

STUDENT ASSEMBLY MEETING

APRIL 6TH, 2020

1. Call to Order ([TIME: Livestream 1; 00:06](#))

○ **Present:**

- Tommy Keith
- Bryce Febres
- Nicole Ramirez
- Seámus Wiseman
- Maya Mathews
- Ashley Garcia
- Orlando Paz
- Julian Perricone
- Penelope Hoopes
- Connie Lorente
- Caroline Paulson
- Shavell Jones
- Stephanie Wu
- Amanda Kim
- Tatum Barclay
- Lóri Fejes
- Jackson Harris
- Jeffrey Bush
- Dylan Morse
- Juliet Davidson
- Emily Fienco
- Nyaari Kothiya
- Frank Meng
- Mariam Saied
- Nadav Konforty
- Luis Morales
- Geoffrey Ravenhall Meinke

○ **Excused:**

- Matt Knowlton
- Amari Leigh
- Jenny Tran
- Omar Lopez

○ **Virtual Meeting Correspondence ([TIME: Livestream 1; 3:06](#))**

■ **Presented by: Bryce Febres**

Febres gave a brief on how meeting formalities will be conducted over Zoom. Members will use Zoom features such as the “raise hand” icon for listing themselves in talking order and will use the “yes” and “no” icons for voting.



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A Motion was made enabling all future Student Assembly to use virtual correspondence. The vote passes.

A Motion was made to approve the March 9th, 2020 Meeting Minutes. The vote passes.

- Julian Perricone made a comment on the minutes and asked the Executive board to honor piloting the abbreviated minutes, urging the Executive Committee to follow the survey SA sent out on the matter at hand. He also acknowledged that given the extenuating circumstances the Assembly finds itself in, the rationale to produce abbreviated minutes can be understood, but that the pilot will be revisited in the Fall semester.

2. Public Comment Period ([TIME: Livestream 1; 9:35](#))

- **Thoughts on Jodel incidents and new Spring 2020 academic policies**
 - **Presented by: Eric Stenzel'23**

Stenzel came to speak on two topics: (1) the racist and derogatory comments against Asian populations that students have experienced on the popular app “Jodel,” and (2) on a statement produced and supported by many Hamilton College student organizations about the Hamilton 2020 Spring semester grading policy they have shared with faculty. Below is a statement Stenzel read about the Jodel incidents on behalf of Katherine Kim’22 a Korean student:

“The racist Jodel comment describing Coronavirus as the "Chinese Virus" has infuriated me, not only because it is a harmful remark that villainizes Asians and Asian Americans as virus agents, but also because these people are allowed to anonymously post such damaging material online and not experience any consequences whatsoever. To be a person of Asian descent and to see such a comment online, but not being able to do anything because it came from an anonymous source, is absolutely infuriating. Some kind of change *needs* to happen to stop this behavior.”

Stenzel added that Hamilton, and the Student Assembly should take this incident as an opportunity to educate our community on correct and inclusive conversations, suggesting that posting these comments and explaining why they are problematic could be an educational opportunity the Assembly should not miss. Specifying that blanketing statements sent out by the school do not target the problem directly enough. Stenzel urges the Assembly to consider this when voting on the matter during the agenda tonight.

On the topic of Hamilton’s 2020 Spring semester grading policy, Stenzel shared the letter of which the following student organizations support and asked for the Student Assembly’s support:

“Dear Hamilton College Community,



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We find ourselves in a time of crisis. Students, faculty, and staff are coping with problems ranging from becoming unemployed to being sick with COVID-19. For students in particular, many are in situations they did not expect to be in to complete this semester. Though a good portion of students may not be experiencing difficulties beyond figuring out how to unmute themselves on Zoom, many hundreds of students are facing food insecurity, losing all income, caring for family members, poor WiFi and large time zone differences, and other environments antithetical to focused, attentive learning. We, as the undersigned student organization executive and/or general board members, are writing to you to encourage you to prioritize equity as the defining principle for your decision on how this semester will be graded.

