

Meet Houghton's New Rainbow Alliance Collective

VANESSA BRAY

Houghton's newly formed Rainbow Alliance Cooperative (RAC) is a student-led organization with the goal of helping to further Houghton's invitation of community to reach everyone. RAC is not a subgroup of "We Are All Houghton." These two groups have developed separately, with "We Are All Houghton" being made up primarily of Alumni, and RAC consisting of current students. Although these groups are unaffiliated, RAC Event Manager, Emily Warner ('21) says they "plan to listen well to all members of the Houghton community, including alumni, so that we can heal past hurt and avoid future harm."

Warner states, "the unifying purpose of RAC is to love people well." RAC Student Networker Sarah Halvorson ('22) adds that the cooperative exists to "create a space for loving, healthy,



The RAC team.

COURTESY OF @HCRAINBOWALLIANCE ON INSTAGRAM.

Christ-centered relationships amongst all peoples of any sexuality, gender, religious background, political or religious stance on the matter. To create a space where conversations can be had and people can connect with each other and support each other...it exists to advocate for the continued inclusion of LGBTQ+

students and to increase visibility for the community at Houghton." The RAC is not an LGBTQ+ advocacy group aiming to change the college's stance on LGBTQ+ issues. Neither is the group intended to subvert any beliefs or convictions that community members may have regarding LGBTQ+ matters. "This isn't some kind of

progressive agenda..." says Halvorson, "this is how can we make a college that talks a lot about community, a real community for all people coming from all backgrounds, because at this point not everyone feels super accepted into the community. So, how do we get those people to connect and to feel loved and safe?"

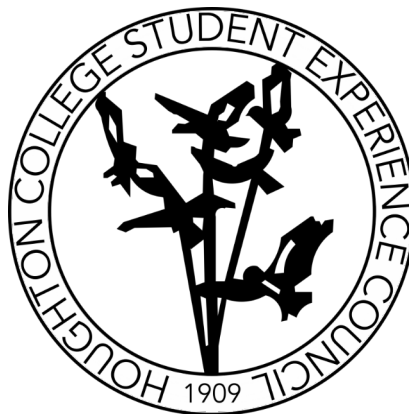
Talk of developing a space dedicated to welcoming this dialogue began last semester. Inspired by the events that took place surrounding the painting and repainting of the Spirit Rock, RAC Coordinator Chelsea Wood ('22) explains "We saw a need for something to be created on campus for support... after that people were like 'we need to have a more official thing that's dealing with topics like this on campus.' So, we formed a cabinet and went through the process of trying to make it a club and realized that that wasn't really what we were trying to make... Then [we] went a different route of being something similar to the Mosaic Center." The Rainbow Alliance Cooperative falls under the direction of the Dean of the Chapel's Office and has been described by Dean Jordan as a support group.

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SGA to be Replaced With SEC

JOSIAH WIEDENHEFT

On Wednesday, March 10, the Student Government Association passed a motion that confirmed the end of SGA as we currently know it, with something new to take its place: the SEC. Known fully as the "Student Experience Committee," this organization aims to preserve the purpose of SGA, while refining its structure and clarifying its responsibilities. Director of Student Engagement AC Taylor explains this revised body as a group of students "[who] represent various student experiences and student groups and [do] so by representing student needs and concerns to the institution directly," and in the words of the organization's own constitution: "The Student Experience Council (SEC)... shall be charged with [representing] the



The new logo for the SEC, a variation of the familiar SGA symbol.

COURTESY OF AC TAYLOR

student body to the college administration, faculty, and staff in order to promote student interests and ensure activities and services make the student experience at Houghton the best it can be." Why do away with SGA though? Why SEC instead? While AC mentioned that the changes have been considered for a few years, the final decision came from "a common feeling among many

executive officers of not really knowing what they were supposed to do." The changes focus around clearing this up. Even though "government" was in the name, SGA in recent years had not been serving any real governing role among the student body, at least not in the usual sense of the term. The name of "Student Experience Council," on the other hand, is meant to clarify their

function: to represent the experiences and needs of students to the school's administration. Most of the changes that have been made have the purpose of making more clear the "how?" and "why?" of the organization. While the number of roles in the executive council (renamed from executive cabinet as a part of the "de-govermentalizing" of these changes) has increased, adding specific

representatives for athletics, residence life, student organizations and academics, the purpose and responsibilities of each of these positions has been made more clear. The focus, as suggested by the names, is very clearly on representation: the various positions each represent an aspect of student life and activity here on the campus, so that the concerns specific to that area can be heard and made known. AC states that the hope is that these more clearly defined roles "will increase their effectiveness in supporting the student body." One question that might be on student's minds amidst all this is what will become of the class cabinets? Formerly, the class of each year had their own mini-executive cabinet, who generally represented that class in the SGA's public meetings and who would also plan events for the other students of their year. Within the structure of the

