



Dear Hamilton College Community,

We hope you are well during this very hectic first month of classes, and taking time to rest. We are issuing this statement with regard to the Monday, September 20th SA General Meeting minutes and live-stream. Unfortunately, the minutes will include a summary rather than the usual paraphrased quotes from your elected representatives.

On Tuesday, Hamilton College requested that we withhold the meeting minutes until we could discuss them. On Wednesday, Hamilton told us we should take down the live-stream. According to a senior Hamilton official, “the College has received a cease and desist letter based on remarks made at the meeting and the College has requested that the video be taken down pending further inquiry.” The College has since received a second letter threatening action against Assembly members should Hamilton not discipline them itself. Both letters were addressed to the College.

Since our first meeting with senior administrators, we have asked for further guidance on what we can and cannot say or do. We have been told publication of minutes and the live-stream is fully our decision, and that Hamilton cannot and will not offer us legal guidance or legal defense. The College put in writing today, “what you say is up to you, and whether you post the video and how you do the minutes is your choice.”

One of our top priorities since the moment we decided to run for office has been to bring transparency to both the Assembly and administration of Hamilton College, to improve public discourse, and staunchly advocate for free speech. This week, we were silenced by threats of legal action. While we are *extremely* confident no speech broke the law on Monday, we do not have the financial resources to protect members’ free speech in court.

As Hamilton’s policy on freedom of expression states: “All members of the college community should be free to examine and discuss all questions of interest to them, to express opinions, and to question but not suppress the opinions of others.”

As the very Mission Statement of Hamilton College reads, we: “learn to think independently, embrace difference, write and speak persuasively, and engage issues ethically and creatively.”

We stand firmly behind every single one of the Assembly’s votes, its unequivocal right to discuss and debate matters of public interest, and expect that the College will continue to adhere to its policies, and hope it will protect the free speech of its students if it becomes necessary to do so.

In solidarity,
Saphire & Eric