

WILLIAMS COLLEGE COUNCIL

2016 PROJECTS SUMMARY



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Executive Board

Michael Rubel '19
Vice President For Operations

Along with visually revamping our internal documents (all hail sans serif), I've taken on a number of projects this semester:

Website: continued to hone and update the new website I launched this past winter, as well as creating a much more accessible and user-friendly catalog of previous minutes and agendas. You can access these in easy-to-use Google Drive folder at collegecouncil.williams.edu.

Amendment: I helped draft and propose a constitutional amendment to split my current position, VP for Operations, into two new positions: Parliamentarian and VP for Communications. Doing so will maintain better consistency year-to-year in CC communications (and with that better transparency and accountability) and institutionalize a higher standard of rules and following of those rules in CC operations and meetings.

Montgomery Guide: I've prepared our new CC website Montgomery Guide, a community project which collects Ephs' experiential learning and publishes it for younger members of the community to see. Launching this fall, the website will provide everyone from incoming freshmen to graduating seniors a little perspective, guidance, and solidarity in approaching the milestones that everyone comes to in their Williams career.

Dining Services App: With Ben, Luke, and Haley, I've approached the Dining Services lead staff members and junior Nate Andersen to help Nate best implement his new dining services feedback app. Nate's app (available on iOS) currently provides up-to-date menus at all dining halls and, in association with CC and dining services, will soon let students RATE meals at dining halls! These ratings will inform future dining services decisions and menu adjustments.

The State of CC: this semester, I and the rest of the CC Communications Team implemented and honed our weekly State of CC email newsletters! We're excited to see the response rate to our weekly polls in the newsletters as well as greater transparency in general.

Ben Gips '19
Vice President For Student Affairs

My main focus this semester has been on a project to increase pedestrian safety on Route 2. I have met with Williamstown officials and Williams administrators, and we have secured the funding and town permissions. We will hopefully have flashing LED signs (known as RRFBs) installed by the end of the Summer. I have also continued work on proposals for an outdoor ice rink and creating an art gallery in the SARC in upstairs Paresky. I have also been a part of the team working with Dining Services to create a feedback app.

Allegra Simon '18
Vice President For Student Organizations

Ava Anderson '18
Vice President For Student Organizations

This semester I've worked on improving various aspects of Student Organizations on campus. This has mostly been an ongoing process of updating what already exists under my position. This includes updating the information on the list of student organizations and thinking about how to better publicize this information to the student body, as well as fixing information on our website and the process of applying to be a new student group. I also have been involved in the conversation around implementing bylaws to increase sexual assault prevention and awareness within groups, possibly in the form of mandatory bystander intervention training. These are all things I hope to continue working on over the summer and for Chetan to continue work on in the fall when he takes over as VP of student organizations.

Suiyi Tang '19
Vice President For Community and Diversity

Student Forum to be delayed until Fall, but is on the top of MinCo's agenda, with the groundwork laid out with leaders of SAAC, JAAB, CC, and MinCo. We will work to meet as soon as school starts, and use the forum to launch community matters into a new year.

Asian American Studies--planning to draft a resolution for CC to officially endorse the establishment of an AAS concentration, with a new hire to be made by the end of the 2017-2018 school year. In light of the Record Editorial Board's endorsement, CC, as a representative body of Williams students, should recognize the necessity of its constituents' representation and educational needs.

I am planning to continue work with those in WASO interested in hiring an Africanist, and students of color who would like to see another Native Americanist.

Additionally, I will be working with the VP of Academic Affairs and CCP to initiate another external academic review of Williams College. The last was done in 2004-5, which makes us overdue for another one. Recognizing that many of the suggestions in the last review were left unfulfilled, and that an intellectual and political community, present in the curriculum (as academia is, like all others, a basis for sociality and community) is vital to the "diversity and community" of the student body, I will work with the CAP, CCP, the Dean of the Faculty, and the VP of Academic Affairs to initiate such an internal examination. Additionally, I will work on soliciting feedback from the student body--through MinCo, a campus wide survey, and open discussions--to get a better idea of the broad curricular dissatisfactions, in particular those of the minoritized student body, understanding that theirs are narratives that have traditionally been reduced, tokenized, and underrepresented at the College, and that this sort of intellectual commodification is a failure of both "diversity" and "community."

Rodsy Modhurima '19
Assistant Treasurer

Although my initial project was on Financial Committee by-laws regarding the funding of intramural sports teams, I quickly realized that the project was a long-term one that I couldn't accomplish within a semester.

My second project was on the Admissions Office's correspondence with International students in the period between acceptance and matriculation as many students have said that they haven't been sent letters of acceptance. I spoke to Dean Nina Pretto. She spoke to Admissions, who claimed that all students are sent letters. We are currently working on constructing a list of students who did not receive letters of acceptance and then taking steps to ensure that all international students receive letters of acceptance in the upcoming years. We are also working on ways to reach students who cannot come for previews with small-scale Williams swag and more personalized methods of communicating.

