

## **INITIAL CHARGE AND GUIDANCE FROM THE 2016/17 WORKING GROUPS**

### *Create a Healthier Community:*

*Position Hamilton as a leader in developing the whole student. Our students operate in a high-achieving environment with many demands on time and energy. Integrating and strengthening counseling, health, and wellness activities on campus and relating them to academic life will help students manage stress and become more responsible and self-reliant individuals and community members. Student's desire and benefit from close relationships with faculty and other adult mentors and research indicates such relationships are a key driver of student success.*

It is the goal of this sub-committee to recommend programs and resources that will transform our campus into a community that is recognized as a national leader in the health and wellness of its members. The programs and resources we recommend will address all forms of wellness to include academic, intellectual, social, emotional, physical, spiritual, financial, occupational, and environmental dimensions.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW**

1. The College should institute a short term either during January or late April to May to accomplish several positive outcomes that will not only differentiate us from most of our peers but also, and more importantly, enrich the lives of our students and those in our community in profound ways. We envision a period of at least three weeks prior to, or following, the spring term in which students can study or engage in internships or other programs away from Hamilton, or participate in campus-based courses and programs.
2. The College should create a Wellness Institute to centralize and coordinate wellness services for all members of our community, an initiative that would in turn establish Hamilton as a leader in developing and maintaining a healthy campus and provide positive, measurable impacts on critical areas of health for the College. We envision an institute that would utilize a multidimensional model of wellness that explores “knowing thyself” along intellectual, social, emotional, physical, spiritual, financial, occupational, and environmental dimensions. Each area of wellness would be a vehicle for facilitating partnerships across the College and would, together, develop a unified approach to wellness for students and employees alike that would positively impact recruitment, retention, and key measures of overall health.
3. The College should create an integrated housing village for students and staff. For many years, the Dean of Students office has heard from students returning from off-campus study experiences, how difficult it is to readjust to living in a residence hall. Students report missing the culture they left from their away experience, the independent lifestyle they were living and making what they perceive as adult decisions. As faculty move further and further away from the College, a tradition that seems to have faded over the years is students visiting faculty in their homes. An integrated housing model where juniors and seniors alongside faculty and staff living in College owned housing could continue this sense of independence for our students and enhance the faculty student relationship.

Respectfully,

Jeff Landry, Associate Dean of Students for Health and Safety  
Prof. Rob Hopkins, Associate Professor of Music  
Miriam Merrill, Associate Director of Athletics and Associate Professor of Physical Education  
Celeste Moore, Assistant Professor of History  
David Walden, Director of Counseling and Psychological Services and Lecturer in Psychology

## **Short Academic Term**

The College should institute a short term either during January or late April to May to accomplish several positive outcomes that will not only differentiate us from most of our peers but also, and more importantly, enrich the lives of our students and those in our community in profound ways. We envision a period of at least three weeks prior to, or following, the spring term in which students can study or engage in internships or other programs away from Hamilton, or participate in campus-based courses and programs. We expect that students will have a choice of many opportunities that will earn them a half credit toward graduation. We propose that all students be required to participate in at least two of the short terms during their four-year program. We further recommend that the College place an emphasis on study abroad and experiential learning, thereby ensuring that every student could graduate from Hamilton with first-hand experience of living or working in a different culture and becoming a more informed citizen.

The short term will enable students to engage with new cultures, experiences, and places in a way that is simply not possible during the fall or spring terms, when they have competing priorities.

While many students participate in our off-campus study programs, this program would make that opportunity available to many more students who might otherwise (for reasons of financial need or academic demands) choose not to participate. Hamilton would need to provide financial assistance to those who need it, and to provide financial resources to faculty and staff members to develop and lead programs away from campus. Opportunities to study abroad for all our students will help counteract the relative isolation of our campus and will, significantly, enable our students to pursue an educational program that fosters a better understanding of cultural diversity and an ethical, informed, and engaged citizenship. Any study-abroad program will need to offer our students preparatory and re-entry programs, thus contributing to the mental health of our student body. By integrating this experience into the curriculum, students will be better positioned to reflect on their time away from Hamilton and productively incorporate it into courses and community discussions. In short, it would strengthen our commitment to forging an inclusive community at Hamilton.

The short term will offer additional opportunities for experiential learning and for departments to offer courses that would fulfill the new Social, Structural, and Institutional Hierarchies requirement. It would also provide more opportunities for internships and for independent study.

