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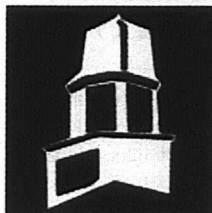


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THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF HOUGHTON COLLEGE  
**THE HOUGHTON STAR**

Volume 106, Issue 4

HOME COMING EDITION

October 2, 2009

# ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY RECOMMENDATIONS ANNOUNCED

by Joel VanderWeele

On Tuesday, President Shirley Mullen, Dean of Academic Affairs Ron Mahurin, and Vice President of Finance and Administration Efrain Rivera announced to faculty and staff that they will recommend to the Board of Trustees a plan to reduce/eliminate non-mission-critical majors and/or programs with low yields, high costs or redundancy in order to give the institution more fiscal flexibility. The announcement, made during the third installment of the "State of the College" series, was part of the fifteen recommendations that the Organizational Sustainability (OS) Taskforce will bring to the Board of Trustees at their October meeting.

The OS Taskforce hopes to generate \$750,000 in faculty costs by reducing the teaching faculty full-time equivalents (FTE) from 96-98 to 88-92 and reducing the part time FTE from 20 to 15 in a two-year period from 2009-2011. The goal is to transition from a student-faculty ratio of less than 12:1 to a ratio of 13-14:1, based on a projected enrollment of 1,200 students.

They also aim to achieve \$350,000 in personnel cost savings by reducing administrative, staff and non-teaching personnel by 7-10 positions. All faculty and personnel reductions will be achieved by position elimination, attrition, and leaving vacant current positions included in the 2009-2010 budget. Decisions regarding personnel reductions for 2010-2011 will be communicated by November 1, 2009.

In addition to program and position reductions, the OS Taskforce will recommend that the school develop plans to move the First Year Honors Program (FYHP) in London to a new model and/or location, reduce Athletics spending by \$100,000, and move the academic organizational structure from 18 departments to units of 5-8 groups/divisions.

For Off-Campus Programs, Mahurin would like to start "looking at standardizing our programs with

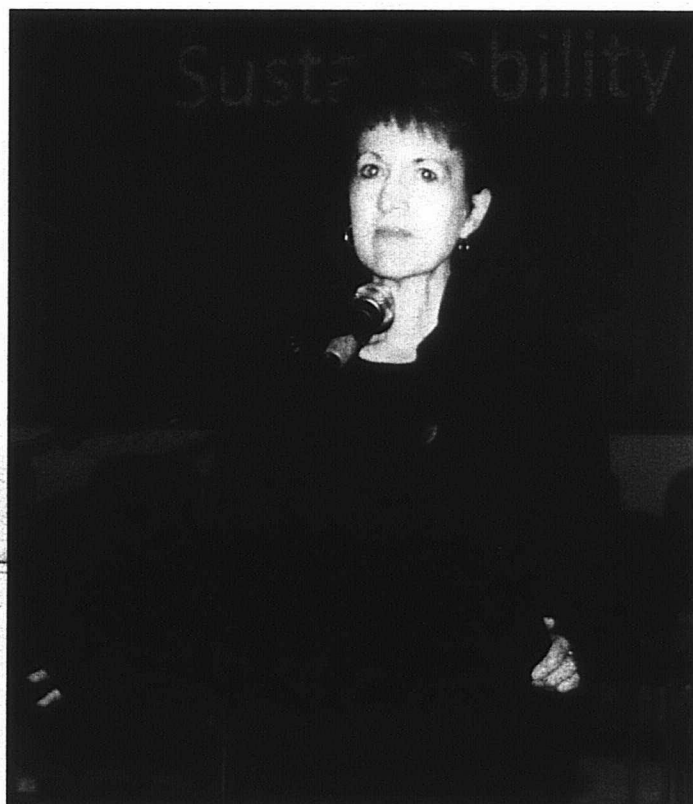


photo by Wesley Dean

**President Mullen addresses faculty and staff at the third installment of the State of the College series: Organizational Sustainability**

respect to not only fees but also the way in which student financial aid travels to programs, particularly non-Houghton programs." Although FHYP-London was the only specific program mentioned in the presentation, Mahurin did announce that "there will be and need to be other adjustments." Rivera wants to "find models that give everyone on campus the opportunity to go overseas," and to expand options to include partnerships with sister institutions. "What we want to do, over time, is expand the number of options for students... What Houghton has done [in the past] is restrict those options."

According to Mullen, "We're trying to make all of our programs qualify as 'best-in-class' programs... Tanzania is already there." The Houghton in London program, on the other hand, "is hugely varied, depending on who's there. There's no unified program purpose... We haven't put the energy into that

program that we have needed to put," said Mullen.

In terms of the future of the First Year Honors Program, Mahurin stated, "We want to maintain three tracks, it's just how we maintain them, and what the third track ultimately looks like."

Professor Peter Meilaender, Director of the Houghton Honors Program, said that changing FYHP-London has "been considered for maybe three years, so in that sense I've known for a long time that it was being considered. In terms of making it into the final recommendations, I had some advance notice. I found out before [Tuesday] afternoon, but not months ago."

The way Meilaender has been thinking about the recommendation "is that we know what we are not going to do. We're not going to keep running semester-long residential programs in London." Meilaender went on to say, "Clearly, the college administration would like to see

something in place for next year. We've had some talks about that, and I've told them that I think that's pretty hard to do, to get a program approved by the faculty in time to recruit in the spring. Without ruling it out entirely, I have some doubts that this would be possible... I'm taking the approach that if we're not going to do the London program, and we're going to do something new, we should think to ourselves that we are starting from scratch, and say, 'if we were going to design the best program we can think of today, what would it look like?'"

In Athletics, Vice President of Student Life Sharra Hynes has considered cutting back the number of non-required competitions Houghton teams participate in. "Another strategy that we've considered is doing some streamlining with... performance aid grants," said Hynes. "Those two strategies are probably what we're focusing on for the primary savings."

The transition from an academic departmental structure to 5-8 academic groups/division is meant to "reduce the amount of bureaucracy on campus," said Mullen. "From the standpoint of leadership and calling, having 18 chairs with varying degrees of incentive and varying work loads doesn't serve departments well, doesn't serve students well, and it doesn't serve the college well," agreed Mahurin. "The task now is to finalize what these [academic groups] will look like, and the faculty are going to need clear voice on that, and they'll have it."

Before beginning the presentation on Tuesday, Mullen explained that the meeting was "about direction, it's about priorities, and it's really to communicate the good news that this process of re-sizing the institution is very do-able." Later, Mahurin concurred with Mullen's statement, saying, "as hard as this moment is, let's keep celebrating and work even harder at enjoying the benefits of being at Houghton at this time."

*Recommendations cont'd on pg 5*

# THE WORLD IS THERE

by Monica Sandreczki

## President Obama Supports Bill on Climate Change

President Barack Obama praised a climate bill, drafted by Senator John Kerry and Senator Barbara Boxer, which will establish a "cap and trade" scheme in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, if passed. The Senate may not eagerly sign it in fear of a harmful effect it could have on the US economy. Under the bill, companies would be allotted a certain amount of emissions, but if they did not use up their allowance, the companies could make a profit by selling the remaining emissions to another company, but gradually, the overall emissions cap would be reduced. The goal is to finish the bill in time for the UN climate change conference in Copenhagen in December. The intention is to cut 2005 carbon emission levels by 20% by 2020.

## Earthquake in Indonesia

An earthquake off of the island of Sumatra, Indonesia, killed 75 people and trapped thousands underneath rubble on Wednesday. The 7.6 magnitude earthquake occurred hours after an unrelated tsunami killed 100 people in the South Pacific. Landslides triggered power lines to fall and houses to collapse. Electricity went out and buildings collapsed, including two hospitals. The quake was followed by very heavy rain, making efforts to clean up the area more difficult. The coastal city, Padang, was among the hardest hit and the total death toll is expected to rise. Extreme

panic has spread throughout the city, especially due to broken water pipes and downed bridges. The earthquake was also felt in Jakarta and Malaysia.