Dean Pretto and I have also been talking about creating institution-wide conversation about need-blind international admissions.

Josemaria Silvestrini '19

Green Liaison

This semester I have been focused primarily on setting up a green revolving fund on campus. Thus far I have organized a group from the class of 2019 to work on the project next year, and I have been working with some alumni familiar with this type of fund structure for advice on how they'd recommend organizing the money here at Williams. Thus far the fund is set at around \$40,000, but i am working with the development office to see if donations can be organized so as to expand the fund within the next two years. My objective before graduation to to grow the fund upwards of a million dollars.

Class of 2016 Representatives

Noah Grumman

I worked on two major initiatives this semester, both of which will hopefully be continued after I graduate.

First, I worked on the possibility of instituting a student trustee. I spoke with a number of trustees and former trustees about this possibility. While most were hesitant, former trustee Paul Neely indicated that a compromise that the trustees would likely accept would be to have the current CC presidents sit in on selected trustee meetings throughout the year. The next step would be to form a CC committee (potentially ad-hoc) to explore how exactly a student trustee might be implemented.

Second, I worked on helping the 8 + 4 initiative get faculty approval. I spoke with members of the faculty steering committee and was unable to get it on a faculty meeting agenda during my time at Williams, but have hopefully helped set the groundwork for it to be passed next fall and implemented in the Spring of 2017.

Allison Wu

Improving Career Center Offerings

This semester, I pulled together informal focus groups and interviews with students to better understand the challenges they face in their career searches despite the resources of the Career Center. I've had two lengthy meetings with the new Career Center director, Don Kjelleren, to share some of these insights. I also presented to the entire center staff at its weekly meetings about these challenges. I will continue to work with Don and the rest of the staff into the summer and potentially into next year.

Increasing Community Engagement and Improving Mental Health: The Montgomery Guide

Michael Rubel and I are bringing the concept of DearPennFreshmen.com (DPF) to Williams. DPF was founded at University of Pennsylvania by my friend Lauren McCann. As she describes on the site, "This is a collection of letters from Penn upperclassmen writing to their freshmen selves. These notes are filled with advice, anecdotes and random thoughts in hopes that their words will make readers' first year at Penn just a tad bit easier. We're hoping these letters will foster a better Penn culture and assure freshmen that failing an ECON10 quiz doesn't mean the world is actually ending."

Michael and I hope to promote the same culture at Williams but open up letter writing beyond seniors to include alumni, underclassmen, faculty, staff, and potentially others. We are going to collect letters from Class of 2016 seniors during Hilton Head and Senior Week (we've been in touch with Libby Dvir from Class of 2016 Council). We hope this project can eventually become a Senior Week tradition and a well-known part of the Williams community, such as through quarterly publication of a letter in the alumni magazine. Michael will send you a more in-depth update on this project.

Improving Communication between the Student Body and the Board of Trustees

In light of the overwhelming success of the open student-trustee forum in January 2016, I worked on improving channels of communication between the student body and the Board of Trustees. I spoke with multiple trustees about these efforts, including Yvonne Hao and Stephen Harty. Stephen, Liz Robinson, and Brian Carpenter sat with Michael Rubel, Ned Lauber, and me at the CC-trustee dinner, and they were enthusiastic about the board joining the weekly CC newsletter listserv. Those three trustees have been added, but we are still waiting on instructions from Keli Gail of the President's Office on how to include the full board. Michael will reach out again this week. Moving forward, it is critical that CC play a role in facilitating communication between students and trustees. I think CC Representatives should stay in touch with the trustees they met at the reception and at dinner and continually convey important ideas, concerns, and positive feedback from the student body -- not everything we pass along needs to be negative! I also think CCCT should take on a bigger role in facilitating this communication, including organizing future forums and other events and institutionalizing them.

Ensuring 8+4 Moves Forward

To get 8+4 implemented, I have been working with the organizers of the 8+4 Honor Code Committee Reform initiative, Committee on Educational Affairs, Honor and Discipline Committee, and faculty members. Right now, it looks like

an implementation proposal committee made up of students from the three aforementioned bodies will be formed. This committee will design the specific implementation of the 8+4 proposal that was passed by an overwhelming majority of student voters. This proposal will then be voted on by the faculty before it can be implemented by the Dean of the College next year. Allegra Simon will be a good CC point person on this project moving forward.

Class of 2017 Representatives

Hanson Koota

Hanson Koota spend the summer working on getting a Student onto the committee for appointments and promotions. He spoke with Tom Smith and Mark Reinhart, who are members of the committee, and has been working with Smith on how the proposal would work. Professors are pushing back because of confidentially issues, and professors' putting their future in students hands. He will be continuing this work into the summer, and has a meeting with Associate Dean of Faculty Lee Park to further discuss the idea. He will also be drafting a proposal to re-work with faculty going forward.