### **ACTIONS**

- Institute a new three-week short term before or after the spring term each year.
- Require all students to participate in at least two short terms.
- Invite alumni and retired faculty members to participate in the new short terms, either as co-leaders or as “hosts.”
- Pay staff and retired faculty, and give faculty teaching credit, for their participation; give students course credit.
- Require that students participate in preparatory and “re-entry” programs for study-abroad programs.
- Establish funding for students who need financial aid to participate in programs away from Hamilton.
- Increase the size of the faculty, as necessary, so that all departments have the capability of supporting courses and programs in the short terms on a regular basis.
- Give the Off-Campus Study Office greater institutional resources to support programs.
- Allow individual departments to use short-term courses to fulfill the social, structural, and institutional hierarchies requirement.
- Offer employees assistance (particularly with regards to family and child care needs) when asked to lead off-campus short term courses

### **OUTCOMES**

- Hamilton will be recognized as a leader both in the Global Liberal Arts and in developing the whole student.
- All students will have the opportunity to study abroad if they want to.
- Students and faculty will have a chance to leave the geographical isolation of upstate New York to learn more about the world.
- Students and faculty will have greater flexibility when planning their course loads.
- Students will have opportunities to see their education in action, whether in a foreign lab, archeological dig, collaborative project, or performance.
- Students will have an opportunity to learn in a less stressful environment.
- Students may be more willing to take risks in a short-term course, whether in trying out a new discipline or learning a new skill.
- Students will have new opportunities for meeting the SSIH requirement in inventive and exciting ways.
- Faculty will develop and sustain relationships with colleagues and institutions in other parts of the country and world.
- Alumni and retired faculty will have the opportunity to participate in short-term courses and programs.

### **THINGS TO CONSIDER**

- Short-term courses could include both credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing courses.
- Courses could be graded in the usual way, or only credit/no-credit.
- The climate in countries around the equator makes late April to May a bad choice for travel.
- In addition to study abroad programs, faculty members could be encouraged to create courses or programs specifically aimed at improving collaboration among students or providing career- or health-related programs and courses, or providing community engagement.
- Students could be invited to create short-term programs or courses.
- Seniors may find a January short term as an ideal time to focus solely on their senior projects.
- Room and board for short-term courses that are on campus must be part of regular tuition.

## **Wellness Institute**

The College should create a Wellness Institute to centralize and coordinate wellness services for all members of our community, an initiative that would in turn establish Hamilton as a leader in developing and maintaining a healthy campus and provide positive, measurable impacts on critical areas of health for the College. We envision an institute that would utilize a multidimensional model of wellness that explores “knowing thyself” along intellectual, social, emotional, physical, spiritual, financial, occupational, and environmental dimensions. Each area of wellness would be a vehicle for facilitating partnerships across the College and would, together, develop a unified approach to wellness for students and employees alike that would positively impact recruitment, retention, and key measures of overall health.

We recognize that issues around health and wellness have come into sharper focus in higher education over the last several years, as the numbers of students visiting Counseling and Health Centers across the nation have increased dramatically and attention has been drawn to the impacts of critical incidents and ongoing costs associated with employee health. Colleges and universities have increased focus on the overall well-being of students and employees, and a Wellness Institute would serve to centralize and sharpen Hamilton’s efforts by defining a wellness model for our community and then developing and executing a diverse array of programmatic efforts based on that model.

Staffed by additional administrative personnel, a Wellness Institute would generate outreach on how to nurture healthier behaviors, organize some sustainability efforts, coordinate the offerings of other offices on campus, and serve as a centralized point around which wellness could be identified and branded as an integral part of the Hamilton experience. This model would allow for an integration of student and employee wellness, as well as connecting wellness to curricular goals and decisions. In short, a Wellness Institute would be the next natural step in solidifying Hamilton’s commitment to the health and wellness of our community.