## US Government Official Meets with Burmese Minister

Assistant U.S. secretary of state for Asia, Kurt Campbell, met with Burmese health minister, U Thaung, the first of its kind in more than a decade. The meeting occurred the day after the U.S. announced a new policy of "sanctions and dialogue" with Burma. Sanctions were first imposed on Burma in 1988, but Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has said that, independently, sanctions and isolation has not worked. According to Campbell, Burma made the initial movement towards dialogue, and the U.S. discussed its concern with nuclear proliferation in North Korea. The meeting was held in New York.

## Anti-Corruption Chief Resigns

Aaron Ringera, head of the Kenyan anti-corruption commission (KACC), has resigned after President Mwai Kibaki reappointed him to the position for another five year term. Many government officials refused to accept the appointment, calling Ringera ineffective and illegally appointed. Ringera was accused of not doing enough to get rid of corruption. Pres. Kibaki did not consult MPs after reappointing Ringera, which immediately gave way to protests. The head of the KACC is currently the most well paid civil servant, earning more than the president.

## After Recession, Global Economy Begins to Recover

by Jonathan Brooks

According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, the U.S. economy entered a recession in December 2007. Almost two years later, a recovery appears to be in place. What has caused the resurgent economy? Robert Black, professor of economics at Houghton College, believes that the answer can be traced to the increase in the money supply over the past year. Only now are we seeing the effects of the new money. As Black states, "the monetary impulse created by the Federal Reserve, especially beginning in March 2009, is taking hold."

The money supply refers to currency held by the American public, plus traveler's checks, and checkable deposits. According to Federal Reserve money-supply data over the past 12 months, the Federal Reserve has supplied the economy with an 18.5% increase in M1 (cash in circulation and current account deposits), and transactions balances. The new money has been used to lower rates for mortgages and to increase liquidity in the banking system that then lends the money to people to buy goods and services.

Other government policies have also helped revitalize the economy. The Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) was initially created by the United States government to purchase illiquid and difficult-to-value assets from banks and other financial institutions, most notably subprime mortgages, one of the primary causes of this past recession. The intention behind TARP was that it would improve the liquidity of these assets and allow companies to stabilize their balance sheets and avoid further losses, all the while promoting lending to consumers and other financial institutions. The U.S. Treasury used TARP funds to directly supply capital to the largest U.S. banks that held many of

the troubled assets. This infusion of capital, now being repaid to the government by the banks, was critical to stabilize the American and global financial system, even though it raised significant questions about government interference in private businesses.

The creation of TARP and the increase in money supply have been vital to the economic recovery. TARP helped stabilize the banking sector and allowed many banks to survive. Federal Reserve loans to banks and to other financial institutions further stabilized them. But the injection of new money by the Federal Reserve really kick started the current signs of recovery in manufacturing and other economic sectors. The cash for clunkers program, which offered cash rebates to persons willing to upgrade fuel-inefficient cars for modern ones, also gave a jump-start to the troubled auto industry in August.

The recovery in the manufacturing sector can be seen here in New York State. The Empire State Manufacturing Survey shows that the general business conditions index improved seven points to 18.9, its highest level since late 2007. This was its third consecutive monthly increase and its second consecutive positive reading, with nearly forty percent of respondents reporting that conditions had improved in September.

So where is our economy currently? Various economic indicators show positive signs of recovery. The most recent edition of the Beige Book, a consolidated report of the twelve districts of the Federal Reserve Bank on current economic conditions, described economic activity as "stable or showing signs of stabilization".

A sense of caution currently prevails among consumers and companies alike, indicated by flat retail

*World Econ. cont'd on page 5*



photo by Wesley Dean

The United States fell into recession in December 2007. Several policies, such as TARP have been created to put a recovery in place.

## Library Struggles With Significant Budget Cuts

by Renee Roberts

Academic libraries across the country are facing budget cuts, affecting staff, resources, and library hours. Houghton College is no different. The Willard J. Houghton Library is "an invaluable campus resource," according to the college website, yet the library

continues to strain under the weight of financial difficulties and budget reductions.

David Stevick, Director of Library and Information Resources, said that over the past few years, there have been "significant budget cuts" directed at the library, leading to various decreases in resources, such as print subscriptions. One

difficulty is that resources are distributed to college departments, which then determine the subscriptions necessary to the department and its specific needs. Stevick remarked that he thought it has been good for the faculty to "critically prioritize" what is vital to their departments. Stevick went on to comment that, while the cutbacks

in funding may not be currently evident, when these changes do become obvious, it will be hard to make up the deficit.

According to Ron Mahurin, Dean of Academic Affairs, the college is aware that it "need[s] to make both short and long term investments in [the] library resources and in the library space itself." The college was recently given a \$10,000 grant which will be used to "upgrade some of the public spaces in the library to provide an even more learner-friendly environment," Mahurin said.

However, with the current status of the library's budget, the process of "creatively moving money" has become frequent.

Stevick said that last year the library kept pertinent databases, but as money became tighter this year, it has been harder to sustain them. This spring, the library will critically assess its financial situation and evaluate the resources needed to continue the library's services.

Stevick mentioned that "this is a difficult time," but he has received an immense amount of support from President Mullen, Vice President Rivera, and Mahurin and is "fairly hopeful things will turn around." Mahurin seconded this thought when he stated, "[t]he library at Houghton College remains central to the re-visioning of our work and ... to strengthening our commitment to the liberal arts at the College." ★



photo by Wesley Dean

The Willard J. Houghton Library has experienced significant budget cuts and have had to decrease print subscriptions over the past several years. A \$10,000 grant was recently received to upgrade the library.

## Retention at Six Year High, 10% Above Nat'l Average

by Kyle Johnson

Houghton's retention rate is the highest it has been in the past six years. Every year, schools across the country are required to report to the federal government on their rate of student retention. This percentage represents the number of first year students entering a particular school, who have not attended college before, who remain for the start of the following year.

This past year, Houghton's retention rate was 86.2%, a 1% increase from last year.

Making sure that students starting at Houghton are successful and can continue here is an important part of college policy. According to Diane Galloway, Director of Student Retention, the whole college is invested in this job.

"Because this is a community, hopefully no one is going to fall between the cracks... College-wide,

there has been a commitment to try to help students," said Galloway.

All aspects of the campus are involved in making sure needs are met and problems are addressed so that students are successful. Even Admissions has a crucial role in choosing students that are a good match for Houghton and are likely to have their needs met. The overall goal of the Retention Office is, according to Galloway, to see "students graduate" and "accomplish their goals." If this means in some circumstances that a student will be better off somewhere other than Houghton, "we want to support that. Our goal is what is ultimately best for the well-being of the student."

The Retention Office's policy is to always be looking for new ways to meet and adapt to the trends of ever-changing student needs. "It's a moving target," explained Galloway. This year, the Enrollment Management Council, a sub-committee that directly focuses on evaluation and meeting

different needs affecting retention, is being formed. The committee will include representation from multiple dimensions of campus including Student Life, Student Financial Services, Academic Records, the faculty, and the student body.

Houghton's current retention rate is nearly 10% higher than the current national average. A possible reason for this comparably high success rate, according to senior Laura Jackson, is because "Houghton offers what it advertises." For Jackson, Houghton's ability to genuinely provide what it purports to offer has been a defining factor in keeping her here for all four years. Jackson recalled, "I came here because I wanted to take an intellectually challenging course load, do meaningful extracurricular activities, and have an opportunity to get to know my professors. I've enjoyed my time here because I've encountered all three of these things."

Yet, does retention necessitate satisfaction? One anonymous student explained that although she acknowledges Houghton's attractive merits, including great people and faculty, she and many of her friends have wanted to leave Houghton College because of the changes in direction in different departments, such as foreign language, but haven't for several reasons.

"Sometimes [it's] because Houghton offers the better financial aid, sometimes because they can't find a school with the major they want, and sometimes they just don't have the time to apply anywhere else." This sense of dissatisfaction with Houghton may not reflect the majority, or may represent natural, temporary frustrations.

