

## **STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE - INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

### 1. Develop a broader, holistic system of **ADVISING and MENTORSHIP**

#### **a. Rationale:**

- i. Students desire and benefit from close relationships with faculty and other adult mentors, and research indicates that such relationships are a key driver of student success. Hamilton prides itself as fostering these relationships - but we can do better.
- ii. Includes, but is not limited to, improving academic advising and creating opportunities for faculty-student interaction.
- iii. Would also include initiatives for non-academic mentoring and support.
- iv. Current advising/mentoring is very 'siloe'd'.
- v. Drive campus-wide cultural shift to supporting and mentoring students holistically - every adult is a potential mentor and guide.

#### **b. Possible strategies:**

- i. Academic/Faculty
  1. Support faculty to host advisees for regular gatherings / meals
  2. Have a Faculty member connected to each orientation group.
  3. Create unstructured block in academic schedule (to allow for group meetings)
- ii. Holistic Support
  1. Create "Center for Student Advising" which would connect faculty advisor, career center life coach, counseling center advisor and Dean of Students
  2. Create a Dean of Students for each of the four classes. The Dean manages the Advisors who are tasked with completely understanding our curriculum and are well versed in creating a path for students to reach their educational and co-curricular goals. The Dean oversees the whole process for each class to ensure everyone is connected and functioning well. (Hamilton tried something like this before.)
  3. Integrate advising software so that all parties can stay connected and access current information about advisees
  4. Consider an "opt-in" model of faculty advising, which allows faculty to advise by choice as part of their service. This presumably reduced number of advisors would be supplemented by staff / administrators who could also "opt-in". [Note that larger question of faculty service needs to be addressed as part of this.]
  5. Dedicated advising liaisons to particular campus groups (LGBTQ, Hispanic, African-Americans, Asian-Americans)
  6. Develop alumni mentoring network.

#### **c. References:**

- i. Bates “Student Support Advisors” -  
<http://www.bates.edu/student-affairs/student-support-and-advising/>
- ii. Wellesley “Office of Intercultural Education” -  
<http://www.wellesley.edu/studentlife/diverse/intercultural/team#MfhWhjXj53ZmYU6c.97>
- iii. Colby’s “Advising Dean Program” -  
<http://www.colby.edu/deanofthecollege/deanofstuconductdiscipline/>

2. Provide all students with the opportunity for **EXPERIENTIAL / CO-CURRICULAR LEARNING**

a. **Rationale:** Opportunities to engage in hands-on, applied learning experiences will help students contextualize academic learning and develop demonstrable skills in meeting real-world challenges.

b. **Possible strategies:**

- i. Require / offer an internship component for all students
  - 1. Broad and comprehensive financial support by the College.
  - 2. Could be fulfilled in myriad ways (on campus in a department, during semester or in Jan / June / Summer term, with a non-profit or for-profit institution, as part of Hamilton off-campus study programs).
  - 3. Increased stipends for research assistance so it can be done during term.
  - 4. Participate in “consortium” internship programs with other schools that allow for shared costs, group housing, and peer networking. See peer examples [here](#), [here](#), [here](#).
- ii. Permit students to earn a stated number of academic credits for experiential-based learning.
- iii. Opportunities for hands-on projects on/off campus (Animal fostering, gardens, building, woodwork, e.g.)
- iv. Create a “Center for Community Engagement / Experiential Learning”
- v. Consider a long-term plan to create a New York City satellite campus that focuses on Career-Related Experiences. Additionally, consider a West coast Study-Away opportunity or expand domestic travel away options, perhaps at partner institutions.
- vi. Provide more funding for projects in the model of Levitt Center or Kirkland Endowment grants.

c. **References:**

- i. <http://www.middlebury.edu/student-life/creativity-innovation-exploration/engagement-careers/community-engagement>
- ii. <https://www.bates.edu/harward/>
- iii. <http://www.wesleyan.edu/jccp/>
- iv. <https://learning-in-action.williams.edu/>
- v. <http://www.bowdoin.edu/mckeen-center/>

- vi. <https://www.conncoll.edu/academics/majors-departments-programs/majors-and-minors/holleran-center/>
- vii. <http://www.summeronthecuyahoga.com/>
- viii. <http://www.climbtherockies.org/>

3. Develop an explicit program focused on **MENTAL and PHYSICAL WELLNESS**

a. **Rationale:**

- i. Our students operate in a high-achieving environment with many demands on time and energy. Stress management and emotional well-being concerns affect a large number of students.
- ii. Changes to the academic calendar and scheduling may alleviate instances of conflicts/over scheduling
- iii. Programs in stress management and wellbeing can help develop important life skills.
- iv. This would be something quite distinct from other schools.
- v. Developing the whole student, as a way of thinking about wellness.

