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Clark Division
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So a few weeks ago the mock trial team headed over to Syracuse to compete in our Regional Championships. Now the judges do not know what schools we are from while we compete, to ensure impartiality. After the second-round ballots were turned in, the judges asked us where we were from. Naturally we responded, "Oh, we're from Hamilton College," to which a judge responded "Hamilton.... Nice!" Then he turned to the other team and asked, "So where are you from?" to which they responded, "We are from Brown University," to which the judge replied, "Brown.... Where's that?" That's what I'm talking about! Get your Ivy League butt out of here because Hamilton is where it is at!

Now I also feel obligated to tell you that during the first round of that same competition, Hamilton got out the broom and swept some punk scrub team from Boston. I don't even remember their name, but it was something with an "H." Their name did not warrant the brain space in my memory banks.

We ended up qualifying for the national championship for the first time in the team's history. On the way home, Queen's "We are the Champions" fittingly came over the radio and we sang along. We were all shouting "Hamilton" and pumping our fists. It was amazing. And it is this moment that I will focus my speech on. Not this event per se, but rather this snapshot in time, specifically the emotions and feelings present in that car ride home.

You see, knowing what I know today, of course there are many things that I would do differently at Hamilton College if I could start over again. I could correct virtually every mistake I have made and regret that I have. I would know what classes to take and which ones to avoid. I could choose to take advantage of more opportunities like studying abroad or taking a wider distribution of classes. I could even say that I would join more clubs, perhaps by going out on a limb and joining the rugby team. This last thought is particularly poignant, as of all the sporting events I have attended this one looks like the most fun ... at least until someone gets hit, that is. Taking advantage of already offered opportunities and correcting mistakes, however, is what virtually every Hamilton student would do if they could go back. Plus, I can make up for all these things later on in life. I am still free to travel the world, take more classes or reads books in certain disciplines, and yes, perhaps I someday I will even partake in a community rugby league ... or at least a flag football league.

Rather than focus on these common answers, which are an inevitable result of a lack of knowledge and a finite amount of time, knowing what I know today I would go back and strive to achieve something that I have observed Hamilton to be severely lacking in. It is something that I could only achieve as a student and cannot compensate for as an adult. It is something that would also leave its mark on the Hamilton College community for decades to come. Simply put, I would strive to bring school spirit to Hamilton College.

I have developed a two-pronged assault to establish this mindset. First and foremost, I would create and found a factor that is vital to school spirit and unity: the creation of a rival. Currently Hamilton has no rival school. Colgate is somewhat like a rival but is actually closer to being a sister school. It is Division I, so we never play them in athletics; it is larger than us and is actually not all that similar. We just tend to not like it because we are often grouped with it, but cooperating with Colgate works to our advantage in many regards, so we would not want to make them our rival. Also, none of the other NESCAC schools are worthy of being our rivals because we have no history of conflict with them and because they are undeniably weaker and vastly inferior in every way, shape and form.

Thus, I propose the assignment of a new rival, one that is cunning, one that we have a history of conflict with, and one that can rise to our level and provide a true challenge for the superior race that is the Hamilton College student body. I would choose none other than the University of Virginia. They may think they are tough stuff with their thirteen-thousand-strong student body, the titan-like dominance of their Division I sports teams, and their national recognition and pre-eminent status, but let us see how those Virginian Cavaliers, who draw their swords as they ride into battle, can handle a musket ball to the face from a Continental soldier.

They are the perfect rival for several reasons. Primarily, the history of conflict stems from UVA's founder, who is none other than the despicable, scoundrelous, pudgy slave driver we all know as Thomas Jefferson, Hamilton's ideological rival and intellectual inferior. Hamilton and Jefferson hated one another, and so we shall finish the epic battle between them by continuously reminding UVA, Jefferson's lineage, that they are inferior to us Hamiltonians. As additional advantages, we know that we have the element of surprise because there is a good chance that most people at UVA have never heard of Hamilton. As our final advantage, given the size and resources of UVA in comparison to Hamilton, we would clearly be the underdog, and everyone knows that America loves rooting for the underdog. A rival fosters strong bonds of unity and hence spirit because everyone is rooting for the same team and against the same team.