The numbers don't lie. Students are staying at Houghton, and it is obvious that the retention office is clear in its goal to, as Galloway put it, make these four crucial years in the life of every student "as rich and fulfilling as possible." ★

## Newly Formed PR Department Refines Image

by Joella Eppheimer

The top floor of Fancher is now home to a new branch at Houghton – the Public Relations Department. Included on staff are newcomers to the area, Sharon Myers, Director of Public Relations, and Catherine Jaycox, Director of Creative Services. Elaine Tooley serves as Communications Specialist, and Brandon Rush will be joining the team on October 1<sup>st</sup> to work as the lead designer.

The goal of this addition to the campus is to provide a reliable and appealing message to prospective students. Any material provided about the college – whether brochures, magazine ads, or other advertisements will come from Public Relations. Although this department has not existed over the past several years, Myers asserts that its concept is not new, but rather, it was created to provide a consistent

message about the school, which is the prominent theme she and Jaycox share in describing their roles.

Members of this new department bring in a variety of experiences. Myers has worked as Director of Communications at St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute, and prior to that has held positions in Italy and the United Kingdom. Jaycox formerly managed design and creative staff for Country Music Television, and Rush was a designer for the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. His experience puts him in the unique position of knowing the competition, says Myers.

Both Myers and Jaycox are enthusiastic about promoting the school. Bringing an outside perspective, Jaycox says Houghton has been “the best kept secret,” which the department hopes to change. “We’ve been blown away,” Myers contends, referring to their

positive reaction towards the college in the few months they have been here. Interactions with the student body have influenced the eagerness the two have to promote the college. Myers emphasizes the community aspect, claiming, “You just see it – the interaction between the students and professors. You can’t find that at other schools.”

Some of the advantages of Houghton Myers hopes to highlight are the location and variety of experiences offered. She recounts her reaction the first time she drove onto campus, saying she was astounded with the natural beauty of the area. She believes the location lends to the students’ learning experiences, and this, coupled with the availability of local and global opportunities, makes Houghton an ideal institution.

Striving to create a strong position for the college among Christian liberal arts schools, the department

is looking for student involvement. Indicating that students are what make up a campus, the staff is seeking to get their perspective in marketing the college. Myers is looking for willing students to interview alumni and write articles. Stressing that this is a great way to reconnect Houghton graduates with the school, she also sees it as an opportunity for current students to interact with people who have already graduated from Houghton and are now working in positions that they, themselves, may seek in the future. Jaycox is interested in students who enjoy design and photography to supplement her segment of the department. Working in conjunction with the PR department will allow students to have a hand in recruiting the next generation of Houghton students, and will also provide practical experience and material for future resumes, according to Myers. ★

## Influx in Bear Population Indicates Positive Ecosystem

by Spencer Adams

Many people believe bears are dangerous animals that must be eliminated for self-protection. In reality, the bears of New York are fairly harmless and there are a few steps that people can take to ensure peaceful coexistence.

The black bear (*Ursus americanus*) is the only species of bear that can be found in the Houghton woods. According to New York's Department of Environmental Conservation, there are between 6,000 and 7,000 of these critters roaming the forests of New York, and the population is growing. The black bear is omnivorous and especially enjoys nuts and seeds, a fact that Houghton's Professor Ted Murphy can attest to. Murphy awoke on a May morning to find a black bear dismantling the bird feeder on his front lawn for the food inside. After snapping a few pictures of the bear, Murphy watched it “lumber” away. His belief that this would be the only interaction with the animal was disproved when he saw it later that night attacking the newly repaired birdfeeder.

Do Houghton residents have anything to fear about the black bear? According to Eli Knapp, conservation biology professor, there is nothing to fear from the increasing population of bears. Knapp had his own experience with bears one night this year when one pulled down a wall-mounted feeder on his house. He said that bears are often a “perceived problem,” but

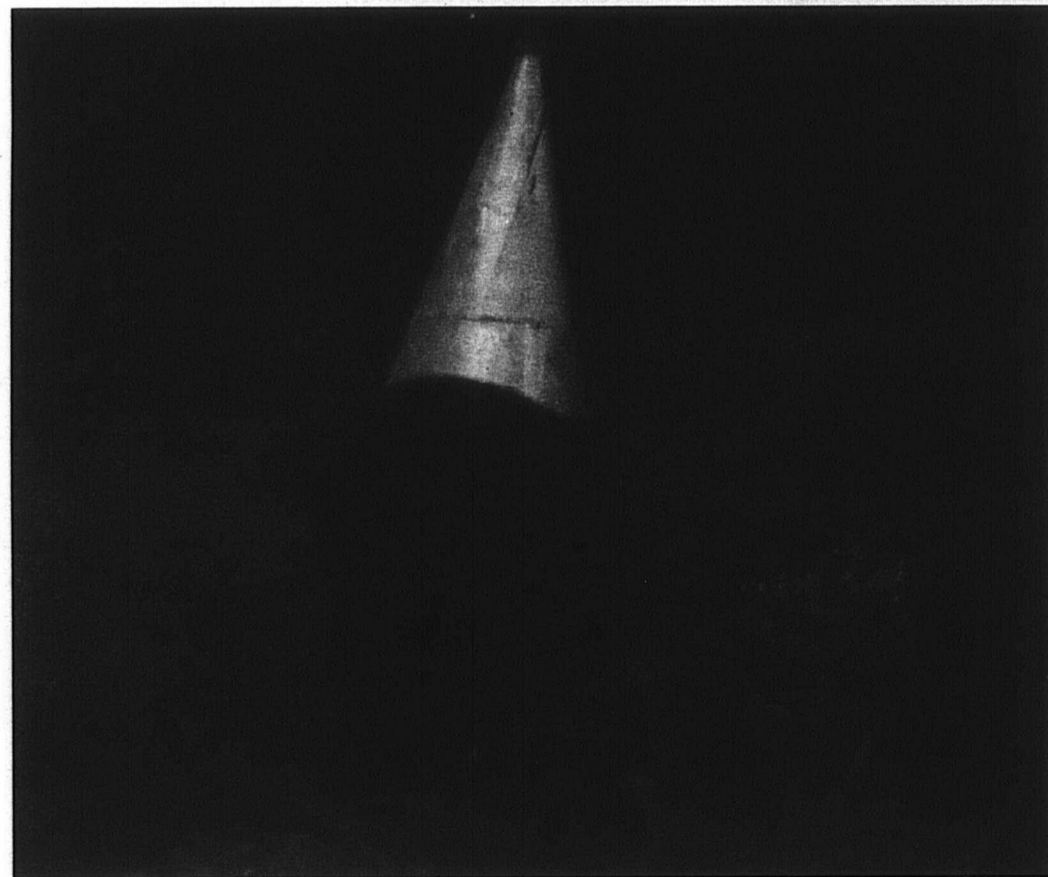


photo courtesy of Ted Murphy

**Black bears have been seen in and around Houghton. They are a sign that the forests are healthy.**

this is not generally the case.

In fact, Knapp went so far as to say, “I would gladly have bears on my property and replace a birdfeeder once a year.”

Harmful encounters with black bears are extremely rare. Since 2000, there have only been two reported serious injuries to people in relation to black bear encounters.

According to Knapp, “They are a synecdoche – the presence of bears represents larger, positive signs in preservation.” He sees bears as long-standing symbols of the wild. People, such as famous environmentalist John Muir, who in 1869 wrote that the bear was a “rugged boulder of energy”, have idealized them.

To ensure the further preservation of the black bear, the Department of Environmental Conservation stresses the obvious: do not feed the bears. When these creatures learn that they will receive food from humans, they return. This may cause them to lose their natural foraging instincts, increase the risk of dangerous encounters. ★

**Recommendations cont'd from pg 1**

Mullen warned that the recommendations were very general and that they would "not satisfy many of the curiosities that I'm sure are out there." According to her, just as it would be irresponsible not to plan the more specific elements of the recommendations before they have been voted on, it would be irresponsible of her to share those specificities with the community as if their passage through the Board of Trustees was a foregone conclusion. She later commented, "it's not good for the community to know, 'Oh, we're going to cut your program,' and then find out that the Board has overturned the decision and, 'Now we want you back.'"

"There are some people who are concerned that there is nothing beyond the recommendations, and that is simply not the case," said Mullen.

