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## RAINBOW ALLIANCE COOPERATIVE NO LONGER AFFILIATED WITH HOUGHTON

JOSHUA CARPENTER ('24)

After a long discussion with President Lewis, Dean Michael Jordan, and Dean Marc Smithers about the demands of the Wesleyan doctrine and their affiliation with Houghton college, the Rainbow Alliance Cooperative (RAC) has officially announced, in a letter shared on social media, that they are “no longer affiliated with Houghton College in any way.” The main reason given for their splitting was the concern that they would not be able to carry out their “mission of understanding, caring for, and supporting people who identify as LGBTQ+” under the new administration. Despite this, both parties have expressed their respects toward each other.

President Lewis wrote to the STAR, “As one of my early interactions with Houghton Students, I was very impressed.



The re-painted rock from last fall, a key event that contributed to the forming of the RAC

PHOTO BY  
RYLEE ARCHAMBAULT

Even with a difficult conversation, [the RAC members] were respectful, thoughtful, articulate, and represented themselves the way we [Lewis, Jordan, and Smithers] expect Houghton students to do so.” This perception was reciprocated by Linette Taylor ('23), the Care & Support Coordinator of RAC, who wrote

to the STAR, “...this situation did not cause me to think any less of Dr. Lewis (or for Dean Jordan or Dean Smithers for that matter)...I truly believe that Dr. Lewis is devoted to his presidential responsibility not only to create a safe and comfortable campus for all students, but to nurture a college identity that is in

line with the beliefs of the Wesleyan church.”

President Lewis (as well as Deans Jordan and Smithers) determined that for any student organization to affiliate itself with Houghton College, such as the RAC, it must first function in accordance with the doctrine of the Wesleyan Church, as must all of Houghton's

facility and staff. The focus on Wesleyan doctrine is crucial in understanding their case, which is made even more apparent in President Lewis' statement on where Houghton college stands amid the topic of sexuality and gender. He wrote, “There have been no changes in the College's policies or positions. As a ministry of the Wesleyan Church, Houghton's positions on sexuality and gender expression are consistent with the doctrine, teachings, and positions of the Wesleyan Church.” He later emphasizes, “It is essential that the Houghton College community leads with love. That even in instances where students' background, identity, and/or behavior is at odds with the position of the College and the Wesleyan Church, we should be faithful ambassadors of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, exercising both

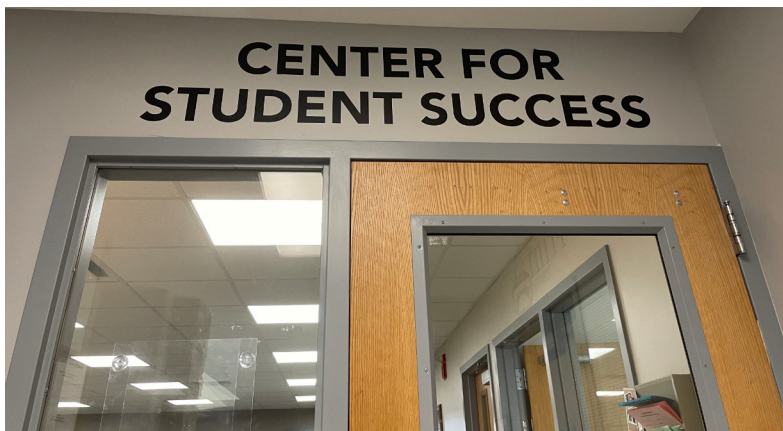
See RAC page #2

### FEATURE: The Center for Student Success

VICTORIA HOCK ('23)

You may have noticed The Center for Student Success in Chamberlain, and wondered “What services are available to me here?” There are quite a few services. Sharon Mulligan, an Associate Director of The Center for Student Success, described the center as a “one door access” to a variety of resources “all designed to equip students for academic, personal, and professional success.”

The Writing Center, run by Professor Laurie Dashnau, is one of the first things you would notice entering the Center for Student Success. Professor Dashnau explained that the Writing Center is a service where “friendly, trained peer consultants — Molly Brizzell, Megan Brown, Tyler Hilgeman, Jake Lajza, and Elaine Starling Leeli — are available to meet in person (Chamberlain Center



The recently integrated and rebranded Center for Student Success, located on the first floor of Chamberlain.

PHOTO BY  
RYLEE ARCHAMBAULT

107, part of the Center for Student Success) or virtually, for a maximum of 40 minutes per session, by Zoom.” These consultants are there to “provide encouragement”, as well as “ask questions, listen well, and provide advice and resources to help you identify areas for improvement.”

