Hamilton College
Notes from Community Forum on Citizenship
September 18, 2009

How do we define "community" here?
- Different constituencies are here for different reasons (i.e. students, staff, faculty, etc)
- Shares values?
- Some common values, but not all – so what value do we share in common?
- Learning community – knowledge
- College-> a social experiment, so we need social community basis as well – civility
- Mission-based->education->proof->obligation
- Diff groups and viewpoints->ok But not strong communication
- Need more open communication
- Is communication enough?
- Coming here means you automatically join a community
- What makes it meaningful/
- Back to citizenship…are we equal participants?
- Formal vs. substantive citizenship – even initiation to come here interpreted diff by diff groups (i.e. time)
- Community/citizenship are defined by resources
  - Consider time of activities
  - Humans v zombies -> facilitates interaction, camaraderie (outside of values)
- Obligations outside of classroom
- Accountability; discussion; VOICE
- Responsibility to understand others' viewpoints
- Willingness to participate (campus-wide events)
- Tricky for employees since they don't reside on-campus

How do we make ACTIVE PARTICIPATION a norm?
- Values are demonstrated thru practice
- What is successful communication
- Employees may have a particular role in bringing students together
- Is responsibility greater for those who live here?
- 1st years, for ex., have responsibility to make roommate situation work
- Whose responsibility is it when bad things happen?
- Take responsibility for actions
- Some conflicts are inevitable – others occur out of ignorance, and that's diff. -> comes from lack of education
- Professor->create environment
- Sometimes a voice needs to be heard – those in authority can articulate college position, but one voice can't do it alone
- How we take resp. for the culture/climate?
- We can articulate positions but also need to think strategically – ongoing process
- Some issues get defined as "jokes" that others define as a problem

Honor Code – the institution has a policy and the institution responds (not a single person) ->how might we similarly respond to violations of community norms?
- One diff is that HC is narrowly defined
- We demonstrate value of HC by emphasizing it early and often (i.e. Bates -> egalitarianism is articulated as value in tours)
- How do we get people to respond who aren't expected to respond?
- How do we encourage VOICE across constituencies? Make people welcome

Following from that, do we discourage outspokenness? At an administrative classroom social level?

- ➢ How should faculty use classroom time to facilitate conversations?
    - o Any subject?
    - o Those who do deal with stuff (incidents on-campus) are then marginalized and seen as less valuable academically
- ➢ Education happens when material is presented and students are in a position to learn it/receive it
- ➢ Faculty have responsibility beyond material for their courses
- ➢ Different groups voices are squashed in diff ways
    - o Faculty->untenured
    - o Staff->varies by dept
    - o Who suppresses voices? {culture/climate}
    - o Also issue of stigma
- ➢ Labeling of student groups who exercise voice -->comes from lack of system of communication
- ➢ Think institutionally, not individually
- ➢ Speaking out is challenging (hurdles)

Community members are intentionally selected to represent diversity of values/ideas -->

- ➢ HC – like a social experiment
- ➢ We may not agree on values and ideals, but we can agree on processes
- ➢ But we are a community with higher aspirations/those of us here long term have special obligation/we do know people feel silenced, and that's a problem for an institution like this.
- ➢ Hard to know speaking out means – being judged, admin can and should intervene
- ➢ One issue-->power difference (i.e. faculty/students)
- ➢ How to deal with those who don't care?

Wrap up consisted of an invitation to continue the discussion by providing ideas on how to create greater inclusiveness. Feel free to contact Steve Yao, Associate Dean of Students for Diversity Initiatives, Allen Harrison, Associate Dean of Students for Diversity and Accessibility and/or Madeleine Lopez, Consulting Director of the Cultural Education Center (CEC) to provide your thoughts.