

HIRAM COLLEGE STUDENT SENATE
February 12th, 2018 MINUTES

Call to Order: 7:30pm

We had 5 Executive Board members present, our Advisor, and 17 Senators present for the evening. Those Senators present were: Andrzejewski, Bennett, Bentkowski, Bessner, Cook, Daniels, Dietzen, Harris, Hart, Hudson, Kidd, Louis, Oswald, Rivard, Robb, Thornton, and Toich

*Those Senators absent for the evening were: Bhau, Colton, Dualan, Lisser, Ma, Rodgerick, and Street
Our guests this evening were: Chase Grossman and Alexia Kemerling*

Executive Board Reports

VP of Administration Stevenson announced the date of the next Sit-In With Senate as February 14 from 12:00-2:00pm, where a table will be manned by Senators Andrzejewski, Bhau, Dietzen, Kidd, and Thornton. She also asked Senators to volunteer for the painting of bowls at this week's Bread and Soup dinner.

VP of Communication Lyon informed Student Senate that he has this year's Presidential and Vice Presidential Election Packets, to be distributed physically after the meeting, and digitally via email the next day, along with a copy of the Student Senate Constitution.

Presidential Announcements

President Enoch introduced Dr. Varlotta, President of Hiram College, to speak before Student Senate.

Speaker: President Varlotta

President Varlotta proceeded to read and answer a number of questions posed by students and Senators.

Regarding how the use of iPads has improved learning on campus, around 50% of respondents to a recent technology survey report using them in class. Respondents said that they use the iPad for various classroom purposes and assignments and many of the college-installed apps like Socrative and NearPod are quite helpful. Officials have also noted a reduction paper usage across the school now that everyone has an iPad.

When asked about the state of walkways and roads on campus during the winter, President Varlotta informed Senate of how early physical plant employees report to campus to work in the mornings. Rudy Braydich and his team work very hard to clear the college of snow and ice, and he is open to students contacting him in the event of an environmental danger on campus. President Varlotta passed out Mr. Braydich's business cards.

Concerns were raised as to whether or not requests for gender neutral bathrooms are being taken seriously. President Varlotta responded that they have heard the concerns, and are considering adding one such bathroom to Booth-Centennial, or potentially to the first Hinsdale during the floor's modification as the center of the Scarborough School of Business and Communication.

President Varlotta explained that the five new academic school directors – Professors Prcela, Ryan, McCreight, Goodner, and Hirsch – may help with greater use of iPads in the classroom. Approximately two-thirds of classrooms on campus have had smart classroom technology installed thanks to generous donations from Mr. Dean Scarborough.

We're already seeing the benefits of the New Liberal Arts. Enrollment is up, and some of the most popular majors with incoming students are among the newly-introduced majors, such as Criminal Justice. A new freshman experience was recently finalized, too.

What other changes can be expected in the future? Renovations to Miller and Henry Halls are coming, along with a full-time economist, to name a few.

The academic redesign has improved college administration by the establishment of the five school directors instead of 31 separate department chairs, enabling more efficient communication between faculty.

President Varlotta was asked about the status of the commuter parking lot, and *VP Lyon*, who continues to work on this issue, explained that while the responsible parties are familiar with the issue, nothing can be done at this time due to the weather. Officials are mulling over what type of improvements might be made to the lot. They are also considering a possible townhouse van loop to free up street parking atop the hill.

Mrs. Gatrell accommodates commuter students in a number of ways, including the Commuter Connections newsletter sent out via email, the Commuter Advisory Board (CAB), lists in the commuter lounge of campus activities, and complimentary lunches, also in the commuter lounge. Her door is always open.

As for international student involvement and enrollment, Hiram is taking steps to strengthen our partnerships with John Cabot University in Rome, in addition to universities in Japan and Israel. This strengthens our major offerings, and encourages them to send students to our campus, as we do to theirs. Efforts are being made by Admissions to attract foreign students who'd be interested in attending Hiram College for four years via the use of reputable agents, too.

In addressing accessibility on campus, *President Varlotta* recognized that the campus has at least \$8 million in deferred maintenance, which is gradually being taken care of as our finances allow. While the library elevator remains under repair, a secondary staff elevator is available for handicapped persons – please see library personnel.

Improved and additional signage is being considered for campus, to provide better navigation and to signify the boundaries of the College. Alumni have been reached out to, for the project would cost \$250,000.

Attempts have been made to remove the old house on the corner of Hinsdale Street and Route 700. When asked, *President Varlotta* expressed the potentiality of a student petition and presentation before the Hiram Village Council to approach the issue. Efforts are also being made to preserve College history despite the introduction of the New Liberal Arts, such as further promoting President Garfield and making use of the Zimmerman House.

Improvements to the path between the Kennedy and Coleman Centers are being considered in the context of the master plan.

Increasing diversity among the faculty and professional staff pertaining to a number of attributes is a goal. Human Resources has tried to post jobs where people of color are more likely to see them, and the return of the Diversity Fellowship is being talked about. *President Varlotta* suggested that *Senator Thornton* work with the Diversity Committee to develop a survey to help determine student perception of diversity on campus.

Campus is being promoted and students retained through the successful launch of the “I AM HIRAM” campaign on a variety of platforms.

There appears to be a shortage of money to fund conference participation by Hiram students. It may be that it is quite popular. Alumni could be asked to donate for this purpose.

Senators Mention

Senator Kidd proposed the creation of an LGBTQ+ Senate committee and explained that it would exist alongside and help to supplement the PRYSM club.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 by VP Stevenson.