The current challenge, explained Mullen, was to size Houghton to allow the advancement of core mission while creating fiscal flexibility. This challenge includes budget adjustments of \$3-3.5 million needed for the 2010-2011 academic year, approximately 10% of the current budget.

Mahurin explained that the \$3-3.5 million figure, which will come from both budget cuts and increased revenue, is "based on an understanding of what, in our current fiscal budget, it will take for us to provide the direction and the margins that we need going forward to operate on a model of sustainability organizationally." He went on to say, "The range of \$3 - 3.5 million recognizes that all the pieces that we laid out in [Tuesday's] proposals that will go to the Board of Trustees, provides some sufficient margin or flexibility within that range."

Mullen, Mahurin, and Rivera all emphasized the importance of seeing the recommendations in the context of the financial crisis. "The loss of perspective is a really huge problem," said Mullen. Rivera reinforced Mullen's comments, saying, "Everything we're doing is in the context of what a lot of

other private colleges are doing at this time." And, according to Mahurin, "This is a process that the best organizations are continuously doing. It's not about which programs are good and which ones aren't. It's about scale and vision... we're stretched too thin."

After the recommendations were presented, the floor was opened for a question and answer session. One of the primary questions brought up by faculty was how the transition from departments to divisions/groups would affect the tenure status of faculty. According to the Mullen, the shift will not affect tenure because "as [faculty] come through the tenure process, they are tenured to the institution, not their departments."

At the conclusion of the question and answer segment, President Mullen invited attendees to reflect and respond to a form which states how attendants would respond, "If [They] were to Declare [Themselves] in the Spirit of Covenant." The form gave space for faculty and staff to sign their names to one of the following attitudes towards the current changes being recommended by the OS Taskforce:

"A. While I may disagree on some of the particulars, I want to be FOR Houghton in this moment. I support the overall direction outlined today and will seek to fulfill my responsibilities effectively within this framework. I commit to voicing my concerns through appropriate channels and in appropriate contexts. I will pray for Houghton, for the students, for those charged with making decisions about the college in this moment, for those who are affected in painful ways by these decisions, and for those within the community with whom I am most frustrated at this time.

"B. I think of myself as being FOR Houghton, but NOT the Houghton outlined in the presentation today. I disagree with key aspects of this overall direction of priorities and decision-making. Having said that, I will choose to remain here. I will not seek to undermine this Houghton and I will exercise appropriate and disciplined

discretion in airing my views with various sectors of the community.

"C. Knowing myself, I am not ready to commit to Houghton at this time. I would like to remain on staff or faculty for the moment, but I will be actively looking for employment that better matches my calling, my priorities and my commitments. D. I am so sure what is best for Houghton in this moment that I would rather see my ideal of Houghton preserved than to associate myself with the priorities and direction of decision making outlined today."

"I'm not asking each of you to turn this in to any office," said Mullen. "It doesn't matter how solidly the board approves this unless each of us commits to making Houghton its very very best self at this time."

Although two students, the SGA President and Editor-in-Chief of the Star, were invited to attend Tuesday's meeting, three uninvited senior students attempted to sit in. "Other students and I had heard that there was a State of the College meeting," said Clara Sanders, "and we are concerned about the state of the college, so we thought we would go. I suspected that it would be closed and that we might not be particularly welcome, but there had been no prohibition for students."

According to Sanders, the students were told that there might not be enough seats for faculty, so they stood in the back in the auditorium. It was then explained to the students, said Sanders, that it was a closed meeting and that "the two students that had been invited had been invited with a purpose to provide a way for students to have at least been in this meeting without making it open for students."

Josiah Nunziato, who also tried to attend the meeting, explained that, "While stopping short of directly asking us to withdraw, [Cindy] Lastoria strongly indicated that it would be wise for us to leave, while Sharra Hynes held the door open to facilitate our exit."

Upon exiting the recital hall, Hynes discussed the matter with the students, explaining that there was going to be a student forum on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October and that "this

was the faculty and staff's forum and there might be sensitive issues discussed," said Sanders. "I'm not sure I agree with all of the elements of her explanation," continued Sanders, "but it was good that we weren't simply just asked to leave, but that we got an explanation, which is what we wanted."

One of the students also asked Hynes whether the recommendations being announced were going to be "set in stone." According to Nunziato, Hynes contested the characterization, but affirmed that it was unlikely that much change would be welcome or even possible. "I appreciated Hynes's willingness to explain the reason we were not welcome at the 'State of the College' address, but I was also chagrined by the apparent inattention to involving students, or even the broader faculty and staff, in actual dialogue about the recommendations," said Nunziato.

"It was a discussion for the members of the community that are most affected long-term," Mullen said of the meeting. "It wasn't about excluding students."

The OS Taskforce plans for moderate increases in full-time undergraduate enrollment to a range of 1225-1250. They also hope to plan pricing that reflects modest tuition increases that grow with inflation and to create flexible pricing options for everything from dining and residential services to programmatic expenses.

It was also recommended that a new academic leader be appointed to provide P.A.C.E. with greater oversight so that the program could be maintained and strengthened in order to generate greater profitability. They also hope to bolster the budget by reviewing the conference program, divesting college properties ancillary to the core operations of the college, and reducing energy and related costs, as well as our carbon footprint.

In Advancement, the OS Taskforce hopes to implement a plan of sustained fundraising for endowment and capital projects to complement the support from the Wesleyan Church, which according to Mullen is about \$1.1 - 1.2 million per year, and the Annual Fund. ★

**There are some people who are concerned that there is nothing beyond the recommendations, and that is simply not the case.**

**It doesn't matter how solidly the board approves this unless each of us commits to making Houghton its very very best self at this time.**

**World Econ cont'd from page 2**

sales, soft consumer spending, carefully managed inventories and tight credit standards. While none of these indicators can be considered great news, things don't seem to be worsening, and companies appear ready to respond to the imminent economic recovery. Business Week recently reported that companies,

outside of the financial sector, had a \$156 billion surplus of cash flow relative to capital spending. This means that companies are ready to invest cash into new equipment and products as they prepare for future increased demand. Perhaps we will see a rapid economic recovery, or perhaps a "double dip" recession. In any event, unemployment is not likely to recover as quickly

as spending and production. The commercial real-estate market also continues to be troubled, and high

unemployment is putting pressure on repayment rates for prime mortgages. ★

**Rothenbuhler Treasure Hunt** × Nov. 6th



**Read everything. Even the finest print. Guessing never works. Understanding?**

# Administrative Profile: VP Efrain Rivera

by Clara Sanders

STAR: Tell me about your background and your family.

Efrain Rivera: Although I was born in New Jersey, my parents are from Puerto Rico and I lived there as a child. I attended Houghton as a psychology major in the late 1970s and went on to get graduate degrees from the University of Rochester, New York University, and Case Western Reserve University. I lived in Mexico for a while in the mid-90s when I worked for Bausch & Lomb. I call Rochester my home and that is where I live with my wife and son.

STAR: What interested you in the VP for Finance job at Houghton? Why did you choose to come here?

Rivera: I wanted to have an opportunity to give back to Houghton and I recognized that there was an important task to accomplish here.

STAR: What have been the most significant challenges so far since you took this position?

Rivera: The state of the economy has increased the challenges for higher education, and Houghton is no excep-

tion in this regard. I've also had to understand the history of the college in a short time. There is a context to this place that is important to understand.

STAR: What has been the most encouraging thing thus far in your time at Houghton?

Rivera: This is a great school with excellent students and talented and dedicated professors. We have many strengths on which we can capitalize.

STAR: What is your vision for Houghton financially, and how do you hope to accomplish that?

Rivera: I want to be part of the team that helps Houghton to thrive financially and organizationally as its academic reputation continues to grow. We will do this by using college resources strategically, building our endowment, growing the student body over time, marketing the Houghton story and developing the financial flexibility to take hold of future opportunities for growth.

STAR: What is your response to student concerns and frustrations about the tough budget and program cuts? How would you attempt to explain the



Houghton's recently hired CFO, Efrain Rivera

Photo by Wesley Dean

necessity of these to the students?