Annika Trapness

This past semester, I worked with Marcus on working with the Career Center in order to provide feedback and suggestions as to how the Career Center could better service students. This involved having us bring the Center's new director, Mr. Kjelleren, into Council where he received a considerable amount of feedback from Council members. Additionally, we met with Mr. Kjelleren to further discuss some ideas, as well as provide feedback on other questions he had for us. I have also continued to work with Mr. Kjelleren on some of the ideas that he is trying to roll out over the summer and into the beginning of next year. Mr. Kjelleren is really eager to work with students and engage with what students want to see more, and I plan on working with him next year to continue providing feedback and help roll out some of the plans he has.

Class of 2018 Representatives

Sam Alterman

My project for this semester was pursuing student trusteeship, which unfortunately appears to have not progressed as well as I'd hoped. I began by researching what other schools do with regard to students on the board of

trustees, and found that while it's not true at every other institution, there is a lot of precedent for at least allowing the heads of student government to sit in on meetings as non-voting members. I also spoke with members of other student leadership organizations, especially MinCo, and found the idea had broad support.

However, when I floated the idea to several trustees at the dinner and reception in April, they voiced clear opposition to the idea and did not seem willing to even consider it. I still hope to present some sort of proposal to the trustees at some point, but I don't think it can happen without a lot of coalition building before hand, as well as convening a large representative group from beyond CC to push for it.

Ned Lauber

This semester, I've been working with Chetan on getting food options available in the 2-5pm time slot every day. This has mostly consisted of meeting with Bob Volpi every week or two for the past couple of months.

Initially, we proposed the idea of expanding Grab n Go hours. Bob Volpi responded by telling us that he had been looking into the option of expanding Lee Snack Bar so that students could use Meal Swipes between 2-5pm. (It is currently open during these hours but not for student meal swipes.) He looked into piloting this program for two days a week next year, and initially asked us for a resolution and student backing. However, at the next meeting he told us that it wasn't going to be possible. I don't think that this option is completely off the table, but we'd have to push really hard if we wanted to let students use meal swipes at Lee Snack Bar during the day.

We are now about to send out a poll to the student body about expanding Grab n Go options. The goal is to offer extended Grab n Go next fall two days a week to see how popular it is. Things we will need to continue to keep track of is what these swipes will count as (lunch or dinner) and if it is possible to create an extra category for swipes.

Finally, an idea that recently surfaced is the possibility of expanding Goodrich hours to 2-5pm. Goodrich is interested, so another possible next step would be meeting with Bob Volpi again in order to allow student swipes from 2-5pm.

Summary: We should be able to expand Grab n Go hours two days a week next semester. We also may expand Grab n Go options based on the results of the upcoming survey.

Next Steps: Making sure that we are all set for expanded Grab n Go in the fall. Creating a new "category" of swipes so that students could swipe for Breakfast, Lunch, Snack (2-5pm), Dinner, and/or Snackbar. Allowing Goodrich to accept student swipes from 2-5pm on weekdays so that they could help fill the food gap.

Haley Lescinsky

I got involved with the food feedback project and met with the dining services committee, in which we got root beer back in 82 and put in interest for a points swipe system on the schow vending machine. We also created a group that will peruse a system for better dining feedback via app etc. Going forward I don't have much I plan on focusing on, since the release of the new food app seems to have feedback incorporated in it. However I'm always down to help with the health equipment vending machine and the working with cc/the athletics department concerning funding club sports.

Arielle Rawlings

This semester, I hoped so explore some possible solutions to the problem of gender-inclusive bathrooms on the Williams campus. One complaint that I had heard from a student was that Paresky is one of the most problematic spaces on campus because, in addition to have only "female" or "male" labeled bathroom options available, none of the bathrooms are single stall. Thus, my project started by investigating the possibility of creating a gender-inclusive bathroom option in Paresky. After talking to Justin Adkins, I quickly realized that this was not possible in the short-run and required doing construction on the building. Justin informed me that a temporary band-aid to this problem would be creating a layer to the online campus map on the Office of Communications, which would outline all of the gender-inclusive bathroom options on the Williams campus for students, faculty and staff, and visitors alike. Thus, my project changed focuses towards the creation of this addition to the campus map. After being in contact with the Office of Communications, it looks like this project will go into effect sometime early this summer. There will not only be a "layer" for gender-inclusive bathrooms, but also one for wheelchair accessible bathrooms as well!

Class of 2019 Representatives

Luke Baumann

I, along with Michael, Ben, Haley and Hank worked with dining services to introduce an electronic student feedback system. We met twice with dining services, and with a representative from the Williams web design team. After those two meetings, we determined that we would try to implement the feedback system as part of the new Eph Menu app rather than in kiosks placed outside of dining halls, for cost reasons. We are also trying to implement a real-time feed on the monitors outside Paresky and mission (monitors to be installed at Driscoll this summer), so that customers can see how people are reacting to foods before they serve themselves.