For that reason, we strongly urge you to choose either the universal A/no credit option or universal credit/no credit option. Though some of us have a preference for one over the other, we all believe that a universal system is the only way to ensure that no student is placed at an increased disadvantage relative to other students. Any level of differentiation within the passing grade(s) builds a gap where students in difficult situations will disproportionately end up with the lower grade by no fault of their own. Even if that lower grade is an A-, transcripts will explain the grading system for this semester. Potential employers and graduate schools will interpret the A- as a shortcoming. The universal A/NC or C/NC options rectify this to the greatest extent possible while still leaving room for failure.

This solution prioritizes equity. "Inclusion" at our institution must extend beyond the presence of underprivileged groups on campus; it must be meaningful consideration of their needs, too. Solidarity means that we take care of everyone in our community, and that we stand by them all the time, but especially in times of crisis. This is that time.

In solidarity,

Sunrise Movement Hamilton College: Faby Alvarez '22, Madison Lazenby '23, Jessica Sanchez '23, Zoe Sauv e '23, Eric Stenzel '23, Sam Greenhouse '21, Eleanna Sorensen '23, Emily Fienco '23; **Black and Latinx Student Union:** Yanea Thomas '22, Sapphire Ruiz '22, Dawun Smith '22, Joel Adade '22, Malik Irish '22; **Survivors Making Activism and Radical Transformation (SMART):** Katherine Barnes '20, Sam Besca '22, Kavya Crasta '21, Nicole Eisenberg '21, Emma Flacard (Teaching Fellow), Olivia Jacobs '20, Axel Rodriguez '23, Jessica Sanchez '23, Nandini Subramaniam '22; **La Vanguardia (LV):** Pablo Reina Gonz alez '22, Karianna Torres '20, Josh Vega '20, Adam Valencia '22, Anyi Rescalvo '22, Diana Escorcia '20, Alex Medina '22, Steven Campos '22; **Asian Student Union:** Qian Ren '22, Lily Qiu '22, Kimberly Ly '20, Krissi Kim '21; **QuestBridge Scholars Network:** Yenesis Alvarez '22, Vanessa Yap '23, Fatima Oliva '23, Sophie Auvin '23, Karen Liu '22"

- o **Questions/Comments** ([TIME: Livestream 1; 15:52](#))
- **Tommy Keith** asked for Stenzel to share these statements directly so we could approach them individually, so the Assembly can approach these incidents in the manor as Stenzel directed. Keith asked a question about Stenzel's grading policy statements, and asked what Stenzel wanted the Assembly to do with the statement.



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- **Eric Stenzel'23** deferred to the Assembly saying it is up to you what you do with this information, mentioning that the Assembly's backing would be beneficial.
- **Emily Fienco** asked if the Student Assembly agreed with this statement, would the Assembly's previous statements about the grading policy be invalidated?
 - **Tommy Keith** responded, yes.
- **Luis Morales** thanks Eric Stenzel's for coming to public comment, but he adds that the Assembly should stick with it's previous statement because it reflects numbers in a poll on the matter of grading policy sent out to students about a week ago.
- **Geoffrey Ravenhall Meinke** proposed including Eric Stenzel's remarks in the minutes, using the Student Assembly as a platform that highlights a meaningful array of options on the topic of grading policy.
- **Lóri Fejes** asked when the Assembly was looking to make a statement on the grading policy, the option presented above was not taken seriously, so why now does it seem people have changed their minds.
 - **Tatum Barclay** responds that at the time when Presidents and representatives we're collecting feedback, the options were not widely supported or asked about. Since then, the student population's opinions may have changed seeing that there are more options being taken seriously by the faculty. She also said it might not be the Student Assembly's place to send out another recommendation. Rather using our platform to share a number of grading policy options the student body has considered.
- **Emily Fienco** proposed the Assembly send out the statement but not endorse it. By doing so, we will recognise and amplify the voices of other people whose message may not have been expressed in our first statement.
- **Connie Lorente** added if the Assembly is sharing something then how are they not supporting it?
 - **Eric Stenzel '23** added, student organizations do not have access to email the "Notices-all" listserv, just "Notices-students". He also added that this academic policy, seeing how it has been supported by so many different student organizations should not be sent out by one because it'll seem like that one organization really owns the statement, when really this is not the case.

