

The Central Council of Student Assembly, Hamilton College
RESOLUTION

PASSED: November 27, 2017

Introduced -- Harry Dubke, Class of 2019 Representative

Urging measures to create transparency in the Office of Residential Life, to empower student voices in Residential Life decisions, and to ensure all students a living environment conducive to their mental health.

Article I Residential Life Transparency

WHEREAS decisions made by the Residential Life Office affect all Hamilton students as all students are required to live on campus; and

WHEREAS these decisions have historically been made unilaterally and behind closed doors with little student input; and

WHEREAS the Residential Life Office has based its decisions to convert living spaces to substance-free housing solely based off of registration for the substance-free housing lottery, thus ignoring the fact that many students in the lottery are simply seeking nicer rooms (i.e. Kirkland Loft or avoiding Bundy) and not necessarily substance-free housing; and

WHEREAS Hamilton College prides itself on its “close community”, yet disregards many of its community member’s voices by excluding students from the very processes that most affect their lives on campus (i.e. the closure of community gathering spaces such as the CO-OP basement).

Therefore, this resolution calls for the Residential Life Office to develop a fixed, transparent process regarding changes made to student spaces and the creation of a public record of such changes and the rationale behind them.

Resolved:

1. By the end of the 2017-2018 academic year, the Residential Life Office will create, post publicly, and make permanently available to the entire student body a record of all **social gathering areas** (i.e. CO-OP Basement) closed since the start of the 2015-2016 academic year. This record will include the decision reached by the Office, the rationale behind the decision, and the methods employed to enact the decision.



The Central Council of Student Assembly, Hamilton College
RESOLUTION

2. By the end of the 2017-2018 academic year, the Residential Life Office will create, post publicly, and make permanently available to the entire student body a record of all residence halls converted to **substance-free housing** since the start of the 2015-2016 academic year. This record will include the decision reached by the Office, the rationale behind the decision, and the methods employed to enact the decision.
3. By the end of the 2017-2018 academic year, the Residential Life Office will create, post publicly, and make permanently available to the entire student body the **formalized process** by which they reach all decisions regarding changes made to informal social gathering areas on campus. Any changes made to the process itself will also be recorded and posted publicly.
4. By the end of the 2017-2018 academic year, the Residential Life Office will create, post publicly, and make permanently available to the entire student body the **formalized process** by which they reach all decisions regarding the conversion of any residence hall or portion of a residence hall from/to a substance-free living space. Any changes made to the process itself will also be recorded and posted publicly.
5. As part of the above formalized process and in order to include student voices in the process, the Residential Life Office will publicly present all proposed changes to informal social gathering areas and residential spaces on campus to the Student Assembly during one of their regularly scheduled public meetings **before** any such decisions are implemented. Notice of such an announcement will be included in the Assembly's weekly all-school email.
6. The Residential Life Office will also create, post publicly, and make permanently available to the entire student body a record of all future decisions made by way of the above process. This record will include the decision reached by the Office, the rationale behind the decision, and the methods employed to enact the decision.

Article II Student Partnership in Residential Life Processes



The Central Council of Student Assembly, Hamilton College
RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the Residential Life Office rarely addresses students' concerns with changes made to informal social gathering areas and substance-free housing unless the Office encounters forceful and prolonged pushback from students; and

WHEREAS there exists little clarity or consistency in the Office's response to recurring issues; and

WHEREAS all decisions made regarding student and campus life should be reached after formalized deliberation with representatives from the student body; and

Therefore, this resolution calls for the Central Council and the Residential Life Office to formally incorporate student concerns into all future changes to Residential Life through creating official student positions within the Residential Life administrative structure.

Resolved:

1. By the end of the 2017-2018 academic year, a **student committee** will be formed within Residential Life in order that any decisions concerning informal social gathering areas on campus, substance-free housing, and any other major decisions reached by the Office are reached with student input. This committee of students will be selected and appointed from the student body before the start of each semester and will pursue to include as diverse an array of student interests as possible.
2. Students appointed to the committee dealing with the Residential Life Office must **publicly communicate all proposed changes** to the entire student body in order to ensure transparency with regard to changes as they are being considered. They are encouraged to make use of the Student Assembly minutes in order to do so.

Article III Mental Health and Residential Communities

WHEREAS Hamilton is a small community that requires all students to live on campus and therefore residence halls are intimately and intrinsically connected to mental health on campus; and



The Central Council of Student Assembly, Hamilton College
RESOLUTION

WHEREAS Hamilton's residence halls are non-themed (except for COOP and substance-free housing) and there is no space for like-minded students to work together to build unique communities (i.e. Spanish, Pre-Med, or International Students living options); and

WHEREAS innumerable Hamilton students suffer from isolation and mental health issues because of loneliness inextricably linked to and exacerbated by their living environment; and

WHEREAS such mental health issues can begin as early as freshman year in secluded freshman residence halls (i.e. Wertimer, Wallace-Johnson) and proliferate throughout the Hamilton experience.

Therefore, this resolution demands the creation and implementation of official policy with regard to creating residential communities within dorms as well as a concerted response across the entire Residential Life Office addressing the link between the current housing structure and mental health on campus.

Resolved:

1. The Residential Life Office will begin conducting a **yearly online survey** of the student body in order to gauge students' opinions and suggestions regarding their respective residence halls. It is recommended that the survey be reviewed by the aforementioned student committee before distribution and should include questions that help gauge mental health within each residence hall.
2. Members of the aforementioned student committee, members of the Mental Health working group created by Student Assembly in Fall 2017, and the Dean of Students' Office will work with the Residential Life Office to **review Hamilton's current housing policy** and create recommendations for future changes that better prioritize mental health. These members will submit a report to the Central Council detailing their findings and recommendations.
3. The Residential Life Office will work with the aforementioned student committee to review recommendations considering the further creation **themed housing** made by the Strategic Planning Committee. The members of the student committee will submit a report to the Central Council detailing their findings and recommendations.

