

Hinman Semi-Formal

One of the most perennially popular events in Hinman history is the annual Hinman Semi-Formal. The first ever Semi-Formal was held in April of 1974 in the Hinman Dining Hall. The idea was a development of the HCC Social Activities Committee and almost undoubtedly Bob Giomi. The Semi-Formal is a dinner and a dance that is held annually where attendees come dressed in semi-formal dress. Although the definition of Semi-Formal attire has never been clear, it usually means that gentlemen wear their suit jackets and ties and ladies can wear formal evening gowns or party dresses. The Semi-Formal typically has a catered dinner followed up by music and dancing. The event has been extremely popular since it first began in 1974, so popular in fact that during some years of Hinman history there were multiple Semi-Formals held during the year.

Like Dorm Wars, Hysteria and other Hinman traditions, the Semi-Formal is not completely immune from change. The first and perhaps most striking change to the Semi-Formal is that today there is a complete lack of alcohol. When the drinking age rose to 21, consumption and distribution of alcohol during the Semi-Formal was prohibited. In the earlier years often beer and sometimes in even mixed drinks would be served to attendees. That practice has completely ceased with the change in the drinking law. Another change has been the change of venue. For many years the Hinman Semi-Formal was held in the Hinman Dining Hall and had food catered by whatever company was running campus dining services at the time (ACE until the early 1980's, then Marriott until the late 1990's, then Sodexo). Today the Semi-Formal is held in an off-campus location with food served not by campus dining services but by a private catering company. Though some might say this takes away from the charm and tradition of the Semi-Formal (which before this was held completely in Hinman) it does serve to

make the event extra special—a night out on the town without the all too unappetizing dining hall food.

Although the Semi-Formal may not be as popular today as it has been in the past, it still continues to rank as one of the highlights of the Spring Semester in Hinman and is recognized as one of Hinman’s finest traditions. As long as there are Hinmanites who are willing to dress up and dance the night away, there will always be a place in Hinman for the Semi-Formal.