

HCC: The Early Years

The idea to establish a student government within Hinman College was laid out in the earliest days of Hinman's existence. The first full year that Hinman was up and running saw some problems that had to be overcome. Hinman was a new college and still searching for an identity. In 1967 it was decided by then Faculty Master Pete Gruber and the rest of the Hinman College professional staff that the development of student government should be delayed a year to allow for residents to become more acclimated to their new residential community and to build up individual hall spirit. While this delay did allow for the establishment of strong individual hall spirit, overall community spirit was still lacking. In fact, it was not until April of 1969 that the Hinman Constitution was ratified and legal popular elections for a Hinman President were held. Still, even with the political framework in place, Hinman residents had little respect for area-wide student governance—so little respect that in a write-in campaign, a dog named Fish, won more votes than any of the human candidates running for political office. Obviously, students in Hinman were not sold on the idea of student government. Perhaps Faculty Master Pete Gruber said it best when he wrote, “Like the French and Italian Republics of the pre-World War II era, Hinman College has operated more efficiently on its civil service base than on its political base...”¹ This may have been the case for now, but Hinmanites would eventually learn to embrace their area-wide government with open arms.

Some of the earliest records concerning HCC are from the late 1960's and can be found within the early Hinman publication, *The West Harpur Other*. Not much is discussed concerning these meetings other than some people who attended. The November 24, 1969, issue of *The West Harpur Other* states that “Jim Geheran, Student Personnel Intern is a regular, contributing observer at the Hinman College Council meetings. This wouldn't be mentioned, but so few

people, even among the elected members, attend that it is conspicuous.”² Besides Mr. Geheran, also attending the meeting were Master Pete Gruber, Mr. Masters and Mr. Hopkins (presumably faculty fellows), Sandy Lazar, Jay Katz, Bill Froelich, Howard Abramoff, Howard Schwartz (which the article states came in late), Debbie Panson, Lynn Teichman, Mitchel Shapira, and Bruce Laubacher. Absent from the meeting were Mitchel Cohen, Robert Monheit (who the article reports had only gone to two meetings) and Faculty Fellows Mr. Bernardo, Mr. Bliss, Mr. Casparis, and Mr. Rowe. The only other mention of HCC in this article is a rather insulting statement toward the end: “Don’t like the way Hinman is dragging its ass in some particular area? Tell your Dorm rep to [come to] Hinman College Council. That’s his business.”³ Even at this early stage, HCC was beginning to get the reputation of having lackluster and apathetic meetings. In defense of HCC, it was still early in its development. Still, this juvenile organization had a host of obstacles to overcome before it cemented itself in Hinman society.

¹ C.P. Gruber, et al, “General Historical Background,” *Brief Overview of Hinman College Development: September 1967-February 1970*, February 16, 1970, on file in the Hinman Archives.

² *The West Harpur Other*, Vol. 3, No. 3, November 24, 1969.

³ Ibid.