The second prong of my plan centers on competition. A supermajority of the student body should attend all home sporting events, from football to field hockey, dressed in school

colors, with face paint and noisemakers, ready to harass, heckle, and rattle (within school rules) all of the visiting teams. Not only would such support help our athletic teams, but these venues are designed to hold large numbers of people and the competitive nature of the event creates a naturally unifying theme as we all root for the home team and against the visiting team. Furthering this unity via competition, I believe that clubs, organizations, and even dorms or random groups of friends should feel free to challenge other schools to competitions. For example, one group might challenge the University of Miami to a snowman building competition. Cook-offs, cricket, gin rummy, or virtually any activity can serve as a competitive event where Hamilton students can unite in competition and spread our reputation.

Instilling this level of school spirit will greatly enhance the quality of life at Hamilton College. One way it will accomplish this is through the creation of new social norms. No longer will you walk along the *Hamilton College* campus and see students wearing Middlebury t-shirts and Colby sweatshirts. No longer will students have to look to the back of the pamphlet to know the words to *Carissima* because they will have sung it many times before. School spirit will enhance the quality of life of students and staff alike.

Now I have struggled to define and explain what this level of school spirit would look like and have come to realize that I cannot adequately explain it in words. So instead I have chosen two paradigm examples of loyalty and spirit that demonstrate what I am speaking about. The first is the widely loved and very special school known as the University of Notre Dame. It has a phenomenal national reputation and is, arguably, the only college in the country that has lifetime fans who watch every football game, buy all the paraphernalia, and sing their fight song to their infant children as a lullaby even though said fans have absolutely no affiliation with the school whatsoever. This is crazy! Why would people do this? They do it because Notre Dame has created such a wonderfully amazing environment filled with spirit that other people actually want and crave to be a part of it. This is what we need. Notre Dame alumni exhibit wonderfully fanatic loyalty. As soon as one alumnus learns that someone is from Notre Dame, immediately there is an unbreakable bond formed between them. Each is willing to go out of his way for the other. Virtually every student knows the starting lineup of their football team. The student body comes out in full force for all athletic events with their faces painted and itching to rattle the visiting team. When you walk along their campus you would never see a student wearing the emblem of any other school, especially Michigan State. This immense sense of cohesion and strength permeates the lives of all who attend or work at the school. It not only advances the quality of experience while there, but also enhances alumni life.

Now some may look at this first example as being too farfetched because of the unique history and size of Notre Dame, especially as compared to Hamilton. To compensate, as my second example I have chosen something much closer to home: the Hamilton College men's and women's rugby teams. You have to be crazy to play the game of rugby. In rugby your teammates cannot block for you, so when you get the ball it is you versus the fifteen members of the opposing team, which is composed of grizzly-like goliaths who foam at the mouth, not to intimidate you but rather because they actually have rabies. But the players love it and play as a true team. They have numerous social events with one another and look out for one another both on and off the field. They are full of tradition and have all sorts of acronyms, emblems, and, most of all, they have pride. They even have ritual songs, some of which are composed more of sounds and grunts than actual words. You look at them and you not only know that they are having fun, but there is no doubt in your mind that they are team. As good or as bad as their season may be, all look on with amazement and envy at the special bond they share and the unique environment they have created around them.

In conclusion, having the benefit of my current state of knowledge and the luxury to go back in time four years, I would choose to enhance the Hamilton College culture. Our students and our staff need a sense a loyalty, duty, pride and spirit. The creation of a worthy and high-caliber rivalry as well as the instilling of a competitive and creative character will help achieve this goal. Given the difficulty in establishing these prongs, I can offer no readily available strategy on how to achieve them individually without writing a dissertation, and even then it will always be subject to how events turn out and how the community responds. What I can say is that my goal is an admirable and much needed goal. Our oldest alumni exhibit such loyalty, but the younger generations seem to lack it. There has been a drastic shift in the lifestyle of the student and staff member at Hamilton College, and somewhere along the road, school spirit and the responsibility of furthering, carrying, and protecting the Hamilton College name was lost. I seek to bring it back.