfair. Clearly, the administration wants more than anything for just to be safe. It raises the idea that we are at odds with or in conflict with the administration when, as President Wippman just stated it should be collaborative effort working with them to the same end.
- **Noam Barnhard:** Just coming back to the last point in the letter, where Graham's advisor said that they didn't know what "*the procedures/rules are for contacting parents but if this was my kid, I'd want to know.*" If an advisor or a professor directly contacts students' parents to express concern about a students' mental health, what would be the repercussions?
  - **Terry Martinez: Yeah,** Typically they don't, Noam. I don't think that is not the channel that faculty members go to to support a student. Typically they go to my office.
  - **Noam Barnhard:** No, I understand, but if a faculty member did, what would be the repercussions?
  - **Terry Martinez:** It seems like you are asking of there would be punitive measures--there wouldn't be.
- **Jiin Jeong:** I guess, one thing I took away from the letter was that there seemed to be no clear definition of "Students of Concern." And what you are saying is that you contact parents when you feel a student is at risk, for some students, but not others. I felt that was not really a clear standard in a way. Even though it is hard to make a set standard for every case because each situation is very different, but I was wondering are there any limits. For example, if a professor contacts you, are you going to contact the parent right away? Do you think there should be some kind of objective standard for contacting or notifying families?
  - **Terry Martinez:** Sure, and like you said, every instance is different. We do work with students throughout this process. If in working, for example, with a student we find that



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their home life is really challenging and contacting their parent would be more detrimental than helpful, then we wouldn't contact the parent. And that's when working with the student is critical in this. But if we find that a student is resistant and not working with us, and we believe that contacting a parent will be helpful then we will contact the parent. It is case by case, in every situation, no two situations that pose themselves are the same and quite often there are no two that are the same.

- **Jiin Jeong:** Going off of that, I was wondering, I totally understand what you were saying about family situations because I know that sometimes it can be stressful if they are not really close for you to contact the family. I was wondering if you gather all this information from all students at the beginning. When you are talking with your advisor, you don't really talk about "oh, of your grades are falling, you'd want your family to be notified." or like "how close are you with your family?" Who is your support system? That is a question that I never got I was talking to my advisor. If I am failing with my academics, I won't necessarily tell my parents this, but they would want to know. If I am having a hard time reaching out to my parents, but if I can't objectively feel that I'm having a hard time, but people around me will know. I feel like if they knew who my support system was. I think a survey of student support systems is really necessary and I was wondering what you think about that.
- **Terry Martinez:** That's not something we've talked about when we have information about a student that comes to us from a faculty member, a staff member or others, we develop a strategy for how to reach out to the student based around who might know the student best. And then we sit down with the student-- in most cases it's dean chase, but sometimes it's someone else who have a closer relationship with the student. We sit down with the student and what we try to do is work in partnership with students, right? We strategize about what might be the next steps. In some cases it's contacting parents. In some cases, they agree to go to counseling because they haven't done that before. In some cases we map out a strategy for improvement. It really is on a case-by-case basis and trying to determine and make an assessment on risk for student.
- **Jiin Jeong:** What I was just suggesting it was that, not only students of concern but every incoming student should have this conversation with their academic advisor, so the advisor knows who the support system is. That was my suggestion.
- **Terry Martinez:** I've been asked to work with the new advisors, the incoming advisors to help them develop training for them, and what we are looking at right now. We did a training session last week for advisors who will be moved through the process this coming fall. One of the things we have talked about is what advisors should cover with students in the first meeting and I'm happy to share your suggestion.
- **Giacomo Cabrera:** I have a question for Dean Martinez. When responding to Ian's 2nd question, you described a leave of absence as a good thing. I understand that a leave of absence can be a good thing at times, but where do you think Hamilton can improve so that we can reduce the number of leaves of absences?
  - **Terry Martinez:** Sure, I don't know. Everything is a systems approach, right? I think right now what we are doing right now is working with students to make sure they get the support that they need much sooner when they are in crisis. That's something that I'd like to continue to focus on. And then perhaps we would get to a point where we weren't dealing with students that are in crisis, right. That we've addressed that sooner. So again,