(note, that comments were made later in the meeting on this agenda topic and have been placed here) [TIME: Livestream 2: \(38:08\)](#)

- **Connie Lorente** asks for clarification about whether or not the Assembly will send out a separate email regarding the grading policy many student organizations supported.
 - **Tommy Keith** said the Assembly will acknowledge it, but not specifically endorse it.



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- **Seamus Wiseman** says that logistically if the Assembly wanted to release a statement on this grading policy, it would have to be voted upon as a separate email going out. As minutes will not be done in time.
 - **Tommy Keith** said in response that the Assembly should expect and evote on this later tonight or tomorrow morning.
- o **Thoughts on Jodel incident**
 - **Presented by: Terry Martinez, Dean of Students** ([TIME: Livestream 2; 3:06](#))

Dean Martinez spoke about how the Hamilton College community deals with racist incidents such as the ones on Jodel. She said often directly calling out the exact statements does not solve the problem, rather it creates a bigger one, adding that all Hamilton College can not necessarily educate on anonymously posted material assumed to be written by a student. She also said the administration has contacted the Jodel application creator to request the geo-tag for Clinton, NY to be blocked given how they've been used.

- o **Questions/ Comments**
 - **Juliet Davidson** asked, is there anything else that can be done aside from just contacting Jodel?
 - **Dean Martinez** responded, at the moment no. Because the comments were posted anonymously, the school currently can not assume the statements were written by a Hamilton college student and therefore cannot reprimand any individuals.
 - **Emily Fienco** pointed out that this is not the first race-related incident this year and proposed that next year perhaps this could be dealt with more formally through a forum or some educational manor.
 - **Dean Martinez** responded that often formal attempts at attacking these kinds of behaviors do not prove effective, pointing to a scenario where if a forum was held, offenders would most likely not attend. She also added the best way to tackle incidents of this nature is through community-wide efforts in condemning them.

3. New Business

- o **Online Housing Selection** ([TIME: Livestream 2; 6:15](#))
 - **Presented by: Tanith Sherman, Assistant Director of Residential Life and Ashley Place, Director of Residential Life**

In terms of a progress report on housing, specialty housing applications and processes have been completed. Still to come is the multiple selection which will be **April 14-17th**. The doubles-singles process is through **April 20-21st**. There will be very detailed information sent about both. In terms of being a resource to the student body, the housing selection team is hosting Zoom sessions with the Student body; students should have received emails about this.



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The committee has been adding FAQs to the housing selections page on the Hamilton website, and they also have a hotline call service available to help students when they are going through the process live.

- **Questions/ Comments** ([TIME: Livestream 2; 10:08](#)):
- **Juliet Davidson** has questions/concerns coming from students in the freshman class since it's their first time registering. If a group goes in for multiples housing and then change their mind and decide they want to be in singles or doubles, will they be automatically rolled into the lottery of their choice.
 - **Tanith Sherman** explained that if you log in during your time for multiples and don't see any options open that you like or would fit your group, don't select. This will automatically make you a part of the doubles and singles lottery.
- **Lóri Fejes** and others planning to study off campus in the fall have been told they have the option to live on campus if programs are cancelled. He asked what help those students would get in finding a housing assignment.
 - **Tanith Sherman** clarified that those students will not sign up for housing right now. As plans change they will work with those students to find housing. Students can still be added to the housing processes if plans change within the next couple of weeks. If plans change after the process is done they will work with students one on one. Nobody will be left without a place to sleep.
 - **Ashley Place** added on that students cancel their leave every year so there are already processes in place for this. Even though this feels very stressful it is not new territory, there is a greater volume of students but they will not change the way it's handled and students will still get individual help.
- **Tatum Barclay** points out that since many rising juniors are pulling out of their abroad programs there will be a lot more juniors than normal in the housing lottery and asks what the anticipated effect will be for the rising sophomore and freshman.
 - **Ashley Place** explains that every year there are more students applying for housing than there are available spaces, so they go on the waitlist. This is because the size of the first year class is unknown, so they reserve overflow housing to assure that first year students can be accommodated. This leaves some sophomore students unable to select housing after waiting for hours. The new system will allow them to identify those students sooner and they will reach out to them earlier in order to make the process less difficult and alleviate stress. The larger amount of juniors will impact the sophomore class. The waitlist this year will be bigger so their whole team will work over the summer to make sure everyone has a bed.