See SGA page #2

Optimism for the Future: Breaking Down Houghton's 2021-2022 Budget

JUSTICE NEWELL

While 2021 still carries much of the baggage from its predecessor, it is time to look forward to what next year will bring. Fingers crossed, it will be better than last year. With that being said, Houghton's 2021-2022 budget shows signs that it certainly will be!

In terms of what the budget looks like for the upcoming academic year, Mr. Dale Wright, the Vice President for Finance at Houghton, reports that 29% of the budget goes toward financial aid to students; 35% is allocated to paying Houghton's personnel; 15% goes toward maintaining the campus and paying utilities; and the remaining 21% is distributed amongst smaller budgets, such as those for the academic departments.

As for where the money comes from to create the budget, together, tuition, fees, and room and board account for approximately 85%, with contributions,

grants, and endowments garnering the rest of the budget.

In planning for the upcoming school year, Houghton's budget reflects the unique situation that COVID-19 has presented, all while holding true to the enduring goal of providing a high-quality Christian education for an affordable price. To that end, Mr. Wright attributes the college's success during these times to three important factors affecting its financial situation.

Firstly, Houghton has historically been "careful planning and manag[ing] expenses," creating what Dean Marc Smithers referred to as a "balanced budget." Essentially, a balanced budget just means that the expenses do not outweigh the revenue, or, the money earned. Secondly,

though many colleges run on a tight budget, Mr. Wright explained that through the assistance of generous alumni and friends of Houghton, much of the financial burden placed on the college is offset. Likewise, the third factor for Houghton's

continued success is the relief provided by the federal government. Especially during times in which special precautions need to be taken to slow the spread of a pandemic, any financial support to help pay for personal protective equipment, like masks or disinfectants, helps keep the budget in check.

Though the world now knows how to combat the spread of COVID-19, this often means that institutions can expect a considerable financial burden to help with that mission. For Houghton and other colleges, this means that more funding is required in the upcoming year to help keep with current health and safety standards. In a joint statement from President Mullen and Mr. Wright, they said, "We have allocated increased funding towards technology, cleaning protocols, personnel and testing, to name a few areas. [And while it is a significant feature of

the budget,] it is not a large percentage of the overall college budget. Further, a portion of these expenses have been partially offset by federal assistance."

Aside from being records of Houghton's financial history, the budget's purpose is to provide students the best overall experience during their college years. From resetting the tuition to a 20-year low, to creating 90 new scholarships, to funding Division III athletics, and paying for residential life programming and student engagement opportunities, the budget is ultimately student-centered.

According to Dean Smithers, in his experience heading the Residential Life Office, Houghton would allot approximately "\$10 per resident for residence life programming." Moreover, part of the Residential Life funding comes from the clubs and organizations fee that students pay at the beginning of each semester, combined

with additional money from the budget. So, it can be assumed that the same can be said for the 2021-2022 school year.

Though the configuration of Houghton's budget has been relatively similar year after year, on occasion large changes are made, and their effects are felt throughout the campus and community. The most recent example of this is the decision to cut the lacrosse program at Houghton. While this change may dishearten many students and community members, Mr. Wright suggests that the reallocation of these funds toward "track and field, cross country and intramural programs [will] benefit a wider range of students" than before.

Though life has not yet returned to normal, the college's financial situation indicates that things are looking up. In spite of all of these changes, students can expect a "normal-looking" semester - you know, all things considered. ★

RAC from page #1

The cooperative has worked closely with Dean Jordan to ensure that RAC continues to exist in concord with the values held by the college. Both Wood and Halvorson emphasized RAC's desire to "work with the school." They expressed gratitude for the positive reception and opportunity granted by Houghton's faculty and staff towards instituting RAC. Dean Jordan said he is "...So thankful for the current groups of students involved with this because they have great ideas that are consistent with our mission."

One main goal for the RAC is to establish longevity. "What can come from this being on campus is so big," says Wood, "and being able to lay down the groundwork for something that can last after us is incredible."