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that's a systems approach: that's thinking about working with students on strategies and behaviors and skills that will help them before things get to a crisis. Most important to me is to really think about, you know it might not be a bad thing that 30 students are taking a leave of absence. I don't know that yet. I think we need a little bit more time to make that determination. For most students, just in my communication, students who have taken a leave of absence plan on coming back in the fall. And that's an okay thing for them to take a semester off. We need to take a look at that over time to see where we can then define best strategies for these students. And it's going to change over time. Right now, I think this is the one that is working for us. And we will take a look at that once we get closer to the end of the semester to determine how many students are coming back. But again, I've said it before, I don't think that a leave of absence is necessarily a bad thing for us.

- **Ben Rhind:** Thanks for coming, I was just wondering if you could speak to what you think about the specific policy proposals in this letter and is the administration considering them or are they just going off the JED audit?
  - **David Wippman:** So some things we've done: we did an external review a year ago and we've implemented the recommendations of the external review. We've been working with the JED foundation and David Walden who is the director of the Counseling Center has been heading that up. We've added staff and we've added space. We don't think that automatically referring any academic issue to the parents would be the right step, nor would it be consistent with FERPA. We think that the approach that the approach Dean Martinez has taken is a good one, of working with students to contact their parents. Not sure what the other recommendations were.
  - **Ben Rhind:** Just looking here, it says *"Establish an independent panel consisting of at least three mental health professionals from outside Hamilton College, with a mandate to devise a "best in class" standard of care for students."*
  - **David Wippman:** Yeah, that was the external review. There was 2 people, not 3.
  - **Ben Rhind:** Going on to the next page, there's a few here listed. One thing I am curious about is establishment of mandatory annual trainings.
  - **David Wippman:** Yeah, so we started Gatekeeper training for faculty and staff and I think there's a process for students as well. We just started it, this is something we are developing. I don't know if we are making it mandatory for everyone.
  - **Terry Martinez:** Yeah, no we are not making it mandatory. But when I think about the training in the Dean of Students' office, in particular, I'm taking a look at professional development writ large. One of the things I did do was ask all of the folks on my staff who serve on the Dean of Students' Student of Concern meeting, we went to a training in January on facilitating those particular sessions. The work that we are doing is best practices across the nation, and it is strategies that have been employed at other institutions that I believe are really great strategies for us to follow.
- **Elizabeth Groubert:** Right, I had two questions. So, statistically I know that you like to compare across where we are NESCAC for issues like this. Where are we compared to the NESCAC for leaves of absences and suicide?
  - **Terry Martinez:** Sure, when it comes to mental health issues, we are pretty similar to our peers. We are not any higher or lower. We are about at the same place as our peers. I think all of our peers and across the country we are seeing an increase in students





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utilizing services on campus. An increase, that, when you take a look at the national mental health statistics we are at par with our peers and the nation proportion to our size.