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- **Ashley Garcia** has been asked by some students how conduct points will affect housing since it's being done online.
 - **Ashley Place** responds that in the past anyone with 6+ points had 150 added to their lottery and could not be pulled since pulling essentially made the larger number not matter. In the new system, lottery numbers are averaged so everyone's number matters. People with 6+ points will still have 150 added to their number but they can live with anyone. Everyone with 6+ points has been spoken to already. Email her with any concerns about point standings.
- **Lóri Fejes** asks about updates on Summer housing for students who may have on campus research opportunities.
 - **Ashley Place** does not have any updates but says the announcements should be coming soon once senior staff comes to a decision.

- o **Racist Comments on Hamilton Jodel** ([TIME: Livestream 2; 19:31](#))

- **Presented by: Tommy Keith**

Racist Comments towards asian people regarding the coronavirus on Jodel, anonymous social networking apps have been reported and taken down from the site. President Wippman just released a statement condemning these comments, reaffirming that they do not align with our values, and we as an assembly would like to join the administration in condemning these actions. The discussion that began during public comment continued into this agenda in the meeting. On the lines of Eric Stenzel's previous statement, Keith added saying a virus is "Chinese" or that it originated from Wuhan insinuates that there is something inherently wrong with those populations; this is why the statements are racist.

- o **Questions/Comments** (*note, that comments were made later in the meeting on this agenda topic and have been placed here*). ([TIME: Livestream 2; 38:08](#))
 - **Connie Lorente** then asked if the Assembly will be taking any further actions regarding the incidents on Jodel.
 - **Tommy Keith** says that the Assembly's conclusion on that topic is that they condemn the incidents and support President Wippman's statement. However, acknowledged there is nothing more that the college can do on the matter.
 - **Jeffrey Bush** asked if Keith's earlier statements were the Assembly's way of calling out and educating the community on the incident.
 - **Tommy Keith** responded that he doesn't necessarily fully agree with Dean Martinez's statement on the matter, and that yes his previous statements were essentially explaining and addressing why these incidents are racist.
 - **Geoffrey Ravenhall Meinke** added that he appreciates Bryce Febres and Tommy Keith's decision to include Stenzel's statement during the public comment period in the minutes. He added that in that statement it would



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be meaningful to remind people that they can condemn and report these kinds of incidents themselves, outside the Hamilton community, essentially reminding everyone that even though the Hamilton community is dispersed all over the world right now, that we are still all responsible for keeping each other accountable.

- **Jackson Harris** explained the distinction between Dean Martinez comments about confronting the racists statements verbatim and explaining why these statements are racist. Meaning it's alright for the Assembly to use this opportunity to condemn and educate but not overstep on Dean Martinez's recommendation.
 - **Eric Stenzel'23** wants to add that the Assembly could absolutely send out a statement saying that these statements are Anti-Asian, more specifically Anti-Chinese and associating the virus with any particular country is a racist thing to do. That is an effective way to find a middle ground way at approaching this incident.
 - **Julian Perricone** would be very cautious with a statement of such nature. Because addressing things in such a way may not be in your personal school of thought, it is a school of thought, and directly targeting these incidents may not have the effect the Assembly would like if the Assembly were to comment further on these incidents. Perricone further suggested that if the Assembly wanted to address this issue further that working with Dean Genao-Homs or a professional in this arena may be beneficial.
 - **Stephanie Wu** wanted to add perhaps the Assembly could focus on this statement in a context where students are uncomfortable and hurt by these statements asking students to be conscientious of our community when statements of such nature are being made. This method could focus less focused on labeling these statements as racist and more on how they impact the community. She thinks shutting down Jodel regionally would be a great idea.
 - **Bryce Febres** adds if we were on campus it would be very easy to sanction this application on our Hamilton College network. The issue however is that currently the student body is all over the world. So asking the developer, while it is something Dean artinez is trying to do, is a harder ask.
- **SA's role in engaging students in the coming weeks** ([TIME: Livestream 2: 32:10](#))

■ **Presented by: Tommy Keith**

Keith wants suggestions about virtually what our role should be for student engagement. He opened by sharing a suggestion that the Student assembly should take on the role of strong advocacy for the Student population. Often the Assembly focuses too heavily on its funding



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obligations and not enough on its advocacy responsibilities. So the ways in which the Assembly can develop the Advocacy role in new and creative ways would be meaningful. He opened with a potential idea of creating a platform where students could connect and communicate, a virtual forum where people could share funny videos and encouraging messages. He added there could be different threads for different classes, etc. Febres added that changes can be suggested about current committee functions or even how the Assembly functions as a whole.