Rivera: Higher education institutions throughout the country are re-evaluating their operations in light of changes in the environment. In these circumstances, colleges must make choices on where to focus their efforts. If an institution continues to focus on programs that aren't yielding the desired or planned results, the institution as a whole is weakened. Focusing resources on the areas of strength is the best way to strengthen the institu-

tion.

STAR: What do you want the conversation to look like between now (when the Organizational Sustainability Task Force recommendations have been announced) and the decisions being finalized in November/December?

Rivera: I'd like the conversation to focus on the areas where the college is strong and discuss how we as a community can build on those strengths to enhance the college's reputation. ★

## Bikeshare Program Loses its Wheels

by Shannon Daugherty

The Bike Share program sponsored by the Creation Care Task Force gives students access to community bikes, allowing them to ride around campus on those bikes designated with yellow flags. The project is only weeks old and already the flags have disappeared and students are losing enthusiasm about the project's initial promise.

The Bike Share program began with 17 bikes each adorned with yellow flags, many of which have splintered, been lost or removed from the bikes themselves. The Task Force is transitioning the identification of "community bikes"

from these yellow flags to stripes of white paint on the tires.

LaMar Mast, designated staff for bike repairs, received many reports of broken bikes but he could only fix 1 in 5 because the broken bikes were not in their reported locations. Originally a volunteer was supposed to help with the repair of the bikes but that position never materialized. Mast commented that he would like to see "the bikes treated as if the users bought them themselves."

Senior Andrew Keller claimed, "Community bikes have all the fun of stealing with none of the regret."

Senior Dan Tomlinson said community bikes are, "the best idea

Houghton has had since I've been here."

It seems that many Houghton students share Keller and Tomlinson's optimistic thoughts alongside disappointing experi-

ences. Senior Wes Dean says, "The first time I tried to ride a community bike, the brakes were jammed."

With this waning of enthusiasm, come theories of why the bike share has been less successful than what was hoped for, like "the bikes were not followed up on by security and there were no rules," "there is a better way of implementing it," "not enough thought was put into it," to "the college should have invested in higher quality bikes."

Senior Sophie Huber said, "Because the bikes technically belong to 'no one,' at least not a specific person and generally are owned by the college, students do not put as much effort into caring for and maintaining them."

For many, the idea that the bikes belong to no one and everyone presents a problem. The idea of the "Tragedy of the Commons" predicts that when resources are shared in a community, individuals acting out of self-interest will eventually destroy the resource even though it is not in the best interest of the community. The original concept was illustrated by a cow pasture. If a village shares one pasture there must be restrictions to how many and which cows can feed at given times. Without restrictions the en-

tire field will eventually go bare. This idea was recognized by the Creation Care Task Force in their Campus Wide e-mail preceding the bike share: "A dilemma called *the tragedy of the commons* points out that resources shared in a community tend to be exploited unfairly by individuals to the unintended harm of the resources and of all who use them. Let's try to avoid that by treating the bicycles well."

The tragedy of the commons is such a powerful human phenomenon that many suggest that it must be checked by restrictions, not by a modest warning. The warning issued by the tragedy of the commons is to institute restrictions to save the resources. There are a number of quite successful community bike programs, but they all have either more regulations or higher selectivity for members. One student suggested that a good example of a bike program that has worked for the City of Buffalo can be found at [www.buffalobluebikes.com](http://www.buffalobluebikes.com)

It seems that the community bike project could be "a wonderful gift" as one student remarked, but for now the project has yet to reconcile how the bikes can successfully belong to everyone and no-one at the same time. ★

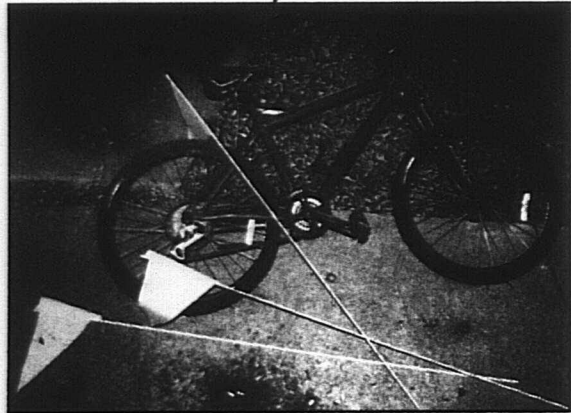


Photo By Wesley Dean

A bike share bicycle in a state of neglect and disrepair.

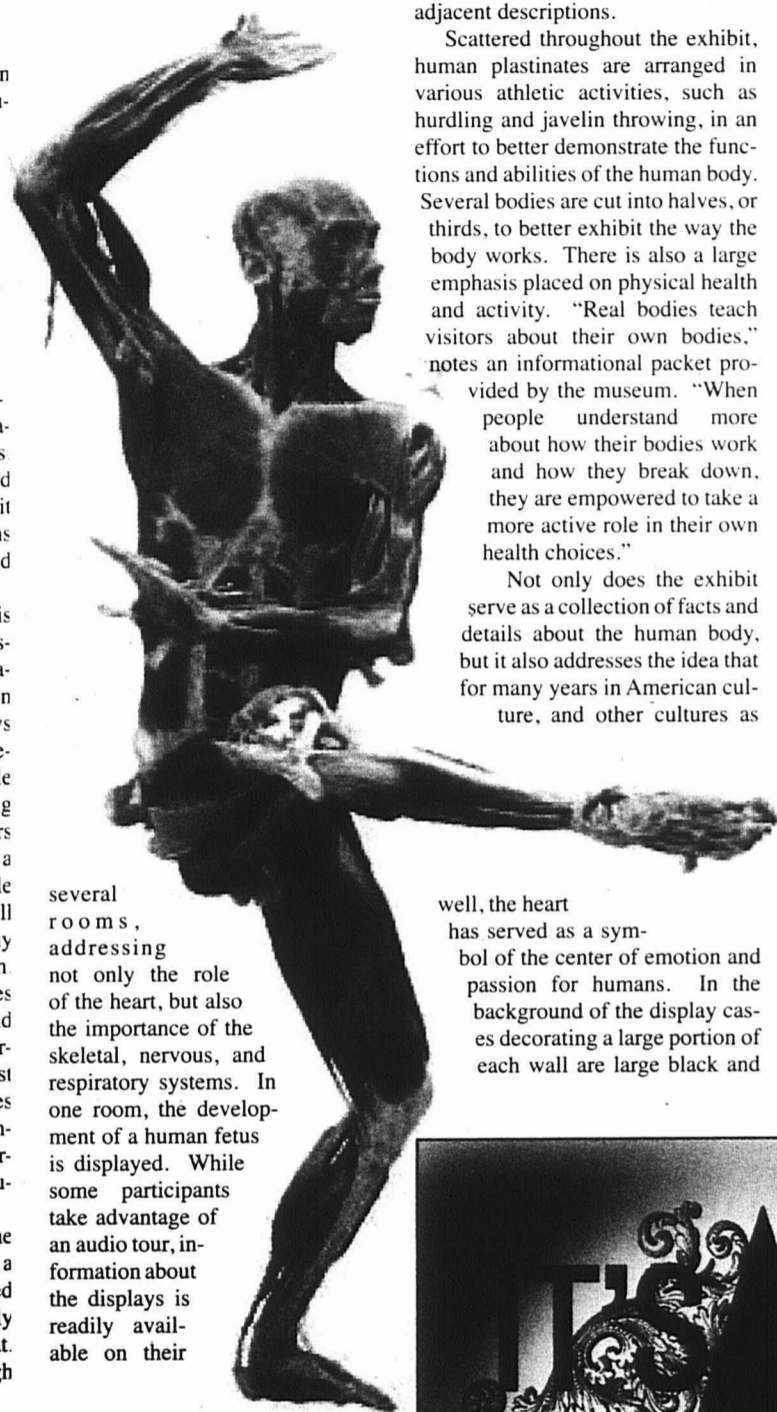
# Buffalo Cultural Review: Body Worlds

by Rebekah Miller

A revolutionary exhibit is soon to close at the Buffalo Science Museum. *Body Worlds*, the original exhibition of real human bodies, has been featured in the museum since early July. The exhibit will close Thursday, October 4, following a period during which it will remain open for 58 consecutive hours. Easily accessible by a range of age groups, fields of interests, and expertise, this exhibit offers a truly distinctive educational experience. Featuring over 200 human specimens including body slices, organs, and whole-body plastinates, this exhibit uses models to trace the functions and inner workings of the heart and its role within the body.