- **Nadav Konforty:** I think with that also, I am constantly in contact with other NY6 and NESCAC student governments and this is one of the most salient issues across the board. It's actually surprising how similar we are in terms of the issues most relevant to students.
- **Elizabeth Groubert:** Just a follow up, are we in touch with schools that are more successful in this area than we are?
- **Terry Martinez:** Again, this is research I have been doing for the past 4-5 years. I'm familiar about what best practices are and that's why I'm employing some of those practices here.
- **Elizabeth Groubert:** My second question was, I know at some point students were talking about implementing an orientation for freshman about the health center and resources for students so that from point A when you get here you know what's available, you know there's a procedure as to what to do when you're in a rut or depressed, has there been talking about implementing something like that. I know that we have the sexual assault and fire safety conversations.
  - **Terry Martinez:** There is a session during orientation about services available for students and we also have a session during orientation for parents. David Walden, the Director of the Counseling Center has facilitated those discussions.
  - **Elizabeth Groubert:** I personally don't remember a session.
  - **Terry Martinez:** I know, cause so much is being thrown at you. It's not just something we need to do once, we need to think about how we have these conversations in an ongoing not an episodic way.
  - **Gavin Meade:** Just to speak to that, I've been talking to the IRB about the survey. We are waiting to make sure it gets fully approved, but once we get that figured out we will have more accurate information about how freshman actually feel informed about the resources that are available.
- **Ian Lunn:** I really agree what you are saying about it being an ongoing conversation, especially in terms of learning and training. I was wondering if you were thinking about moving towards that kind of model for the faculty as well. I know right now we do have the Gatekeeper training, as far as I understand it's a one hour session that is presented to a representative from each department and then they disseminate the information. I was wondering if that was going to be a yearly thing, or if it was going to be a more frequent training in the future.
  - **Terry Martinez:** Well, one of the things that has been reported is for us to share the information with faculty and staff, so we did do that gatekeeper training. I do think we need to assess the training because their charge now was to go back to each of their departments in order to inform their colleagues and then we have to assess that. We just launched that, Ian, so we haven't yet done that assessment. And then that will help us determine what else we need to do to inform, to educate, to bolster, to keep closing that net.
- **Jesse Bennett:** It seems like in April 2018, we have a system in place to recognize and get help for students who need it. However, when I first read the email yesterday, I got the impression that the issue was not that faculty weren't trained to recognize the signs of mental health, but as those



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correspondances clearly indicated that the faculty recognized was something wrong. I'm curious of you could comment on why the safetynet failed in fall 2016.

- **Terry Martinez:** It's hard for me to comment on something when I wasn't here. I just know that when I got here I was taking a look at best practices for the issues that were most salient at the moment and that was one of the things that I thought was very important, was to take a look at our system.
- **David Wippman:** There is a lot of information that isn't noted in the letter, but for reasons that I noted at the outset, it's not appropriate for me to talk about the specifics in any given case. What I think we should focus on, what I believe the parents of the letter say want us to focus on is the steps that the college is taking now. Dean Martinez and I have tried to outline those.
- **Julian Perricone:** We are at the end of the talking order now, but if no one has any comments we can continue with Ian's questions. We are on #6: *What specific reforms does JED's audit recommend Hamilton make? Why are these not public?*
  - **Terry Martinez:** Well, I think I just answered question number 6. JED gives us a tremendous amount of information on best practices across campus. They don't prioritize for us what we should be doing. This is a faculty and staff committee and there are two student representatives that serve on that committee as well. They are not made public because it's just a working document for us. When we get information from external reviewers, we don't necessarily make that public, we just decide how we prioritize that for our institution and how we keep making progress on that. I am happy to give an update report as to where we are at with those but I can't do that at this moment, I don't have that information in front of me. I think President Wippman has already answered #8, we are not going to go into details.
  - **Ysabel Coss:** Just going off that question for #6. I don't know what is enough, but I do appreciate that that is being implemented because even just going to Isabel O'Malley's programming, this sounds similar. Even in that hour, I learned an incredible amount and I think it is really important to start with this.
    - **Terry Martinez:** And the faculty and staff have gone through a similar training with different approaches based on the skills and principles and techniques. And what we are hearing back from the faculty members is that was very helpful to them in thinking about talking to students.
    - **Ysabel Coss:** I also have a similar question: how do Campus Safety officers play into this? Are they a part of the staff? Do they take these trainings as well?
    - **Terry Martinez:** Yes, it's the same process. We have individuals from their departments that are trained and then they go back to their units to train. We've done that with faculty, staff, and in every single division across campus and they've gone back to train their coworkers.
- **Ian Lunn:** Do you have or are we allowed to know the percentage of campus that has waived their FERPA rights?
  - **Terry Martinez:** I'm sure we have that information, but I don't know the answer to it. I would have to ask the Registrar's office. I don't know how that would be helpful. If we are able to release it, I'd be happy to give it to you. I'm not sure how that would be helpful to you, to find out how many people have waived their FERPA rights.