4. Funding Update (TIME: Livestream 2; 24:09)

■ **Presented by Nicole Ramirez**

The funding committee will be working closely with the Student Activities Office to figure out how unspent money will be rolled back to our Student Activities funding; this will be done working with individual student organizations. After that process is completed we will see how much money remains and how else it can be used for the student body this semester or next. Nicole adds if you have further questions. About contractual work or invoices that are still being expected to pay with the money you received from the Assembly or if you have any ideas/ requests on programming for your organization for the rest of the semester, please email Kaity Stewart: ksstewart@hamilton.edu and Nicole Ramirez: nramirez@hamilton.edu as currently there are no formal forms created for this process. Every student organization still has access to use their \$50 credit. Noelle Niznik added the Student Life office is still trying to figure out how much money is left in the Student Assembly account after all outstanding invoices are paid. Whatever is left will either be used to add the virtual programming the office and the Remote Engagement Team is hosting or how they can support students in the next semester/academic year. Niznik also wanted to harp on the fact that these funds will be used to support students in one way or another. Details on the funds use, however, is still to be determined. Finally she added the Constitution committee and the funding committee will still keep looking at the funding codes so the funding process can be improved when Hamilton College resumes (hopefully) in the fall.

■ **Questions/Comments**

- **Lóri Fejes** asked what's the plan to replace the Class and Charter Concert?
 - **Noelle Niznik** responded that there is no specific answer to this question yet. There is an idea about hosting a bigger concert in the fall and inviting the Class of 2020 to attend or the reuse those funds in another way that would benefit as many students (if not all students) as possible. The Student Activities Office will not make decisions without student input; all decisions about the Class and Charter Concert and Student Assembly funds will be made carefully and thoughtfully. If for some reason, a concert can not be held, these funds will still be used on student initiatives. Ideas from the past included updating the lighting and sound systems in the Annex and the Sadove Basement renovations.



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- **Jeffery Bush** asked if it's the responsibility of student organization treasures to roll back funds they don't use this semester? Will they be penalized for not doing so?
 - **Nicole Ramirez** says that given the nature of the semester we will not penalize individuals/organizations for emailing the funding committee about rollovers (funds not used). We just asked that if a student organization has outstanding invoices or events that will occur, reach out to Kaity Stewart and Nicole Ramirez to make sure funds are still left aside for those matters.
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5. Announcements ([TIME: Livestream 2; 35:35](#))

- **Ashley Garcia**, got in contact with Maria Genao-Homs and Cameron Feist from the Dean of Students and Financial Aid Offices to discuss resources available to students for basic necessities. Here is what they said: “All refunds that the college issued for room & board were intended to help offset students' basic necessities -- all students who were on campus have had their bill updated to reflect the refund. For those who have questions about their refund, please feel free to reach out to the Office of Student Accounts. For individual students who have additional needs that extend beyond the support that the college has already offered through the refund process, please reach out to the Office of Financial Aid. Financial Aid will work with these requests on a case by case basis in close partnership with the Dean of Students office.”
- Election Update - elections are coming up so those who want to run should be prepared and on the lookout for an email with more information! Elections will be done remotely and anyone who needs more info can reach out to **Bryce Febres at bfebres@hamilton.edu**. An interest form will be circulated via email this week.
- Class and Charter Day Awards/ Nominations - be on the lookout for information on that later this week. Lots of details will be provided then about how to nominate a peer, or student (faculty can nominate students this year). Please make sure you nominate! All Nomatination are due by April 14, 2020.
- Need a rep to serve on a committee for teaching award (4/14 2pm (EST))
- Check out the [Virtually Everything Website](#) for updates on all things related to Student Life!