The RAC does not intend for their cooperative to foster an exclusive, dialogic space. Their objective is to provide opportunities

for students who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community, and those who do not respectively, to share in equal engagement. RAC's advisor Michael Green is hopeful that the Rainbow Alliance Cooperative's presence will help to "demystify LGBTQ+ people on campus and lead to a stronger and more inclusive Houghton community overall."

So far, the RAC held a well-received meet-and-greet on March 4th and led LGBTQ+ sensitivity RA training. They have a variety of upcoming events planned to offer different ways for anyone on campus to be involved and engage with the topic.

You can follow them on Instagram: @hcrainbowalliance & Facebook: Rainbow Alliance Cooperative. The RAC invites you to email them any questions you may have at hcrainbowalliance@gmail.com ★

SGA from page #1

SEC, class cabinets have been done away with in name, though their purpose has been morphed to a different form. The role of representing the needs and concerns of a given academic year will now be taken on by four class representatives who will be a part of the executive council. These four positions have acquired additional responsibilities beyond merely representing their class, however: the senior class representative takes on a role similar to that formerly fulfilled by the SGA vice president, acting in the place of the president in their absence; the junior class representative fulfills a scribe roll, taking the minutes for SGA meetings; and the sophomore representative helps to organize the election of the first-year representative each year. The representatives of the first-year and senior classes also take part in coordinating traditions and events for first-years and graduation respectively.

The "class cabinets" will also continue to ex-

ist, though they too will be shaped slightly differently. Going forward they'll take the form of dedicated clubs, which AC says will be able to "work to increase connections and comradery amongst classes while also still having a connection to the concerns/advocacy part [of the SEC's function]."

While the decision was formalized last week by the current Executive and Class cabinets, SGA is still open to hearing student thoughts and feedback. You can make your voice heard by talking with your class cabinet representative or members of the Executive Cabinet, or by attending one of the weekly public SGA meetings. All students are also invited to get involved by running for a SEC position for next academic year! You can find out more information about that process in the all-campus email sent out last week. ★

Interested in Contributing to the STAR?

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If You're Stressed and You Know It, Raise Your Hand

MEGAN BROWN

It seems a little redundant to state that we are all a little bit stressed. Turn to any of your classmates who may have blank stares and blank expressions hidden beneath their masks or even your roommate who has been zoning out at their laptop all day, and you will see that this semester is taking a toll on us. Couple regular school stress with no breaks in the semester, except Good Friday, add in stress because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and it becomes perfectly clear why students at Houghton College feel the way they do. This semester was a poor time to remove all breaks because students are already at a heightened chance of burnout due to stress caused by COVID-19.

To make sure we are working from the same base, I am using the Merriam Webster definition of burnout, which is "exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration." A normal college semester already leaves students vulnerable to burnout. Fifteen intense weeks of projects, tests, and extracurriculars alone can make us tired and prone to frustration. We know how we per-

form during college is often pertinent in getting jobs we desire in the future, so that stress of doing well adds up from week to week, from test to test. Removing a reprieve for students during a regular semester would be difficult for us to push through, but with the added stress of living through a pandemic that affects the way we must live our lives for the past year, it is no wonder why many of us are dealing with heightened exhaustion and frustration.

One way we often deal with stress to avoid

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cles must be smaller. When we do get to hang out with others, there now exists a subconscious nagging of

pus at a significantly greater risk of shutting down because of an outbreak. That too would increase stress, as people's lives would be put at risk and many could be put into quarantine. Because of this combination of immense stress due to COVID-19 and currently having no officially set academic breaks (the "snow days" this Monday and Tuesday only encourage professors to give students the day off), burnout will continue to occur.

To speak further about the encouraged off days that are happening this Monday and Tuesday, they are a nice gesture while also being a bit haphazard. These reading days were not planned when professors created their schedules, and because of this, some professors, especially ones that lead lab classes, and their students cannot participate in the reading days. Therefore, not every student will have a break early this week where they can relax and take a mental health moment before the final push to the end of the semester. Students should have an equal opportunity to avoid burnout by having the same breaks.

As we are nearing the last month of the semester, I urge our Houghton community to look to our neighbors who are burnt out and who may be short-tempered. We

must have compassion and be slow to anger towards them. I know for me this is not always easy, especially when I am exhausted myself. However, if we all look towards each other and are a little bit more patient, especially in the moment when we desperately do not want to be, this could begin to chip away at our collective college student stress. ★

Megan is a junior majoring in Writing and Communication with a concentration in Media Arts and Visual Communication.