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- **Julian Perricone:** We have a lull in the talking order, I know a lot of people are here from outside SA probably to listen, but now is a great time to ask questions.
- **John Dorer:** So, One issue I know you said, but I'm not quite sure how this faculty training works, but I know that following Isaiah's death, someone who was very close to me had approached a professor about getting an extension, and I know in my experience and their experience as well, most professors were very very understanding. But several professors just didn't seem to take it seriously and one gave her a 3 hour extension on an assignment. I just want to kind of impress my desire that you'll give this training as mandatory and with as much depth as possible to make sure that faculty takes this issue as seriously as they possibly can.
  - **Terry Martinez:** Sure, and since then one of the other things we have done is share information with faculty members. What I heard from faculty members is that "I don't know how to talk about this in class; I don't know what I should do." In some cases, students just need to continue to go on and in other cases students need to take a break, so that was confusing for faculty members in thinking about what they wanted to do. So what I've done is I've pulled together information on best practices and language for faculty members in dealing with situations like this in the aftermath of a death on campus. I did the same after Professor Pellman's death as well. I shared that information with faculty members. They were appreciative to at least have language around that. Again, faculty members are always the ones that get to determine their course and what they need to do with that, but I've given them additional language and additional pieces on how to deal with the aftermath of a tragedy.
  - **Nadav Konforty:** I'll also speak to that, I also know students last fall, where honestly certain professors were apathetic to students experiences when they lose a friend. There was a great Spec article that came out right after that highlighted that maybe the world does need to stop for a bit. When it comes to professors and faculty, while I always assume the best in people, I'll put it bluntly in saying that some individuals just don't get that sometimes you need to grieve, like, for example, you can't take a midterm, or take an assignment, etc. To some extent, from students, there's a need for a standardized practice, or at least a baseline. As much as I support a professor's autonomy within their teaching space, when it comes to the loss of a student, it can't be up to a professor whether or not they give an extension or not with something like this.
  - **David Wippman:** It's a challenging issue. We have almost 200 faculty. The overwhelming majority are flexible and care a great deal and want to do what they can. Occasionally there is a faculty member, you might imagine, when you have a population of that size, that will make a decision that is unfortunate in a given instance. But there is a very strong tradition of faculty autonomy over their course requirements and while the Dean of Faculty or I can speak to the faculty member, and there are various faculty committees that may get involved in a given case, faculty have a lot of discretion over their course assignments. We have discussed this at a number of faculty meetings.
- **Ian Lunn:** Looking forward, as I'm trying to do more of in this conversation, I know at the Mental Wellness Collective meetings, one of the things we talk about (though again, I'm not speaking for them) is looking at the hiring process for future faculty in terms of the three things that we look at: scholarship, service, and teaching. I'm wondering if mentorship comes in under either of the service or teaching. How heavily is mentorship considered when hiring new faculty?



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I'm hoping it can be taken more seriously so that we do have less faculty over time that might rely on autonomy over the importance of mentorship in those situations.