b. **Possible strategies:**

- i. De-stress the academic cycle
  - 1. Add Jan / June / Summer term for credit / non-credit bearing classes
    - a. Allows students to spread course load in non-traditional ways: 3-1-3-1; etc.
    - b. Engage alumni to actively participate as instructors, at least for non-credit offerings
    - c. Possible co-teach opportunities between faculty and alums
    - d. Possible winter session study abroad / experiential learning programs
    - e. Create unscheduled time in weekly cycle, perhaps also expand in semester (e.g. longer reading week; random "sun" or snow day)
- ii. Required/optional PE courses in wellness.
  - 1. Offer more wellness seminars or courses - could include stress management, self awareness, meditation, yoga, communication and decision making skills.
  - 2. Do more to involve PE faculty in wellness programming.
  - 3. Could be offered as no-credit or to meet part of the first-year physical education requirement.
- iii. Physical/mental/emotional support resources positioned as College priority
  - 1. Significant institutional support for Wellness programming - campus games (that involve faculty / staff), nutrition

literature/speakers, motivational activities. Make this open to whole campus community.

2. Include comprehensive overview and focus on wellness during orientation
- iv. Assess how Hamilton is supporting students that take leaves of absence and if there are things that we can be doing to ensure that the students that leave Hamilton know that if/when they decide/want to return the door is still open to them. And help them find that entryway.

**c. References:**

- i. Wesleyan Summer Program - <http://www.wesleyan.edu/summer/>
- ii. Middlebury Winter Term - <http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/catalog/winter>
- iii. Wellesley Wintersession - [http://www.wellesley.edu/ois/wintersession\\_abroad#M7gLvzgsOsHkSEP8.97](http://www.wellesley.edu/ois/wintersession_abroad#M7gLvzgsOsHkSEP8.97)
- iv. Skidmore Summer Session - <http://www.skidmore.edu/summersession/>
- v. Hampshire College Short Term Courses - <https://www.hampshire.edu/geo/short-term-field-courses>
- vi. Colby Jan Plan - <https://www.colby.edu/januaryprogram/>
- vii. Williams Mountain Day: <https://www.williams.edu/feature-stories/2015-mountain-day/>

4. Be more deliberate about **POST GRAD OUTCOMES**

- a. **Rationale:** Ensure that Hamilton students have the skills needed to engage in a rapidly-changing world and workforce. Consider programs that will encourage and set expectations for lives of globally engaged citizenship.

**b. Possible strategies:**

- i. Embrace concept of “Purposeful Work” [broadly defined as work that contributes meaning to an individual’s life and has relevance to their greater community; could be linked to an expanded concept of “Know Thyself”].
- ii. Create a “Center for Purposeful Work,” housed within the Career Center, modeled on Bates’ center: <http://www.bates.edu/purposeful-work/>
- iii. Promote/require internships (see above)
  1. Get alumni to create internships or other kinds of experiential learning opportunities over non-academic terms.
- iv. Broader digital literacy
  1. Workshops / courses that prioritize use of digital technology and data analysis in a variety of disciplines
  2. Create a category of courses that would highlight “digital literacy across the curriculum.”
  3. Ensure that the college and faculty are prepared to support “digital natives” entering a digital workforce. That is, our students come in

with a familiarity with digital technology greater than that which many faculty currently have.

**c. References:**

- i. <http://www.bates.edu/purposeful-work/resources/purposeful-work-bibliography/>
- ii. <http://ocs.yale.edu/yale-college/yale-coordinated-domestic>
- iii. <https://www.grinnell.edu/about/offices-services/cls/students/career-exploration/externships>

5. Commit to being a leader in liberal arts colleges in creating an **INCLUSIVE and COHESIVE** campus culture - including, but not limited to, committing to robust diversity initiatives

a. Celebrate and broaden our support of DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

- i. **Rationale:** Diversity challenges persist. The college needs to prioritize leadership and support of programs to celebrate difference and teach tolerance and acceptance. We need to have Diversity of our community embraced and celebrated at all levels, and in all aspects, of College Life.

ii. **Possible strategies:**

1. Create a “Center for Diversity / Cultural Studies,” bridging academic and co-curricular offerings: i.e. Provide a much larger, more robust facility than DMC
  - a. Support programming meant to culturally enrich Hamilton, broadly defined.
  - b. Higher expectations for how the Director is intertwined with the activities of the College.
2. Create a “Pipeline Program” like U.S.C’s Neighborhood Academic Initiative, which involves partnering with nearby high schools and community colleges, to help prepare students for high-level college work. Also similar to Utica College’s Young Scholars program. Possible connection with ABC House?
3. Become peer institution leader for domestic student diversity in single identifying racial/ethnic categories [Black/African American, Hispanic/LatinX, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native/Indigenous American, etc.]
4. Focus on the selection of the next Chief Diversity Officer and make this a priority addition to the senior staff at Hamilton. Preferably a person of color dedicated to addressing real-time issues that students have.
5. Cultural shift: Re-writing the College Mission to focus on celebrating difference and diversity.
6. Assessment and improvement of Hamilton College’s accessibility for the physically differently-abled.
7. Fully fund students with a household income below \$100,000

8. Ensure all HEOP/POSSE scholars/1st Generation students can participate in study abroad, ie, provide funding for airfare and other hidden costs associated with study abroad.