Who we talked to: Bob Volpi, dining services director. Jerry Byers, associate manager, Paresky. Russ, Williams web design dept. OIT. Nathaniel Anderson, Student developer of Eph Menu app.

Next steps: discuss technical details of implementing the module with Nathan Anderson. Discuss adding real-time feedback feed to Paresky and Mission monitors, so dining customers can see feedback in real time before they choose their food.

Justinas Banyas

This semester my main project was to find a potential way to improve the accessibility of both academic and non-academic events on campus. My goal was to find a platform that would combine daily messages, department newsletters, and the social media in order to make it easier to announce and find out about what is going on on campus. By examining the situation in other colleges I decided to engage in finding ways to develop the Williams app. I reached out to the external programmers that created apps for universities like McGill in Canada, but I had to slow down after finding information about WSO and the goals of its app. The main problems that I see with their app is that it will take a very long time to be created and that it may not be very useful as it would mainly include the information that could be found on the WSO website. I am hoping to stay in touch with coding experts outside of Williams and continue the dialog with WSO in hopes to find a compromise about the app to satisfy students' needs as soon as possible and encourage more communication with the student body to make the app more useful.

Moises Roman Mendoza

My project has been composed of my work with a group of students who are interested in dealing with undocumented student issues on campus. The group was funded by a few students who were passionate on addressing the

admissions, institutional and financial issues faced by DACA and undocumented students. The group had done extensive research on the policies that the peer institutions had undergone. Through the findings, many attainable goals were seen that are currently being practiced at peer institutions. With an idea of what and how peer institutions are supporting the DACA and Undocumented students, we reached out to the administrations starting with the first generation dean, Dean Reyes. After reaching out to the administration, we were able to establish a meeting with Dean Reyes and Elizabeth Creighton, the deputy director of the admissions office. The meeting was approached through a discussion about the issues Williams has and how other peer institutions are taking steps to solve these issues. We needed to do a ton of research and a ton of meetings with admissions to break the misconceptions between what we know and what is the actual process for such students. The meetings became successful in the administrations ability to support the development of the proposed support systems for undocumented students. The largest proposals were to have a more transparent and a more interactive tab within the admissions page to promote the applications of undocumented students, another proposition was the financial and administrative awareness of undocumented students. The administration was happy to help. But even with the aid from the administration the project was not left at a level of satisfaction. The strongest thing to push for is to maintain a link between the group of students and the administration.

Bum Shik Kim

Project Update on Dog Therapy:

Key Figures - Ben Lamb (OSL), Laini Sporbert (Health Center)

*Note this is a project that I will continue on regardless of whether I decided to run/get elected next semester. One thing I learned being on CC is that you don't have to be on CC to make these changes.

Summary: The intention was trying to hire outside dog therapy organizations to come to the Williams campus, as some of our peer institutions do. Preliminary research showed that these programs were of no cost to the institution. Two main national organizations are Therapy Dogs International (TDI) and Pet Partners (which Sammy, our one and only therapy dog so far) is registered through. TDI's paperwork passed college's lawyer review and OSL standards, but we got stuck because the college needs an additional Certificate of Insurance (COI) in addition to the insurance already covered by the organization like TDI. Thus, because this is in the college rules for outside vendors with animals, a partnership with TDI is infeasible per college rules and TDI's rules. We

did not know about this prior because "students are not allowed to create or sign agreements on behalf of the college, which is why [you] wouldn't have the rider accessible to [you] directly" per Ben Lamb's words.

Things to note:

- Overall rules surrounding animals: "Its very case sensitive, so in this case, there is a lot of potential liability around having someone bring a bunch of unknown animals on campus. To give you an example of another vendor of this type, we had the exotic animal guy come 3 years ago and he brought 4 animals with him, so we had to get a certificate of insurance from him in order to allow him on campus. Most of the challenge comes from concern around what issues could arise from the types of things being in our buildings, especially when the college is agreeing to host them."

-Any dogs which come in must have a peer health member or the project leader of this to be present in the room at the same time of the therapy dog, as OSL or Peer Health cannot allocate their own resources towards the project. Ben Lamb also stressed specifics of the dates/times/location these sessions would take place (which can just be in Peer Health room at your own arbitrarily determined time).

For the rest of the year:

No formal therapy dog programs will be taking place this academic year. However, constant contact with Laini Sporbert of the Health Center makes it more likely Sammy will come in at least once next week during reading period if Sammy's handlers agree (which Laini has graciously been reaching out to) and Ben Lamb looks to bring his retriever, Penny, twice for two one hour sessions during finals.