- **David Wippman:** So I think it would come under both teaching and service, it's fairly easier to assess things like scholarship and teaching than it is to make a judgement about how a teacher will respond in a given case in the future. Until we have experience with that faculty member, we don't know that. But again, I will say that the overwhelming majority of our faculty try to be as flexible and reasonable as they can be. I'm not sure how we could really change our hiring practices in a way that would allow us to get at that.
- **Ysabel Coss:** Yeah, this is backtracking a little, to talking about these tragedies in class. I think that it is also important to think about, some students didn't talk about it at all in class, but I had at least 2, it might have been 3 classes where we did talk about it and they were all very emotionally taxing conversations. By the end of the day, it was less helpful than it was the first time. So I think also being aware that we go to multiple classes and if all professors are doing the same thing, it can be more harmful than helpful
- **Jiin Jeong:** I was thinking about the policies that we are implementing. I thought that the individual support system could be broken down to 3 degrees, like down to friends, faculty, and people outside of Hamilton. I think our school is trying really hard to get friends and faculty to be around people. I don't feel like we are doing enough to utilize the external support student's that the student has. How many of the college announcements are given to parents? Like if there is a suicide or a death on campus, are parents notified?
  - **Terry Martinez:** Yes.
  - **Jiin Jeong:** Okay, I was also wondering. For students who stayed here over break, like, I stayed here all of break. One of the things that Dean Harrison did, was collect photos and videos from our parents back home and he showed it to the students who were staying on campus. I felt like something like that, maybe like letting people know that it is midterm season, or finals, and why don't you give your child a call to check on how they are doing. Something for our families, like "send a photo or a letter to your child, we will provide a postcard", just something that lets us utilize the external support systems as well.
  - **Terry Martinez:** That's great, that is a good idea.
  - **Penelope Hoopes:** Just in thinking about support systems on campus, I think that when you go to college, for most people, it's the first time you are alone without an adult supervision. And while I know our faculty are great and that some students may have great relationships with faculty members, but that's not always the case and I feel like our advisors are not being utilized enough. My freshman advisor was great, but I didn't have a class with him, so I only saw him when I had to pick my classes. So I was wondering if there could be any research done to changing the advising program because it's someone who is somewhat removed from your academic and social life. I think it could be a really great support system, it's just not being utilized. If you had to meet with your advisor/advising group more often and automatically had another sense of community at Hamilton. I think we should be trying to create as much community as possible, and that advising is a place where we can improve in creating a better community.
    - **Terry Martinez:** I'm smiling because we are actually having these conversations in the advising network. I'm also taking a look at, as I have conversations around



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our residential experience piece, is how we create or how we work with students so they can identify their own individual advising network who are their peers that they go to, peer leaders, in particular that they go to for support in addition to a faculty member and maybe one other adult on campus that they can connect with. So we are looking at advising approaches.

- **Grant Hamilton:** So if I'm understanding correctly, we have the right to waive confidentiality between the administration and our parents. How we are made aware of that and how do we go about doing that?
  - **David Wippman:** You can sign a formal waiver form that will allow the college to share things like your academic progress and grades with your parents and you can give that to the registrar. I don't know if it is discussed with students.
  - **Terry Martinez:** I'll have to double check and I could be wrong on this but I think every student gets an email very early on that says that you can wave your right. You can just come to the registrar's office to sign this waiver. I'll double check on that. I'm pretty sure that we do. We don't like to send it home to students prior to arriving because sometimes parents are standing over you, pressuring you, saying "sign that form because I want to receive everything that you get." We want to make sure that students can sign that form very willingly. I'm pretty sure its an email that you get once you get on campus, I'll double check that.
- **Diana Perez:** Early on you mentioned that these suicide prevention events are not mandatory for the student body. I'm wondering why this is the case. Shouldn't every student be educated on that?
  - **Terry Martinez:** During orientation there are mandatory sessions in which they share the resources available to students. I'm not sure that sharing how to intervene or how to give information is something that we can force everyone to do. I hope that as many students that want to help can, but not every student feels that they should be able to feel equipped to do that or want to take on that responsibility. So, we send it out as broadly as we can and hope that people will take part in that, and we are seeing tremendous numbers of students participating.
  - **Diana Perez:** I mention that because the SA leaders did this, and I personally found it very useful as I have encountered those instances here at Hamilton. Initially, as a student, I did not know how to handle these issues but I feel like making those type of teaching things aware is very beneficial and incentivizing them is very important.
  - **Terry Martinez:** We are trying to figure out how to get information out as broadly as we can. I continue to give full credit to Isabel O'Malley for thinking about how students can help students. We will continue to have more conversations and we will continue to think about how to broaden that experience for as many students as possible.
- **Bridget Laven:** Hi, I am a second semester senior, so I'm pretty much as far away from orientation as you can get. I still very very strongly remember the fire safety presentation that we got during orientation. The reason that discussion was so intense was because of the tragedy at Seton Hall, he talked about that for a really long time and I believe that is why they make it such an intense presentation, because by law they really have to to make sure that that never happens again, specifically at Hamilton. I think most of you would agree that having 2 suicides in one year at Hamilton is also a tragedy and I'm not saying we should utilize scare tactics in an orientation presentation like that, because I do think that the fire safety one is very much scare tactics, but I



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do think that demonstrates that there is a way to talk about this really seriously and to embed it in students' minds during orientation. I still remember exactly what he talked about during that presentation, but I cannot tell you what they talked about that had to do with mental health and suicide or how to deal with sexual assault during orientation. I really believe there is a way to talk about this issue much more strongly in orientation so you can still remember it in second semester of your Senior year.