"Students should have an equal opportunity to avoid burnout by having the same breaks."

burnout is by hanging out with friends. Humans are social creatures, and I think even the most introverted introvert may be beginning to feel that need for some basic social interaction. Being with the people we love and sharing our struggles is recommended for dealing with stress and trauma, but the irony of the matter is that due to COVID-19, to best take care of our friends we need to limit our interactions with people. Our cir-

"Am I going to get someone sick? Or is someone going to get me sick?" That is its own stressor, and that can add up, too. While we cannot take a break from the reality this pandemic has plunked us into, we can take a break from school, which would help ease some of the stress students are under.

I understand that if students were to leave during breaks, that would potentially add to the spread of the virus and put our cam-

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Lantern Lite

"This is the Thaw" and "Autumn's Soliloquy"

"This is the Thaw"
by Kimberly Logee
March 2016 Issue

The warm air breathes life into the frozen ground, just as it breathes life into me, and this must be how Adam felt, to be dust breathed into by God.

Editor's Note: A perfect poem for this time of year, "This is the Thaw" brings theological significance to the melting world outside. We are all familiar, I expect, with the connection between the coming of spring and the ideas of new life and rebirth, but I particularly like that this poem makes the breath of warm air the source of that life. I think we all know what this looks like on a literal level--we have all seen how warmth and sun softens up the hard ground. But I suspect we all also know what it means to have warm air breathe life into us. I know these past few weeks I've been thinking about it a lot: the feeling of inexplicable joy, hope, and wonder, that the touch of a warm breeze can inspire. What I especially like about this poem is how it connects that familiar, life-giving experience, to one that we imagine: being the dust that God breathes into Adam. I personally have never thought to imagine what that moment might have felt like for Adam, but I love picturing it like this, as the feeling of joy and life that I get from a breath of warm spring air.

"Autumn's Soliloquy"
Anonymous
Harvest 2020 Issue

The last remnants of warmth surrender now.
The vibrant greens yield to a foreign hue;
A morning frost instead of morning dew.
My summer sun, my light, takes its last bow.
Falling leaves, in gathering weight avow,
"The bitter days are nigh, we hold this true,
And a blanketing cold will come for you."
I'm tempted to believe these words somehow,
But a different voice is known to me:
"There's beauty to be found in this blessed time.
Please listen to autumn's soliloquy.
Without the frost could warmth be so sublime?
Wouldn't stagnant shades mute nature's melody?
Listen and see creation in its prime."

Editor's Note: Spring and fall have always been tied together in my mind, and so, though it's technically the wrong season for it, I thought "Autumn's Soliloquy" would be a good pair for "This is the Thaw." "Autumn's Soliloquy" also considers the greater significance of the changing of the sea-

sons, but it wrestles with what is for many people a more difficult change: that of summer into autumn and then winter. This poem was one of my favorites from the Harvest issue because of how it gently explores both the positive and negative aspects of autumn. Most poetry about autumn either glorifies in the poetic beauty of the changing season, or examines the literal and symbolic death and loss. "Autumn's Soliloquy" explores both, and offers a possibility for how to think of both ideas together. The poem uses sonnet structure to great effect, setting up the speaker's initial thoughts about autumn in the octave, and then suggesting a different perspective in the sestet. I appreciate the portrayal of this different perspective coming through another voice--sometimes we need someone or something outside ourselves to help us break out of one way of thinking. I also like the portrayal of autumn giving a soliloquy, which implies that autumn is speaking and pointing out beautiful things whether we notice or not, but that we have the opportunity to stop and listen.

Ally Stevick is a senior and an editor of the Houghton Lantern.

Sudoku Solution from the 3/05 issue!

2	9	6	3	1	4	8	7	5
3	4	5	2	8	7	6	1	9
7	8	1	9	5	6	4	2	3
8	2	9	7	3	1	5	6	4
5	3	7	6	4	8	2	9	1
1	6	4	5	9	2	3	8	7
9	7	8	4	6	5	1	3	2
4	1	2	8	7	3	9	5	6
6	5	3	1	2	9	7	4	8

FROM SUDOKUOFTHE DAY.COM

About the Artist



Chelsea is a Bachelor of fine arts major with minors in Psychology and Theology. Her interests include sailing off the coast of Maine, spending quality time with people, and making Spotify playlists.

Artist of the Week

Chelsea Wood

