

HCC in the New Millennium

Joshua Kittenplan, although perhaps one of if not the most influential of modern HCC presidents, was certainly not the last one. During the 2002-2003 academic year, Jordan Peck became the next to add his name to position of President of HCC. Jordan had come to Binghamton in the fall of 2001 partly because his father was an alumni but also because he was interested in Mechanical Engineering and Physics, and Binghamton University had both a good Engineering and Physics program. His freshman year, he lived in Roosevelt Hall, which at the time was the living/learning community for Hinman.¹ Besides physics and engineering, Jordan had always been interested in politics and was encouraged to get involved in student government. His freshmen year he was the SA representative for Roosevelt Hall. Along with the regular SA meetings, he would also attend the weekly HCC meetings. There he quickly learned that HCC was at the heart of the community and the most active and influential of all the student governments at Binghamton University. He came to enjoy meeting new people and interacting with diverse groups who cared about being involved.¹

Following in the footsteps of Joshua Kittenplan, Jordan decided to run for President of HCC the next year. At the time the people in Hinman were somewhat ambivalent about him running for President. Though he was highly involved in the community he was viewed as an SA man and not one who was deeply committed to Hinman. Jordan did win the election and went on to be an exceptional President. Although his administration was not wracked with controversy like other earlier administrations, the Peck Administration still had issues to contend with. “We tried to strike a balance between keeping true to tradition and trying new things,” Jordan would say four years after his term of office. One such area in which they tried to

¹ The Living/Learning community involves classes that are “linked together” (i.e. a philosophy and an English class or a biology and a chemistry class). The idea is that those in the living/learning community not only will do better at their classes but will study together and form close bonds.

innovate involved creating a new game for Dorm Wars. The game was a type of relay race where four people would pick up another person and carry them. Unfortunately, this particular game was unsuccessful and resulted in numerous minor injuries. Still, it was this type of innovation, a blending of the old and new, that Jordan and his E-Board tried to bring to Hinman that year.²

The very next year, following his term of office as HCC President, Jordan, like Josh had years earlier, decided to run for President of the SA. This time, though, Jordan won and a Hinmanite was in charge of the whole Student Association. Efficient administration was a characteristic of Jordan's time running HCC and he carried this over to the job of SA President. Jordan would learn the importance of efficient and rules-driven meetings during his time as SA representative for Roosevelt. However, during his time as President of HCC, he also learned about community and the importance of developing community. Combining the best of both worlds, Jordan took office as SA President and quickly earned a reputation as being not only an efficient administrator, but one who had heart as well. It is the latter of these two characteristics, the importance of building community, that he learned by being President of Hinman College.³

Other HCC Presidents and E-Boards followed. Frankie Seeman was President of HCC for the 2004-2005 academic year. Anyone who knows Frankie can attest that he is a very energetic, enthusiastic, and most especially, eccentric character. Numerous HCC meetings saw Frankie strip some or nearly all of his clothes. One of the best and most memorable of HCC meetings was one right before Winter Break when he came to the meeting dressed only in a box around his waist that was wrapped in Christmas wrapping paper. On the box there was a tag that read simply, "From: God. To: Women." This is the type of raucous humor that made Frankie one of the most beloved HCC Presidents of recent memory and one of the most dedicated and

active of the Hinman Student Fellows. Besides his humor and unstoppable drive and energy, Frankie also was able to get things done and run efficient meetings.⁴

The Seeman Administration saw many reforms in HCC. One controversial change came when the HCC meetings, traditionally held at 10 p.m. on Tuesday nights, were moved to 9 p.m. on Tuesdays. Although to many this might seem like a minor alternation to a schedule, many in HCC denounced the move, citing tradition and also the fact that many HCCers had late classes and/or meetings for other groups and organizations that met earlier in the evening. They declared that if the meetings were moved to 9 p.m. it would be all but impossible for them to attend HCC meetings. The supporters of the resolution argued that moving the meeting back an hour would get people out of the meeting earlier so they could study or go to sleep earlier if they had early morning classes. The arguments flew back and forth, though in the end it was agreed that HCC would be moved up an hour to 9 p.m.⁵

One of the more interesting stories to come out of the Seeman Administration originated during Dorm Wars 2004. During previous Dorm Wars, one of the events was to sell out the t-shirts for the hall. The first team to sell out the t-shirts got the most points. HCC ordered a set number of t-shirts, and when the box came the captains would give it to the halls and then it was up to the individual halls to sell out the t-shirts. However, that year's Dorm Wars was in disarray and someone had forgotten to place the order for the shirts. Frankie and the rest of his E-Board rushed to the store that made the shirts and asked if the order of approximately 375 shirts could be in by the due date which was in just a few days. The proprietor of the store said that the best he could do was have the shirts ready by the end of the week. To cover-up their gaff, Frankie made up a story during the next HCC meeting about why the t-shirts would be delayed and instead handed out a "pre-order" sheet with the number of t-shirts and a set number of sizes to

each of the buildings. The E-Board's mistake oddly enough turned into a success. The shirts sold out quicker than they ever did before. The system worked so well that from then on during every Dorm Wars and Hysteria, "pre-order" forms were distributed in advance of the event.⁶ Frankie, who was technically a member of the Class of 2006, decided to stay in college another year so that he could fulfill a lifelong ambition—study abroad in Germany. In the Fall of 2006, Frankie studied abroad in Germany and went on excursions throughout continental Europe. In the Spring of 2007 he returned to Binghamton to finish up his college career, and even though he had since moved off campus, he continued to come to HCC meetings regularly and remained active in Hinman as a Student Fellow.