- **Gavin Meade:** For everybody interested, tomorrow the Mental Health Collective is going to meet. If you are interested, please come. We would love to see new faces and get some more people there. I am sure we'll be discussing the open letter in more detail as well as some of the specific things we are trying to get done, so if you are interested, please come.
- **Nadav Konforty:** We've been at this for about an hour. I'm just going to give some thoughts. I got really scared last week when I saw the police and fire engines during our meeting-- my mind initially went to worst case scenario. Since coming into this position, my biggest fear is the loss of another student. I know to some extent, we can't control everything and as students we can advocate for policy even we can't write it. We can also take care of each other and create the community for our campus. Part of me is just perpetually worried and frustrated because the only way you know if it's working is if you're not losing students. There's only so much the students can do and so much the administration can do also.
- **Zach Oscar:** I just wanted to take a second, when I spoke with Nadav earlier about this and when I read the letter myself earlier, it's a lot to process and it's certainly not something that we want to have to discuss. But, we are and have been at a point where we must discuss it. My main point really is just to commend Ian for being here and the people who don't usually attend Student Assembly, also President Wippman and Dean Martinez, coming in and representing people. We all know that it is easy to retroactively think "oh we could have, would have, should have" but the goal now is to make sure we create an environment on our campus that encourages discussion on these issues, that further de-stigmatizes them, and that involves a lot of conversation, right. So this is a good thing. I want to encourage the continuation of that cooperation. That is the only way that we will really create the best situations out of these things. So while I echo Nadav's sort of loss of "what do you say" because there's so much feeling, I also think it's important that you continue to ask the hard questions that Ian poses because that's the way we are going to make the best of it.
- **Terry Martinez:** I'd like to echo that as well. Open communication, this is not an us versus them moment, right? This is an opportunity for us to continue to think about how we become the best community by taking a look at all of the things that we have in place. How we work together, how we communicate with each other, and how we make sure that we support each other. That doesn't mean that we don't have moments where we challenge each other or ask each other the hard questions but that we are all in this together and I look forward to our continued partnership in addressing these issues.
- **Ben Rhind:** Some of the thoughts I had today parallel what Zach said. In a lot of the conversations I had today with people who were not on Student Assembly and with people who read the letter for the first time was this first emotion of anger and "how could this have happened like this?" I think, part of the reason that came up is that the mental health situation has been out of their mind for a while and now all of a sudden it has abruptly been brought to the attention of the community. I was thinking, obviously Dean Martinez, thank you for coming last week and this week. For us in this room, we are hearing about the positive changes that are ongoing.



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However, for a lot of people that I have spoken to, besides the new Health Center going up, it's kind of out of mind. And obviously everyone in this room cares about it. So obviously, stressing conversation and focusing on how we continue to take these steps to be more productive.