The main concept behind this unique installation is a tissue preservation technique called plastination. Invented by Dr. Gunther von Hagens in 1977, this process allows for the preservation of tissue by removing all bodily fluids and soluble fat from specimens and replacing them with resins and elastomers like rubber or epoxy. The result is a human anatomical figure, or single organ, which looks startlingly well preserved and healthy, without any obvious signs of decomposition. With the addition of facial features such as eyes, eyebrows, a nose, and a pair of lips, the human models arranged in various poses look almost life-like. Even though the bodies display exposed muscle, bone, tendons, and in most cases, internal organs, they are surprisingly intriguing.

Immediately upon entering the exhibit, the viewer is greeted by a very red human heart, accompanied by a loudspeaker that persistently projects a steady human heartbeat. The exhibit winds around through



several rooms, addressing not only the role of the heart, but also the importance of the skeletal, nervous, and respiratory systems. In one room, the development of a human fetus is displayed. While some participants take advantage of an audio tour, information about the displays is readily available on their

adjacent descriptions.

Scattered throughout the exhibit, human plastinates are arranged in various athletic activities, such as hurdling and javelin throwing, in an effort to better demonstrate the functions and abilities of the human body. Several bodies are cut into halves, or thirds, to better exhibit the way the body works. There is also a large emphasis placed on physical health and activity. "Real bodies teach visitors about their own bodies," notes an informational packet provided by the museum. "When people understand more about how their bodies work and how they break down, they are empowered to take a more active role in their own health choices."

Not only does the exhibit serve as a collection of facts and details about the human body, but it also addresses the idea that for many years in American culture, and other cultures as

well, the heart has served as a symbol of the center of emotion and passion for humans. In the background of the display cases decorating a large portion of each wall are large black and

white pictures featuring quotes from noteworthy individuals addressing the perseverance of the human heart and will. One pair of plastinates, delicately kneeling towards each other, are arranged to represent the balance between the brain and the heart, and their connections to human emotion.

There have been some who question the ethics of the exhibition. Critics accuse the displays of being sensationalistic, or of being merely for the sake of art. Some have also questioned not only the validity of the use of human bodies in such an exhibition, but also how the displayed bodies were originally obtained. *Body Worlds* insists that each body shown was freely donated by that person before his/her death. Supporters of the exhibit point out that not only are the bodies given willingly and freely to science, but their anonymity and educational function support the fact that the bodies are strictly for science, not art. Aesthetics do play a part in how the bodies are arranged, but the exhibit argues that this is because an audience approaches the exhibit not only intellectually but emotionally as well.

Though the event is careful to clarify that you do not have to donate your *own* body to science in order to attend the exhibit, there is information provided for those who wish to look further into the possibility of a post-mortem donation. General Admission for adults is \$22.00, with a small discount for students.★

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# How Social Media Changes Communication

by Laura Day

On any given day around campus, members of the Houghton faculty are readily spotted on their way to or from a meeting, class, or preparation to impart some facet of their knowledge to the student body. Occasionally they are found, some more than others, in the cozy crevices of Java 101, or working out at the gym. Although this type of community is the sort of thing Houghton tries to foster, and is what makes it stand out in the collegiate world, student-faculty interactions are still based primarily in the classroom and office discussions.

However, the basis of communication and community building is changing as a primarily print-based generation undertakes the challenge of educating a digital generation. When much of the faculty and staff of Houghton College were growing up, education was based in text, fact, and history. The current student, born on average between 1985 and 1995, is generally educated in a more fluid context, determined largely by opinion, and firmly rooted in collaboration and creativity. So how does education adapt, if it can at all?

Associate Professor of Political Science Peter Meilaender's Twitter provides updates, in a mix of English, German, and URLs on recent happenings in the political science world. Meilaender says he uses this form of communication primarily "to increase the visibility of the

political science major," using the 'mini-blog' format to link interesting articles that he would like to share with others. Meilaender expects the renovated Political Science department website to include a link to his Twitter, providing a place for incoming students to discover what Houghton professors are saying in real time, and allowing those outside of Houghton to get a taste of the Houghton community.

Assistant Professor of Visual Communication and Media Arts Dave Huth could be called something of an internet sensation. However, Huth makes very specific distinctions between the various forms of virtual communication in which he participates and what sorts of community they build. His vlog, hosted on iTunes and at davehuth.com, is open to anyone who cares to look, and he encourages feedback on the various entries. His Flickr streams provide a slightly more personal glimpse into the life of a professor, artist, and "techy geekoid," with photos highlighting the growth of his daughter, mosaic-like compositions of family reunion photos, and scans from his sketchbook. Twitter also opens the door to real-time updates, ranging from questions about the lecture for the next class session to links to his favorite fellow Flickrites. However, even with this seemingly free internet presence, Huth draws a hard line when it comes to Facebook, maintaining a policy of not 'friending' current students, reflecting the similarities between

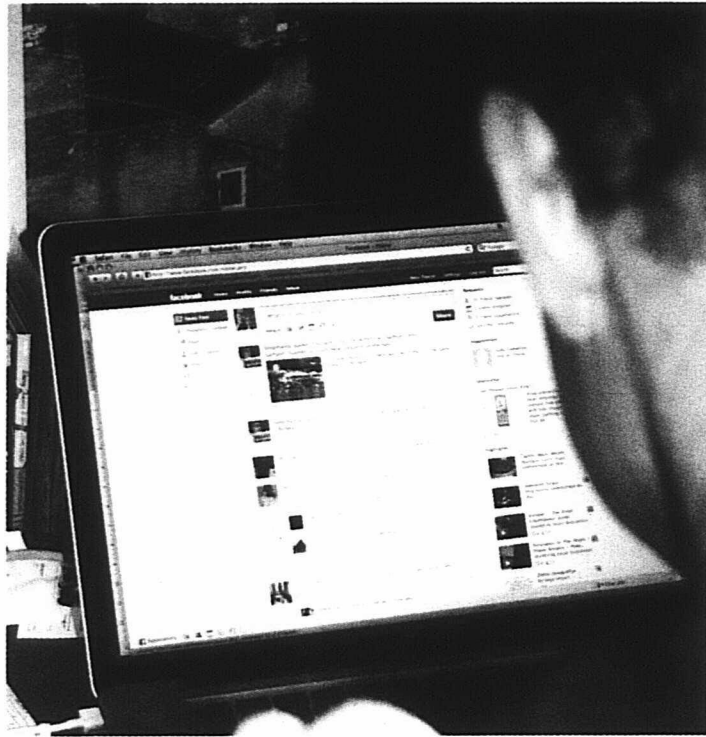


Photo By Heather Hahn

Professor Meic Pearse checks his Facebook account page.

his "online life and real life....The other forms of communication," says Huth, in regard to Flickr and Twitter, "are like my professor life: it's out there, it says things I want people to know and share. But I have other parts to my life as well, parts that are more personal, so I just don't share those."

As far as email is concerned, Huth recognizes its immediacy and convenience, and conducts much of his interaction with students, family,

and friends via email, as do many other faculty, staff, and students. Considering the differences between the various forms of computer-mediated communication and what they entail, Huth seems to stick to the maxim of communication theorist and scholar Marshall McLuhan: "the medium is the message," meaning that the form of the communication influences the content in such a

*Twitter con't on page 9*

## Despite Injuries, Men's Soccer Gains Momentum

by Nicholas Fredette

As fall dawns on the Houghton College campus, the Men's Soccer season is in full bloom. The Highlanders are currently ten games into the 2009 season, with an overall record of 6-4-0. The Highlanders have built momentum recently with wins in each of their last four contests. As they look forward onto the rest of their season, we look back at their progress thus far.

