

Hamilton College
Academic Vision
Committee
Practical Vision &
Notes

April 21-22, 2017



**Hamilton College Academic Vision Committee
2022 Practical Vision (Created April 22, 2017)**

1. Integrated learning across boundaries		2. Healthy community: Education for life		3. Respectful interaction outside the classroom		4. Supported risk-taking (students)	
Place	Culture	Remedial support	Informal student / faculty time	Encourage positive risk taking			
Distinctive - ADK-link to ENST, food, sustain untapped resource	Breaking down silos - faculty can teach and research outside traditional discipline - Students learn from each other outside class	Education for life De-stigmatize mental health resources by incorporating more therapeutic resource into curriculum	Sense of community between faculty and students	Stronger emphasis on trying new things Grades: 1 st yr. forgive credit/no credit			
Global initiative – linking language to other disciplines – hybrid majors	Mixing of different student groups starting in classroom - Safe space	Funding for support systems for incoming students	Student led learning	Students get out of comfort zone: try new things Challenge: struggle			
Expanded study abroad/global	Give faculty course release/time off to take classes in other depts. at the college (blurs student / faculty lines)	Don't compartmentalize student mental health issues as distinct from academic program	Parallels between student and faculty development	Self-evaluation and reflection are encouraged /external evaluations discouraged			
	Encourage relationships across campus friend groups	Make SSIH requirement less abstract (Between the World and Me)		Leverage diversity: opportunities that encourage students to go beyond their "circles" Accessible courses for non-majors			
	Foster a cross-curricular approach that is in sync with the professional world	Ensure all students get the best out of Hamilton - Success for all					
	Greater flexibility in teaching e.g. interdisciplinary and co-teaching	Make Hamilton more accessible to a broader array of students					
	Digital sharing	Promote / invest in lifelong learning					
	Group work						

**Hamilton College Academic Vision Committee
2022 Practical Vision (Created April 22, 2017)**

5. Foundational skills as core competency	6. Modes of learning: It's messier than it looks	7. Culture of shared responsibility	8. Institutional risk-taking to be a leader	9. Recruit & retain committed faculty
Focus on: Writing Speaking Problem-solving Quantitative literacy	Respectful Disagreement	Buy-in of shared governance - Faculty: Δ expectations desire to do, not "required" - Student investment in "running" college	Encourage holistic forms of evaluation De-emphasize grades	Diversity - Increased diversity of faculty - Leads to increased diversity of student body
Digital literacy and Digital citizenship	More experiential learning	Engaged Community	De-emphasize sports	Community attracts faculty to come to stay & be part of a larger picture
Team-based learning	What kinds of learning can be trans-contextual?	Research conducted with students in service of the college	Hamilton takes risks Refuses to participate in rankings	Retain faculty with innovative partner hiring options
Writing as a process	Experiential learning		Technology to free up faculty time	
Foundation of speaking & writing: ability to think critically	More experiential learning (integrates different areas of the curriculum)			
Trained to be flexible, critical thinkers in a changing environment	Integration of alumni into development of career skills			
Communication within classrooms - Professional skills & drive - Collaboration & learning from peers	Independent / student directed learning			
Strengthen communication - Resources - Requirements				

Hamilton College Academic Vision Committee Meeting Summary

Strategic Planning Framework – Key Questions:

- **Why do we exist?**
 - Storytelling: most/least valuable academic experiences
 - Purpose

- **Where can we have impact?**
 - Practical vision
 - Force-field: driving forces & restraining forces
 - Key –focus areas
 - Scenarios

- **What will we do?**
 - Prototype / experiment
 - Commitment
 - Roadmap (iterative 12-18 months)

Hamilton College Academic Vision Committee Meeting Summary

Storytelling Feedback: Most (and Least) Valuable Academic Experiences

Bob

- See annualist letters for more on “best academic experiences”
- Relationships with faculty
 - Pushing us to think critically
 - Funny/humor
 - Dinners at faculty houses: poker games! Tremendous closeness
 - Trust – speak frankly
 - Felt they knew us / cared about us and our individual needs
 - Respect
- Role of faculty in advising
 - Issue: should faculty do this? e.g. Syracuse has professional advisors
 - Risk of faculty not advising: lack concern, awareness beyond curriculum

Brian

- Wish for major with a sense of community
- Most valuable: classes with a specific focus
 - Shakespeare, Jane Austin, etc.
 - Everyone passionate, focus, engaged
 - Dialogue – engagement
 - Small classes

Dan

- Professors are better at role modeling than content...people don't remember content
- Make the practical connection in their own lives
- Modeling values, e.g. David Walden
- “How are you?” Personal connection in class. Platform between content and how to use it
- First ask, “what is this class doing for me?” Then read, speak up, go above and beyond.