- **Ian Lunn:** I want to say, I also appreciate you two coming out tonight. I'm very grateful to Dean Chase in her position as well. I do want to agree that I hope this can be understood as a productive challenging and more so than othering, I don't want to be "us versus them" situation because that isn't the goal. The progress being made, and there is progress being made, has been great and I have no problem with any of it. I just don't want the progress to ever end and I want everyone on campus to understand that it is going to take a lot of effort from all sides; talking about it and asking questions and thinking about it always. Ideally we can not only be on par with our peers, but in my vision, lead academia to a place where mental health isn't so misunderstood and ostracized. We are responsible for training the future of the minds of our country in the sense that we attend an elite institution, and I'd like to set a precedent where elite institutions teach students how to be mentally healthy so that our society can reflect that overall. I don't want to create sides at all. I want to always be trying to find as much progress as we can. It feels like a long time when you are feeling things, I guess.
    - **Terry Martinez:** Yeah, it's painful for me, as well, and I understand that. We never want to be in this position. You're absolutely right, it must be ongoing and continuous conversation. And I think that what I've heard here is a commitment from everyone to do just that, and so I think that we will.
    - **David Wippman:** I hope everyone here can share some of the discussion has covered with students who are not here because I am concerned about the point that you make that for many students may not be familiar with what the college is doing. I think that anything you all can do is get out the message that what we are doing is positive and that we always like suggestions and community support. I'll finish by saying that I appreciate how everyone here has approached this.
4. **Old Business**
- Mosaic progress report and reminder!
5. **Acknowledgements**
- Thank you **Jiin Jeong '21** and the Cultural Affairs Committee for putting on an amazing International Fair!
  - **Nadav Konforty:** The food was great. Thank you for everyone who represented their countries. We hope to have it again in the future.
  - **Jiin Jeong:** Special thanks to Al and Reuben from Bon Appetit, Opportunities Director Ms. Phyllis Breland, Assistant Director of Student Activities, Ms. Kaity Werner, Senior Director of Media Relations, Ms. Vige Barrie, and SA Treasurer Jake Engelman '17 for helping us with preparation! Also, thank you to Dean Harrison and Ms. Regina Johnson for assisting in funding the event.
6. **Committee Reports**
- Cultural Affairs:
    - **Refugee Solidarity Month in April:** On The Move, with Professor Erol Balkan and Professor Britt Hysell, is organizing a Refugee Solidarity Month this April. The Refugee Solidarity Month is an effort to highlight the "refugee experience" and bring into light successful refugees who were able to overcome the countless



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obstacles that are facing refugees on a daily basis. This is done through events such as the food festival, meet and greet with the British Pakistani novelist Kamila Shamsie, Journey West concert, and many more, as well as social media campaign under the hashtag #refugeesolidaritymonth.

- o **Funding--** **Note: Org Leaders, please submit your rollbacks to satreas!**

Amount Remaining: **\$8,150.25**

Organization	Items/Services Requested	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended	Amount Approved
Hamilton Christian Fellowship	Travel for Worship Nights	\$605.13	\$605.13	\$605.13
Boffer/LARP Club	Equipment	\$338.85	\$338.85	\$338.85
HAAND	Donuts - Walk for Autism	\$49.95	\$49.95	\$49.95
SA E-Board	Campus Event	\$2,394.60	\$2,394.60	\$2,394.60

Amount Requested: \$3,388.53

Amount Recommended: \$3,388.53

Amount Remaining if Funding Passes: \$4,761.72

- **Hamilton Christian Fellowship:** Two events they are going to. One in Rochester and one in Albany. Entrance tickets and mileage for 15 people.
- **Boffer/LARP Club:** Equipment. Nonstrategic bc they were a new club. Asking for foam and PVC to build weapons. Recommending in full at \$338.85. Thank you to their rep for coming in tonight.
- **HAAND:** Asking for a couple boxes of donuts for their Walk for Autism which will be outside of Sadove.

**Hamilton Christian Fellowship, Boffer/LARP club, and HAAND funding passes as recommended.**

- **Jake Engelman:** I've been working on this for a while. My idea was to bring an entertainment company to campus that will host a zorb soccer and paintball-esque event. Free for everyone on campus, to have a couple tables around that will collect money for the civic leadership fund that the Philanthropy Committee sponsors. I thought the campus would like it. Hopefully we will have a great time and raise a little bit of money. Towards late April.

**SA E-Board Funding passes as recommended.**

7. Announcements

- o **HAMILTON COLLEGE'S FIRST TOWN HALL: "Checking Our Pulses" in the Chapel tomorrow, Monday, April 2 at 7pm.** Join President Wippman, Dean Martinez, Title IX Coordinator Ashley Place, Counseling Services Director David Walden, and





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Interim Director of Diversity & Inclusion Phyllis Breland as we talk about campus culture as a community.

- **Class and Charter Day Awards:** We will be sending out an email tomorrow for people to nominate. This is all campus! Be on the lookout.

