

Hinman Fellows' Lunch

Since the days of Nick Sterling, Hinman College has hosted a Friday lunch for all Hinman Fellows. Whether they are faculty, students, alumni, or fellows, all are encouraged to congregate at noon in the Hinman Dining Hall to meet with one another to socialize and to go over the recent events and happenings in Hinman College. Fellows' Lunches, as they are called, have been especially popular with the numerous Hinman Fellows and continue to serve a most needed function in the Hinman community.

Although Fellows' Lunches did not happen regularly until the 1990's during Nick Sterling's second tour of duty as Faculty Master of Hinman, similar events had been going on since the very beginning to Hinman College. The very first Faculty Master of Hinman, Pete Gruber, started Table Talk, a dinner where students were invited to speak with Hinman Faculty Fellows to discuss a wide array of topics. Though these dinners were not held every week, they started the precedent of having students and fellows sit down together during a meal.

Ever since then, every Faculty Master of Hinman has been known to show up in the Hinman Dining Hall at regular intervals to eat with students and interact with them in a casual and relaxed setting outside of a formal classroom. It was Nick Sterling, however, who really took this concept to heart and made it a Hinman tradition. From 1990-1998, almost every student who has been involved in Hinman has eaten a Friday lunch with Nick Sterling. The lunches were informal and casual, and Hinman Fellows were invited to join. The lunches soon became notorious for their length and the number of topics covered. Sometimes these lunches would become marathon sessions that would last well into the afternoon. Oftentimes, even after Nick left, students and some of the Fellows would remain, engrossed in their conversation and in each other's company. Where Pete Gruber's Table Talk followed a rather formal course of

discussion on prearranged topics, usually of an academic nature, Nick Sterling's Friday lunches covered every conceivable topic under the sun. Students were so comfortable at the lunches that they did not hesitate to complain about their classes, their families, their relationships and anything else that was on their mind. Although one can never be sure, this is perhaps one of the many reasons why Nick Sterling was such a beloved Master of Hinman. These Friday lunches were a safe environment where anyone could let their opinions and concerns be known without fear of being judged or ridiculed.

In 1998, Al Vos became the new Faculty Master of Hinman and continued with this tradition. Every Friday at Noon, the Hinman Fellows' Lunch occurs. Like Nick Sterling's lunches, this lunch invites all Hinman Fellows and current Hinmanites to join to discuss the topics of the day. Although student participation in the Fellows Lunches has fallen in recent years, the lunches provide a much needed outlet for Hinman Fellows to keep abreast of what is going on in their residential college.

Regardless of how long they run or their attendance, there will always be a place for Hinman lunches. The lunches provide the necessary setting for casual conversation between fellows, staff, and students to occur. It is also unique in that there are very few places where these three groups can congregate and talk about any subject that comes to their mind. It also gives the opportunity to Faculty/Staff Fellows and Student Fellows (current Binghamton students who no longer live in Hinman) to hear about what is going on in Hinman. In an interview in 2004 for the *Binghamton Alumni Journal*, David Berkowitz (Class of 2000) had this to say about Hinman and the Fellows' Lunches, "You're not a 'former' Hinmanite. People identify with Hinman for many decades after they graduate, so even if you don't live there, you're still a

Hinmanite at heart.”¹ That is the essence of these lunches. They are a tradition that Hinmanites who are no longer living in Hinman can still partake in.

¹ Jeanette Duffy, “Hinman College: A Feeling of Family,” *Binghamton Alumni Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 2, Winter 2004, <http://alumni.binghamton.edu/AJ/2004/winter/reslife.htm>