Tara

- Interviews a couple - both '97 alums
- Relationship with professor outside class
 - Gave them books
 - What happened in/outside class – intermingled
- Dialogue & engagement
- Her best experiences:
 - Thesis/independent work
 - Learned to write, enjoyed research
 - Independence important & being successful
 - Classes changed how I thought about science
 - OK to discuss
 - Saw it was transformative – “ah ha's”
- His best experiences
 - Rigor of history (Doug Ambrose)
 - Meaningful feedback

Hamilton College Academic Vision Committee Meeting Summary

- Had to do the work
- Pushed to think deeply
- Professor immaculately prepared / well-crafted
- Like a fish: deep dive AND bigger picture
- Worst experience: professor not good at facilitating and everyone checked out
- Worst examples seem to be adjuncts, visiting (not permanent faculty)

Chris

- Student 1's most valuable: explore what I like to do going forward
 - 3 big experiences – each was a discovery and stepping stone
 - Finance: didn't like finance, but liked research
 - Levitt summer
 - Thesis
 - Working with professor outside of classroom – eye opening
 - International – engaged with them / exciting
 - Brought this together with the thesis
 - Experiment: fail / success – and adjust
 - Even within focus of career
- Student 2's most valuable experience: senior project / independence
- Student 3's most valuable experience:
 - Himalayan mountains
 - Pushed out of comfort zone
 - More experiential education
- Alum most valuable experience: learning to write in a field & group projects
- Bad experiences
 - Student: still learned from classes I didn't like
 - Alum: thought I needed more career / pragmatic skills and training

Robin

- Senior student – most valuable
 - Semester at NE Center for Children – practical internship – ideal for a job
 - Writing & intensive programs
 - Humanities: dialogue, writing
 - Wish for more psych courses that are writing intensive
- Least valuable: psych statistics with a visiting professor

Jenna

- My independent study
- Recognized as an individual – this was huge for me
- What I'm interested in vs. professor's agenda
- Discuss creativity, theology, etc.
- Relationship – and interdependence
- Room to make connections to the past 4 years: integrations / interdisciplinary connections
- See what I thought was random are actually woven together

Hamilton College Academic Vision Committee Meeting Summary

Gordon

- 4 students
- Courses: knocked out of my comfort zone
 - Different for each student which course was great or not
 - No common theme re: academic discipline
 - Different topics “knocked me”
- All: learned something about themselves
- Very different stories – all about personal experience
- Learning how to learn
- Faculty: give the project and let them fumble; struggle vs. “right answer”; need to get through this before I can learn

Kyra

- Professor relationships
 - Best: used office hours; able to connect; learn my skill set and how I would catch up
 - Worst: co-taught where one professor dominated
- 2 study abroad students
 - Gain different experiences
 - Would like more dialogue within the government dept.
 - History classes: solidified that I wanted to work outside my comfort zone
- Consistency important (issue with adjunct/visiting professors)

Michael

- My best experience
 - Required government class
 - Began with a paper with no direction – struggled but amazing – found my bearings
 - Able to apply this throughout the semester
 - Independence – do my own research and apply it throughout
- Least favorite
 - Required
 - Unorganized; no clear focus to learning
 - Too much theory and too little practice
- Other students:
 - Came because of small classes and relationship with professors
 - Got research experience – this was amazing; able to apply/use it
 - Negative experience: co-taught course

Marianne

- Student 1
 - Zadie Smith talk in the Chapel – talked about Martin Buber and then went and read him; sparked a conversation with other students
 - Another visiting writer
 - Experience to understand themselves
 - Sparked interesting conversations
 - Worst experience: required class; big; too much too quick; didn’t get to talk / no dialogue

Hamilton College Academic Vision Committee Meeting Summary

- Student 2
 - Loved a philosophy conference she organized; showed her what she was good at & wanted to do
 - Geology field study: students teaching each other

Additional Data from 2016 Senior Survey

- What was your most meaningful educational experience at Hamilton?
 - 21% senior project
 - 52% specific classes/professors/departments (other than SP)
 - 9% travel abroad/off campus
 - 8% extracurricular activities
 - 5% social relationships/friends
 - 6% independent/summer research

Reflections on stories: themes that stand out

- Faculty - student relationships
 - Community
- Student relationships
 - Cohort – peer-to-peer; student culture
 - Combination of caring without being competitive
- Out of comfort zone
 - Independence
 - Push to think critically
 - Experiment
 - Feedback
- Engagement; passion; focus; dialogue
- Application; practice; tangible
- Developmental
 - Changes over time: alumni reflections focus on reading and problem-solving
 - Exposure to different experiences
 - Discovery – point of “ah ha”; linked to research
 - Worldview shifts
- Development of speaking & communications skills
 - Tune into your audience
- Learn about myself /personal learning
- Connect across classes – integration sticks and is meaningful
- Problem-solving skills an advantage; writing & speaking – foundation for the longer term