The Men's Soccer team got off to a slow start, dropping their first two games after having to rearrange the team due to injuries, but have steadily improved since, losing only two of their next eight games. The Highlanders have relied heavily on freshmen to play a strong supporting role on the team, and have not been let down. After junior forward Jonny Kimani was hospitalized with an injury, freshman Daniel Smith has stepped up in a big way, leading the team in scoring. Smith has found the back of the net six times in the

nine games he has played. Another freshman whose performance has been strong is Mike Amico, despite being plagued by illness and missing a few games midway into the season. As usual, Houghton has found strong performance from upperclassmen as well. Seniors Jonathan Brooks and Steve Grudda have been in top form, netting four and two goals, respectively. When asked about the team, Grudda

responded by saying, "I can say that it's been a privilege to be a part of this team. We suffered a lot of early injuries this year and have had to rearrange our line-up several times, but younger players have been stepping up to the challenge and have done well."

Offensive performance has been good from the Highlanders, but as any true team, they rely on

a holistic effort on both sides of the ball. Houghton's defense has been held down by strong defensive execution by players like juniors Aaron Martin, Chris Davis, and Zach Wise, and senior Justin Farnsworth. This strong defense stands in front of sophomore goalkeeper Steve Zacchigna, who has risen to the task of starting goalkeeper, filling big shoes left by Erik Lefebvre ('09). Zacchigna has performed well this season, with 46 saves in goal, leading to four clean sheets. As the Highlanders look to the second half of their season, they will have a few objectives in mind. Staying healthy will be important for the team, as injuries have caused them to rearrange their line-up several times. Houghton will rely on strong play as a team and begin to prepare for the rest of its season. The Highlanders play on Homecoming weekend, with a home game Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> against St. Lawrence University at 4:00. ★



Photo by Mike Wise

Zach Wise maneuvers around the opponent.

# from the ARCHIVES

*From the Archives is a series of articles re-printed from past issues of the STAR. This article was printed in the February 19, 1971 issue and is entitled "College Forced to increase Tuition for Fall Semester." The current STAR staff finds this article particularly relevant as we experience times of economic strain. Selected by Emily Rinehart and Stewart LaPan.*

All students attending Houghton College in the fall of 1971 will pay an increase of \$3.50 for tuition, bringing the charge per hour to \$53.50. In an effort to compete with rising costs and the general effects of inflation, the College found the increase imperative. Houghton is not the only college facing this dilemma. In an article recently published in the Buffalo Courier Express, out of all the colleges in the western New York area, St. Bonaventure University was the only institution retaining the same charge for tuition. In an interview Dr. Willard Smith, the Business Manager for the College, said that most colleges today are being forced to raise fees because of the general inflationary trend of our nation's economy.

In a survey taken, most schools' tuition increases range between a 7% and a 12% rise over the charges of the previous year. As compared to these figures, Houghton's increase is in the 7% category, putting us in the lower percentile.

Alternatives were considered but none proved feasible. Besides reducing the number of courses offered or releasing faculty members, there was no other alternative. Alumni and donor gifts, which contribute greatly to the school's income, are shrinking instead of rising. This fact intensifies the need for a rise elsewhere.

With regard to the school's new curriculum plan, Dr. Smith feels that there will be no major changes. The charge for each course is based on credit hours, not on length of course. The charge for winterim courses will be the same as any other courses of comparable credit hours. Fees for science and art labs are connected to each course and are not expected to change.

In closing, Dr. Smith said, "All colleges and universities are at the mercy of inflation - we are forced to keep pace with economic trends. For our type of school - a private liberal arts college that is church associated - we are at the bottom of the list as far as our fees are concerned." ★

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**ANNUAL OFF-CAMPUS PROGRAMS FAIR**

OCTOBER 8, 2009  
 10:30 AM-1:30 PM  
 CAMPUS CENTER VAN DYKE LOUNGE



<p><b>Founders Day Chapel</b> 10:10 a.m. Speaker: Neil MacBride Wesley Chapel</p> <p><b>Alumni Career Fair &amp; Business Expo</b> 1:30-4 p.m. CanDyk Lounge Reinhold Campus Center</p>	<p><b>Alumni Volleyball Game</b> 7-8 p.m. Nielsen PE Center</p> <p><b>College Choir Homecoming Concert</b> 7:30 p.m. Wesley Chapel</p> <p><b>Jazz Fest with Fireworks</b> 9-11 p.m. Quad</p>
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<p><b>Alumni Soccer Game</b> 9-10 a.m. Wilt's Field (behind Burke Field)</p> <p><b>Family Weekend Golf Scramble</b> 9 a.m.-Noon Waterways Resort</p> <p><b>Homecoming Parade</b> 10-11 a.m. Main campus</p> <p><b>Fall Festival &amp; BBQ</b> 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Quad</p> <p><b>Alumni Art Show Reception</b> Noon Wesley Chapel Basement</p> <p><b>Field Hockey vs. Mansfield</b> Noon Field Hockey Field</p> <p><b>Volleyball vs. Urbana</b> 1 p.m. Nielsen PE Center</p>	<p><b>Trail Rides</b> 1,2,3,4 p.m. Equestrian Center</p> <p><b>Women's Soccer vs. Carroll College</b> 2 p.m. Burke Field</p> <p><b>Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony</b> Between Soccer Games Burke Field</p> <p><b>Men's Soccer vs. St. Lawrence</b> 4 p.m. Burke Field</p> <p><b>Italian Dinner Buffet</b> 5-7 p.m. Reinhold Campus Center</p> <p><b>Student Banquet</b> 8-9:30 p.m. Reinhold Campus Center</p> <p><b>SPOT</b> 10 p.m. Wesley Chapel</p>
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**Family Weekend Breakfast with President Mullen**  
8:30-10:00 a.m.  
South End of Dining Hall

*Twitter con't from page 8*

way that certain forms cannot fully convey certain content. So while students routinely refer to Huth as "Dave," this sort of informal conversation is built specifically for exchange of information in the academic community, rather than for "friendship" in the online world.

Is the internet dramatically changing the ways in which students and faculty interact? Classrooms and conversations during office hours still have the same merits they always did: face-to-face interaction, immediate understanding, and clarification, if necessary. But students are growing up in a new environment that drastically changes the way they learn, and education is becoming more flexible to address these changes. Perhaps the professor-student relationship can occur outside the confines of the classroom, though distinctions should be made between the nature of the interactions. Ultimately, the internet will change things, and the changes seem to be positive. It might not be the iProfessor next, but as Meilaender finds, Twitter can be "an especially nice way to keep in touch with alumni." ★

# New Chapel Enforcement Policy Fosters Fear, Not Faith

By Matthew McCann

In considering both the old and new chapel enforcement policy, I have been noticing hypocrisy and a fear-inspiring pattern. The way chapel has always been explained to me is that it has three purposes: to foster spiritual growth, to provide a corporate time of worship, and to create and nurture community. The pattern involves two opposing methods in which these objectives may be met.

The first method, which is what one would hope is Houghton's goal, is to create a welcoming, loving, and understanding environment. The second method is to induce suffering and fear, which forces the individual to achieve these objectives. The current policy prefers the second method over the first. In terms of spiritual growth, this is seen by forcing students to suffer through chapels that bore or even drain them spiritually for fear of not meeting the attendance requirements. This will cause growth, but not from spiritual nourishment. Rather, growth will come from the perseverance of

students in their spiritual walk through this trial and tribulation.

Not as inherent, however, is how this accomplishes the objective of worship, because real worship is a choice. This means that if the student does not come to resent worship due to it being forced, then the student will come to appreciate and truly value the worship they choose to perform. Unfortunately, such forced "worship" will often lead to resentment, and therefore a lack of worship.

Concerning fostering community (which entails feeling like part of such a community), chapel has succeeded, but the community it has fostered is one of fear and suffering. The general impression that I hear students express is that there is a community of students, professors, and staff, but the administration is not a part of this community. Too often "Community Dialogue" seems to be the administration saying:

**If there had been open discussion prior to this change, maybe we'd have a more acceptable policy**

"Here is what is going to happen: ask your questions so we can tell you why your concerns do not matter."

The governing body of a community should respond cooperatively to the concerns of the members of that community. Such a governing body should also be bound by the rules it legislates and subject to the same constraints.