The Center for Student Success also offers peer tutoring, which Mon-

ica Lewis, a staff member who is new to the Center for Student Success this year, coordinates. Lewis explained that “Peer Tutoring through the Center for Student Success is encouraged when a student is still struggling with a course after attending group review sessions and meeting with their professor.” She also added that if a student thinks that they need a peer tutor,

they can either fill out a Tutor Request Form online or get one from their office. Lewis also said that they “want all of our Highlanders to be successful and encourage you to get help before it's too late.”

Another staff member who is new to the Center for Student Success this year is Rachel Wright ('07), the new Director of the Office of Vocation and

Calling. Wright is also an Associate Director for the Center for Student Success. Through the Office of Vocation and Calling, students have access to a variety of services designed to help with searching for internships and jobs, such as mock interviewing, professional network-building, resume and cover letter reviewing, and a lot more. Wright also highlighted a few upcoming events that will be hosted by the Office of Vocation and Calling, such as an event on Wednesday October 13th from 3-5 PM, “What can I do with my major?” At this event, Wright explained that students will have “the chance to have a free professional headshot taken for LinkedIn” (this part of the event will take place from 4-5 PM). The Office of Vocation and Calling will also be hosting a Virtual Graduate School Fair on Thursday, October 14th from 2-6 PM, featuring “over 80 schools represented both in the US and overseas.”

Students can also find Counseling Services in

See CSS page #4

# My Queer Experience at Houghton and Beyond



NINA D'AMATO ('23)

I will start this piece by acknowledging the place and space I have actively put myself in and that this is a topic that some of the people reading this may be exhausted of hearing about. I will also acknowledge that this is important, to me and others, and that this may be something that someone reading this may really need to hear. And finally, before I get into all there is to get into, I want to express that all people, queer people included, are loved and cherished children of God, no exceptions, and have a rightful and valued place in the family of Christ.

I will start by giving a little insight into my experience with my own personal queerness and how I have experienced it within the bounds of my faith. I was raised in the Presbyterian Church, and if you are unfamiliar with this branch of Christianity, they explain it like this: "neither

*the Church as the body of Christ, nor Christians as individuals, can be neutral or indifferent toward evil in the world"* and that we as Christians are responsible "to speak on social and moral issues for the encouragement and instruction of the Church and its members" with the largest emphasis "to speak always in humility and love."

Along with this, the Presbyterian Church takes quite strong stances on very polarizing issues posed to Christians, like protecting reproductive rights of persons with child-bearing ability, ordaining and affirming all members of the LGBTQIA+ community,

*"I struggled with belonging on campus, feeling like everything that was being preached was actively excluding me because I did not fit the mold of the exemplar Christian Houghton wanted me to be."*

and supporting the Black Lives Matter movement. This emphasis on responsibility to engage in social and moral issues with a great empathy and love for others is the thing I would say shaped me into the Christian I am. Growing up with parents who believe these things and being very involved with this Church made me feel very comfortable with the idea of being queer. Although I didn't

*"I want to express that all people, queer people included, are loved and cherished children of God, no exceptions, and have a rightful and valued place in the family of Christ."*

conclude my sexuality until I was a sophomore in college, I always knew I was loved by my family and by God no matter my gender or sexuality.

Coming to Houghton was one of the first times in

freshman year, signing the then called "Community Covenant." In signing this, I had to agree to this contract that went directly against my own personal beliefs and I asked myself the question "why did this direct disregard for LGBTQIA+ rights affect me so much and why was this something I was signing?" I went through that year of school aware that this was a doctrine I was now abiding by and exploring why it was something I was so uncomfortable with. Fast forward to the fall of my sophomore year, the beginning of the first full COVID school year, I came to terms with my own sexuality, coming out to my close friends and family, and meeting my amazing girlfriend. The year following this would be such an important one in my own personal growth as a queer person in the Church.

I struggled with belonging on campus, feeling like everything that was being

preached was actively excluding me because I did not fit the mold of the exemplar Christian Houghton wanted me to be. This feeling did not make me uncomfortable in my own identity but angered and frustrated me because I was being told all these messages of "truth" and "love of Christ" but knew my community was being excluded as sinful and wrong by many of the people proclaiming these ideas. Something I was not prepared to deal with when coming out was this feeling of anger. Attending an institution that included the disapproval of my community in its core doctrine makes me feel more unwelcome than I was prepared for.