**iii. References:**

1. See Swarthmore's "Intercultural Center" - <http://www.swarthmore.edu/intercultural-center>
2. Colby's "Pugh Center" - <http://www.colby.edu/pugh/>
3. Williams' "Davis Center" - <https://davis-center.williams.edu/>
4. USC's NAI: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/26/opinion/usc-neighborhood-academic-initiative-lifting-kids-to-college.html>
5. Utica College Young Scholars Program: <http://www.utica.edu/academic/yslpp/>

6. Enhance COHESIVENESS of the Hamilton community

**a. Rationale:**

- i. Develop a more comprehensive sense of community where all students feels that they "belong." While celebrating diversity and the uniqueness of the individual, develop a stronger communal sense of who "we" are as a collective.
- ii. Connect students with Alumni in meaningful ways

**b. Possible strategies:**

- i. Community teaching kitchen, where groups of students and faculty and staff can come together to cook and eat meals.
- ii. Require or expand First-Year-Courses and/or REAL courses, where students are encouraged to form closer bonds with peers and faculty.
- iii. Bryn Mawr "Sense of Belonging Survey" and Community Day of Learning
- iv. Consider a community commitment to a year-long InterGroup Dialogue Series, built from surveys and student requests.
- v. Include Faculty, Staff, and Alumni in more social events
  1. Redesign of the Late Nites, which are *meant* to provide an alternative to the more alcohol-centric nightlife
  2. Include alumni and faculty as co-hosts, organized around themes / topics, promote conversation, alcohol optional, RSVP (see Dick Tantillo events for example)
- vi. All-campus event(s) w/ alumni during Fallcoming and Spring Volunteer Weekend that remove barriers between cohorts (currently the weekends are designed to tightly control interactions) - e.g. campus-wide obstacle course, fair, concert, etc.

**c. References:**

- i. Bryn Mawr Community Day of Learning - <https://www.brynmawr.edu/community-learning/session-descriptions-2017>

7. Expand opportunities for STUDENTS to exercise **AUTONOMY/RESPONSIBILITY**

**a. Rationale:**

- i. Provide students with more opportunities to develop practical life skills, promote personal responsibility and problem-solving as capable young adults.
- ii. Create additional opportunities to engage with the Clinton/Utica community to foster a civic mindset and counteract the feeling of isolation/disconnect from the real world (the Hamilton “bubble”).
- iii. Allow students to have greater involvement in determining College policies that affect their living and learning environment
  1. Students don't need to be the sole decision makers but they **MUST** have a meaningful role. It's hypocritical to suggest that they should change communities/the world but not their College. [Haverford as a model? Include students on more governing/planning committees]

**b. Possible strategies:**

- i. Create more kinds of residential housing that make student responsibility an explicit aspect of residency. For instance:
  1. Apartment-style residences (off meal plan)
  2. Off-campus housing for seniors owned by the College;
  3. More coop houses, or partial coop houses.
- ii. Provide more forms of transportation so students can get off campus for internships, work, etc. Perhaps also for travel to airports and train stations.
  1. Increase funding for student-led activities that are off campus
- iii. Create more opportunities for students to take leadership roles in community service/civic engagement projects.
- iv. Provide courses in life-management
  1. Taxes / Accounting / Financial (Debt) Management
  2. Healthy Nutrition / Cooking
  3. Real Estate
  4. Investing
- v. Greater, codified involvement of students in College governance - student code of conduct, point system, physical spaces, etc.
  1. Formal process outlined for amending / ratifying the Student Code of Conduct with Student Assembly
  2. Student involvement in dedication / establishment of facilities - including housing options, recently vacated spaces (e.g. LIST), etc.
  3. Involvement in Faculty and Trustee Committees. Have more students on planning committees of various kinds.

**c. References:**

- i. <http://www.kenyon.edu/student-life/residence-life/office-of-housing-residential-life/housing-options/>
- ii. <http://www.oxy.edu/residential-education-housing-services/residence-halls/themed-living-communities>
- iii. <http://mcla.edu/Assets/MCLA-Files/Student-Affairs/Student-Life/Campus-Housing/Theme%20Housing%20Communities%202017-2018.pdf>
- iv. <https://www.haverford.edu/president/governance>