### **ACTIONS**

- Establish a Wellness Institute, utilizing existing space or in a new building located near existing/future student services buildings (Sadove, Counseling and Health)
- Appropriately staff the Institute so that it has the capability to coordinate efforts across campus and generate new and innovative programming.
- Develop programs to increase social wellness around specific skills such as interpersonal communication, self-care, bystander intervention, and clarification of goals around social relationships in collaboration with Title IX and Counseling Center.
- Create programs to increase skills such as emotional intelligence, failure recovery/resilience, self-care, and academic/work-life balance, in collaboration with Academic Resource Centers and Counseling Center.
- Coordinate with Dean of Faculty to implement a wellness hour within the academic day to be used for self-care (e.g., campus wide gatherings, club meetings, meditation, or other self-care practices).
- Create programming to address dietary education, physical fitness, and healthy lifestyles in collaboration with the Counseling Center, Health Center, and Athletics.
- Coordinate programming around the spiritual life of all members of the community, in collaboration with the Chaplaincy.
- Develop programming focused on financial literacy, wealth inequality, and differential access to financial services in coordination with Financial Aid and other appropriate departments.
- Coordinate with the Career Center in offering programs focused on occupational wellness, including goals clarification and workplace satisfaction
- Coordinate environmental wellness efforts, including developing a sustainability strategic plan that would strengthen existing efforts around environmental studies, Hamilton’s commitment to carbon neutrality, and add resources to specific initiatives (e.g., decreasing vehicular use on campus, campus far, limiting use of toxic chemicals, etc).
- Collaborate on other specific initiatives that would positively impact the recruitment and retention of students and employees (e.g., meeting the needs of specific populations, exploring on-campus childcare services and infant care, create support for spousal hiring, etc).

**OUTCOMES**

- Centralize wellness efforts and infuse wellness into campus culture as a core part of the College's mission
- Work to ensure Hamilton is recognized as one of the healthiest liberal arts colleges in the United States
- Increase recruitment and retention of talented and diverse students and employees
- Lower health insurance costs for the College
- Mitigate or stop increases in demand at Counseling and Health Centers
- Increase employee and student wellness
- Provide opportunities for employees to collaborate meaningfully across departments
- Decrease student leaves
- Increase lifetime adherence to healthy mind, body, and spirit practices

## **Integrated Housing Village**

The College should create an integrated housing village for students and staff. For many years, the Dean of Students office has heard from students returning from off-campus study experiences, how difficult it is to readjust to living in a residence hall. Students report missing the culture they left from their away experience, the independent lifestyle they were living and making what they perceive as adult decisions. As faculty move further and further away from the College, a tradition that seems to have faded over the years is students visiting faculty in their homes. An integrated housing model where juniors and seniors alongside faculty and staff living in College owned housing could continue this sense of independence for our students and enhance the faculty student relationship.

One component of the Integrated Housing Village is housing for faculty and staff to not only live among students, but also to interact in a way to further educate our students. Critical to this model would be a central meeting area large enough for groups of students, faculty and staff to meet regularly. A programming model where faculty/staff in residence can share a meal with seniors and discuss life skills such as how to lease an apartment or how to do your taxes or Bon Appetit teaching students how to cook would be valuable information to our seniors as they prepare to graduate.

While this housing could be available to any staff or faculty member, it may be an attractive option for new faculty/staff and their families and may help in recruiting new employees to the College. In addition, this model may be an attractive option for retired faculty. This would allow the opportunity for retired faculty to stay connected to the Campus and for the campus to continue to benefit from their expertise.

Location and repurposing existing property may be an attractive option for this project. For example, using the Rogers Estate as the central hub/ common area and building apartments and townhouses around it that match the style and appearance. And perhaps, returning the Rogers Estate to its original function, as a place for visiting speakers to stay and who would engage with the residents of the Village.

### **ACTIONS**

- Build desirable apartment style housing for juniors and seniors
- Build affordable, high-end townhouse style apartments for faculty and staff
- Build higher-end townhouses for retired faculty
- Design social spaces and dining areas to allow faculty, staff and students to engage around a variety of topics
- Housing Village may repurpose existing housing options such as the Roger's Estate.
- Integrated housing village may include on-site daycare/early learning opportunities for faculty children, which would benefit employees and students alike.
- Housing village would adhere to ongoing sustainability efforts.

### **OUTCOMES**

- Apartment style living would provide more independence than our traditional residential offerings provide and allow students to gain valuable skills in order to transition to life off of the Hill
- This facility would add to housing capacity in order to:
  - increase enrollment
  - take current housing options offline
  - create some flexibility in housing stock
- As more and more faculty and staff move further away from the College, bringing staff back to the Hill would positively benefit the Hamilton and Clinton communities.
- Integrated housing would create a space for retired faculty to live and also stay connected with the College through attendance at or providing lectures or other expertise.

- Integration of students, faculty and staff would allow for faculty and staff to provide a positive role model for students on how adults and families operate on a day-to-day basis.
- residents may provide programming such as cooking classes and other life skills such as learning to file tax returns, how to lease an apartment, etc.