All these feelings are things I am still working through today, and I don't know that I will ever fully work through them while I am here on this campus. I have learned how to listen to the truth of others and constructively accept that who I am may always be challenging to the things other people believe. I am grateful for Houghton as a place where these conversations can be had, and I don't think I would have the drive I have for LGBTQIA+ faith dialogue without the experiences I have had here.★

## RAC from page #1

boundless love and compassion."

However, some people at Houghton do not see many examples of ambassadors who exercise both boundless love and compassion. They are hurting – hurting to see those who lead with love, to have a hand extended out to them so that they can be pulled away from the following of threats and slurs and be taken somewhere safe. As Taylor wrote, "I want a campus where LGBTQ+ students aren't hurting. I want a school where they don't have to deal with students calling them slurs, with anonymous threats being sent to their CPOs, with professors comparing them to Nazis, with trusted adults telling them they won't be saved, and with practical strangers constantly trying to argue theology with them through social media."

Overall, the RAC has highlighted a need for a safe space here at

Houghton. Linette pointed this out, writing that, "LGBTQ+ students need a space to exist without being told they're an abomination or a burden, and my hope is that the new RAC [the individual one] will be exactly that. I hope that one day, Houghton as a whole will be exactly that." It is this dream that gives the RAC its direction. They want people to exercise boundless love and compassion just like Lewis, Jordan and Smithers, but not at the cost of "unaffirming their queer identities", which, as Taylor expanded upon, "would have been required had [they] remained an entity of Houghton College." This "would have infringed on the safe and comfortable environment [they] were trying to create."

For anyone who would like to follow RAC on their journey, they can be found on Instagram @hcrainbowalliance, as well as on Facebook.★

## CSS from page #1

the Center for Student Success, which has welcomed a new counselor this year, Carolyn Higgins. Dr. Bill Burrichter is the Director of Counseling Services, as well as the Executive Director of the Center for Student Success. He explained that "Counseling Services at Houghton College supports and empowers students to pursue emotional growth and wellness through meaningful therapeutic relationships, equipping students with personalized skills and resources designed to accelerate their God-given potential." They provide "comprehensive support" for the "residential student population" at Houghton for issues such as relational and social stress, adjustment issues, acute mental illness, depression and anxiety. Burrichter also noted that since the Counseling Services Office is very busy currently, with the caseloads of counselors "being maxed out within the first few weeks" for the first time ever they

have needed to institute a wait list. However, he made sure to clarify that they "do not want this to keep students away", mentioning as well that they have "brought Nancy Murphy, who retired from her counseling role at the end of last year, back in a part-time role to help carry the load."

Burrichter also runs the Office of Military and Veteran Support Services at Houghton College, which is new. He explained that this was started because he "saw a need and value in having a more formally established and available support for this important student base." While there currently isn't a strong military and veteran student population at Houghton, Burrichter stated that "we want to be ready and welcoming as they come to campus." While this is not yet a formal office, Burrichter hopes that it one day will be.

Also located in the Center for Student Success are the Academic Support and Accessibility Services. Here, stu-

dents who need them can receive any necessary accommodations for their classes, such as digital materials (which are coordinated by LuAnne Brubaker). Students who need accommodations for exams (such as extended time) can also receive them here.

You can schedule an appointment with the Writing Center and the Office of Vocation and Calling through Handshake (all Houghton College Students have a free account). Mulligan also noted that there are first come, first served study spaces in The Center for Student Success that students can use during business hours.

If you need any services from the Center for Student Success, feel free to stop in. If you are unsure about who you should talk to or what office you should visit, Mulligan mentioned that you can talk to Hannah, who is the Area Coordinator and Diverse Student Success Coordinator for the Center for Student Success.★

# Worshiping Well



GAELEN NEGUS ('23)

As Christians, especially those of us who have grown up in the Church, it is all too easy to find ourselves going through the motions. I see a tendency in myself (and I expect it exists in others also) to go on doing the things I've always done without thinking—without remembering or understanding the significance, the weight, even the purpose of what I do. Recently I have been thinking about this tendency in connection to worship. Am I thinking about what it means to worship God, about the posture of my heart when I come before Him? If not, then my worship is in danger of being empty. And empty worship is not worship at all. Not only does this situation greatly fall short of what we can and ought to be as believers,

it is profoundly dangerous. So what is worship? What does it mean to worship God?