During the 2006-2007 academic year, Josh Delmage was the President of HCC. The story of this HCC President was one of the most inspiring stories to come out of the history of not only HCC, but also of Hinman College. Josh, a resident of Tioga County, commuted to Binghamton University his freshmen year. Although he saved a lot of money, Josh felt that he was losing out on the college experience. For his sophomore year he asked for on-campus housing and he was placed in Smith Hall. He would remain in the very same room for the next three years. As luck would have it that first year, in that suite, were living HCC President Frankie Seeman and Ryan Schoeffield, who was the HCC Financial Vice President, at the time and who would go onto become an RA in Smith Hall. Virtually the entire HCC E-Board came from Smith Hall that year and Josh was exposed to the dedication and enthusiasm of that group of student government leaders. Seeing all of this, Josh was inspired to run for President of Smith Hall his junior year. Josh won the election and had an amazing experience with it. Josh would later say about his experience, "I lived it, I loved it, and I had to have more of it."⁷ Yearning for more involvement with student government, Josh decided to run for President of HCC and won.

It was also during this time that Josh met Victoria “Vicki” Wargo, a Smith Hall resident and the Academic Vice President of HCC during the Seeman Administration. Vicki would soon come to play a very important part in Josh’s life. Vicki came to Binghamton from Lagrangeville, New York, a suburb of Poughkeepsie. When she arrived in Hinman she quickly became involved in student government, partly because she was involved in government in high school, but also because she wanted to take on leadership positions in college. Eventually she worked her way up to Academic Vice President of Hinman College where she put on successful Research Fair and organized a Hinman team for the campus college bowl trivia competition. One evening, there was an HCC program held in the East Gym where a game of dodgeball was to be played in the gym’s pool while the film *Dodgeball* would be projected onto a screen in the background. Present at this unique program was Josh Delmage. This was the time that Josh and Vicki first met. Their first conversation went as follows:

Vicki: “Nice arm.”

Josh: “Thanks.”⁸

From this simple introduction the two grew to become close friends and began dating. Eventually Josh proposed to Vicki. These two seniors are presently engaged to be married in May 2008.

One contentious issue that during the Delmage Administration was an idea pitched by the Student Association for a “Super Community Meeting.” The SA proposal called for a combined meeting once a month of all the members of every area student government. The SA proposed this measure with the hope that it would bring students closer to the SA and allow the members of the SA to better inform the area governments. One problem with the “Super Community Meetings” was that the meetings would be held on a rotating basis in each community. In other words, one month they would be in Dickinson, the next in Newing, the next in CIW, then

Hinman, then Susquehanna and Hillside. The members of HCC would have to trek across campus. More importantly, it would take away a meeting of HCC. As everyone who has ever been involved with HCC knows, HCC meetings are long. This is not because a tremendous amount of business takes place but for other, far more important reasons. HCC is and has always been the social and culturally heart of Hinman College. The meetings times develop community like no other activity in Hinman. It allows its members to stay in touch and gives them a welcome opportunity catch-up with each other and to form bonds, many of which become long lasting and transcend the ordinary. The elected officials and HCR's of HCC are unique among the communities in the sense that by and large they are all friends, both in the actual meetings and outside of it. HCC members work together and play together like no other residential college's area government. These bonds of friendship and camaraderie often times go well beyond the college experience and translate into lifelong relationships. Taking away a meeting would seriously disrupt not only the business of HCC but also these important socialization and community-building experience. When the SA proposal was announced at one HCC meeting, the roar of disapproval was so loud that Josh took it upon himself to write a letter to the SA President explaining why HCC was against the Super Community Meetings. The SA President wrote back that Josh should run more efficient meetings. Not to be cast aside lightly, Josh along with Eric Katz, Hinman's most vocal and influential SA representative, continued to call for an end to the Super Community Meetings. In a move reminiscent of the Sy Rolnick/John Huntington HCC duo of 1976, Josh and Eric fought the SA when all of the other residential colleges caved in to the decision of the SA. Eventually the decision was made that the Super Community Meetings would be optional and later on the idea was abandoned completely. This was a victory for HCC. While the other communities had let the SA dictate to them, the leaders

of Hinman stood up and fought for what they believed to be right. While that's not saying that the Super Community Meetings would not be beneficial, the people of Hinman did not want them and it was HCC that made their wishes known.⁹

¹ Jordan Peck, telephone conversation with author, March 26, 2007.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Frankie Seeman, interview with author, March 27, 2007.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Josh Delmage and Vicki Wargo, interview with author, March 20, 2007.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.