Worship is fundamentally concerned with recognizing value in something and responding to it accordingly. In this regard, we worship things all the time. When we see a beautiful sunset, watch an exciting football play, or listen to a favorite song, we recognize value in it, and this recognition calls for a response in us. This response is a form of worship.

Our worship of God is like this, except that the value we recognize in God is on a totally different order—it is infinite. So, to truly worship God we must first know who He is. God is all-powerful, all-seeing, all-knowing, perfectly good,

*“If we truly appreciate God’s power, goodness, mercy, His perfect worthiness, then we don’t have to think about our response. It just happens.”*

just, faithful, and loving. His character is revealed to us in Scripture by His words and His mighty deeds. God has given His only Son to pay the penalty for our sins on

*“I see who I am in comparison to the God of the universe, and it astounds me that someone so small and insignificant would be chosen and loved by Him as a child.”*

our behalf. Christ has redeemed us through His death and resurrection and called us to Himself—we belong to Him! If we truly appreciate God’s power, goodness, mercy, His perfect worthiness, then we don’t have to think about our response. It just happens.

Think for example about how people react when they see angels—they tend to hit the deck!

to them. The power and majesty human beings glimpse in angels is only a dim reflection of the Creator and Master. If we were to see the God of the universe as we are now, we would not be able to stand it. We would be undone. But one day we will stand before Him in our glorified bodies, and I can hardly imagine what that will be like. Perhaps, like the seraphim who attend His throne, the words “holy, holy, holy” [Isa. 6:3, Rev. 4:8] will be crushed out of us by the mere weight of His glory. The holiness and glory of our God must be appreciated by us in some measure of its magnitude if we are to worship Him as we ought.

So, once we begin to understand who the object of our worship is, our correct worshipful response will naturally attend this realization. Knowing this, our posture in worship should be one of submission and humility. I see who I am in comparison to the God of the universe, and it astounds me that someone so small and insignificant would be chosen and loved by Him as a child. When I recognize what my Savior has done for me in laying down His life for His Church, what else can I do but lay everything I am before

Him. Not that I could ever repay Him, but rather knowing that every ounce of good in me comes from Him by His grace I joyfully offer it back to Him, bowing before Him and declaring my allegiance to the King of kings. This should be the posture of my heart in worship, submitting my will to His and asking that He use me for His honor and glory. He is infinitely worthy of my loyalty and allegiance, my life and all that I have to give.

If you take anything away from this, I hope it will be that worship is about God. If I do not approach the throne in worship from the right posture—one of humility and submission—then what I’m doing is not worship at all. Now to be clear, I am not saying that we have no part in worship or that we receive no benefit from it. What I mean is that we only benefit from worship if we aren’t in it for ourselves. We cannot worship God while thinking about ourselves—we must be focused on Him and who He is. Worship is not about how I feel or what genre of music I like. Worship is bending the knee in declaration of allegiance to the God of the universe in the knowledge that He loves me and has claimed me for Himself. There is nothing better for me than to totally submit myself to the One who is infinitely deserving of all that I am. I do have a part in worship, but it’s not on the receiving end. I do greatly benefit from worship, but only when I recognize all that matters is Jesus.★

Have an opinion you want to share?

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## SPEAK OUT!

Letters to the editor should be 250 words or less

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The mission of the Houghton STAR is to preserve and promote the values of dialogue, transparency and integrity that have been the ideals of Houghton College since its inception. This is done by serving as a medium for the expression of student thought and as a quality publication of significant campus news, Houghton area news, and events.

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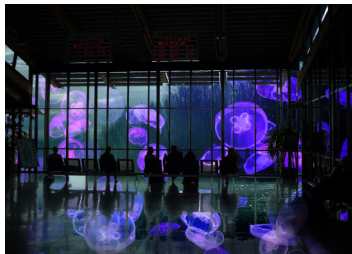
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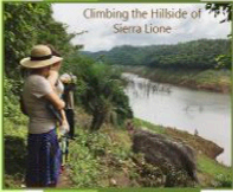

For as long as I can remember, drawing has been one of my favorite pastimes. I remember being very young (maybe four or five) and declaring to one of my elementary teachers that I was going to be an artist when I grew up. Now many years later I still love art; I'm a senior here at Houghton and I'm a double major in Studio Art and Intercultural studies. I love people and learning about their stories and cultures—there's a lot of beauty in our differences. Someday I hope to combine these two passions and work teaching art! Insta: @just\_plain\_rae

**Sudoku Solution from last issue!**

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

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