Seeing these results, one must beg the question: "How is this happening?"

The only connection I can see is a blatantly obvious hypocrisy caused by a peculiar negligence. Last Friday during the responsive reading in chapel, we recited "let us no longer be slaves to fear," yet the enforcement policy seems to be dependent on fear. Also, this policy is supposedly going to help foster student integrity, but the only students that such a policy will punish are those with the integrity to only scan in for the chapel services they attend. The

old enforcement system contained a semester of grace. How does getting rid of a semester of grace enforce attendance better? It does not, unless better records are kept of disciplinary probations than were kept of warning letters. So will we trade grace for the ease of not having to keep track of warning letters?

If there had been open discussion and thoughtful debate prior to this change, then maybe we would have a more acceptable policy. Also, had the change been reviewed by any judicial body, such as the Committee of Spiritual Life, it would have been made more tolerable if only because it would feel more legitimate. Ultimately, discussion and review of the policy will be necessary if only to quell the dissent and anger currently being expressed. I submit this article neither out of anger nor personal affliction, but out of sadness for the state in which we find ourselves now.

*Matthew McCann is a Junior Mathematics major*

## Celebrating 100 Years: Dave Perkins

*2009 marks the 100th year of The Houghton Star. To celebrate this occasion, we have invited previous editors to contribute editorials which will be printed throughout the year. This editorial is from Dave Perkins, class of 1989*

I listened to a talk (on www.ted.com) by the president of Bennington College yesterday. In her speech, she spoke of her desire to transform how her students view conflict: not as combat between good and evil, but as choices between competing goods. This insight escaped me as a young student and has dawned on me only recently.

Two years ago, as the faculty prepared to debate whether officer training for the army (ROTC) ought to be listed in the catalog as a minor, I found myself staking my ground with the opposition. For all the world it was as if I were pitching a tent with my peace-loving colleagues and aiming my rhetorical guns at the enemy.

I wrote an essay with the intent of arguing against an official endorsement of ROTC by a Christian college; you can imagine what I wrote. Circulating it to my allies, to mitigate friendly fire, I re-crafted the essay to shore up weaknesses and load my arguments

with deadlier ammo.

At some point in this process, I realized that I was a zealot. I had never talked to an ROTC student. I had no concrete idea of what such students were taught. Inside me were feelings that I associated with people who rattle the chain link fences that separate them from women seeking abortions. I had no human connection to the arguments I was composing.

So I met with two ROTC students, one a rookie, one about to graduate. We talked about war, peace, and reconciliation. I did not hesitate to present my arguments, and their responses were careful and articulate. Thanks to those meetings, I turned my essay over and began a new line of thought on the blank sides.

Instead of banning ROTC, what if Houghton raises up a program that can have conversation with it, like a minor in Conflict and Reconciliation? What if students who wished to study one of these fields were asked to study both? We already offer students the chance to travel to Rwanda and engage people who were on both sides of the recent civil war, and listen to them describe the wrenching process of forgiveness and restitution. Opportunities like that would enrich the education of anyone who wishes to learn about violent conflict, including ROTC

students.

These are the ideas I began to sketch out on the blank sides of my original essay. To properly study conflict, we must grapple with the effects of choices that rational people make on behalf of those they love; to properly study resolution, we must be open to difficult choices between competing goods. And if we treat our enemies as strangers, we are choosing to live as the world lives.

**Next Week's Feature:**

**Interview with Stanley Hauerwas**

**If you have questions for Dr. Hauerwas, e-mail them to star@houghton.edu**

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From the Editor's Desk...

## President Mullen and the OS Taskforce: Make Me a Victim

by Joel Vanderweele

At last week's State of the College Address, Part II, President Shirley Mullen closed with the following comments (as is typical, they are lengthy, but worth the read):

"This next two months is not going to be an easy time for our community. But this is a discussion, for the next two months, that really needs to happen among the faculty and the staff and the administration of the college. The students should not be made victims in the context of this discussion. As I said in the beginning of the college 'State of the Union' part one, this is their only time at Houghton. And what they need is the very very best experience that they can have here.

"Now, students may, of their own free will, choose to do a variety of things that they have every right to do, and that's their choice, but I'm asking, indeed pleading with you, to please think twice before sharing with students things that put burdens on them...

"... Well, the reality is, that any one of the decisions that we will have to make over the next two months, are ones where a certain set of the community will be affected and if we simply turn the community into a battleground of petitions, and you know, this kind of thing, it's not going to be helpful. And I would say to the extent that does become a characteristic of our community, I would ask please keep it among the faculty and staff, at least as much as you have the ability to do that...

"... I'm pleading with you, to please not make students the battleground for things that either as a department or as individuals we care about. Because, the bottom line is we do have some difficult decisions to make... You [the faculty and staff in attendance] should be as vocal as you wish to be but again, I'm asking that we not make students the battleground for what we want or don't want. So that's what I would ask, and I share it today because I have a feeling that if that is even to some extent happening now, the likelihood of that would be greater perhaps after the 29<sup>th</sup>."

There are two ways to interpret what Mullen is saying here, the first of which is highly offensive, the second less so, but still problematic. Regardless of which interpretation you find more convincing, though, some serious (and frankly insulting) issues remain; I will return to those issues in the second half of this editorial.

The first interpretation of

Mullen's closing statements, which I will call the "gag order" interpretation, has Mullen pleading with faculty and staff to keep the discussion "among the faculty and the staff and the administration of the college," and not to discuss anything with students, effectively locking the tuition-paying population out of the discussion.

In almost every chapel and convocation address I have heard Mullen deliver, she has told students "not to shy away from the difficult issues" and instead encouraged us to "ask the big questions together." If Mullen intended for her comments to be interpreted as a gag order, and she really does believe that being part of the difficult discussion is the same as being a victim of it, her gag order flies in the face of everything she has

told us from the stage of Wesley Chapel and seriously undermines the attitude she has tried to instill in the community. After all, "asking the big questions together" does not mean "faculty and staff will ask the big questions, but not within earshot of students."

Does Mullen truly believe that the best way to give students "the very very best experience they can have here" is to shield them from the difficult discussions regarding the future of the school? What could be more rewarding than being brought into the discussion and having a chance to shape what Houghton looks like in a decade? If this "gag order" interpretation is correct, Mullen believes, contrary to what she has said in the past, that students should be protected from the burden of big questions so they can freely concern themselves with the little things in life. In an attempt "protect" students from becoming "victims" of a potentially nasty discussion, Mullen is really "protecting" students from the truth.

Minutes before Mullen made her closing remarks, Vice President of Finance and Administration Efrain Rivera explained his belief that what makes Houghton a high-quality institution is the "quality of interaction that occurs when [students and faculty] are on campus."

If any discussion about the recommendations between faculty and students is to be henceforth prohibited, as the "gag order" interpretation suggests, it appears that the high-quality student-faculty engagement that makes Houghton great should only occur when the

stakes are low and the decisions are abstract.

The second interpretation, which I will refer to as the "exercise caution" interpretation, has Mullen pleading with faculty and staff, not necessarily to keep silent about the recommendations, but to exercise great care when sharing information with students. If the "exercise caution" reading is correct, Mullen hopes that if faculty and staff choose to explain to students what has happened, they will do so without sharing how they feel about it. Whereas the "gag order" interpretation aims to keep students in the dark, the "exercise caution" reading aims to keep students from becoming pawns in the inevitable turf wars between faculty, staff, and departments (or divisions) as the reality of the recommendations sinks in.

**I find it difficult to argue with the victimization of innocent students; it's much easier to disagree with the sidelining of principles for the sake of expediency.**

I'm not completely convinced that this more charitable read is what Mullen intended, but if it is, her comments raise some interesting questions about what student-teacher dialogue should look like.

All our talk about living in loving community with one

another can sometimes fool us into thinking we're all best friends, but is this appropriate? Can a faculty or staff member share their concerns with a student without unduly exercising their influence over them? Can high-quality interaction be maintained if professors withhold their personal opinions from those who go to them for counsel?

Regardless of which interpretation you choose to believe, some troubling questions remain.

When Mullen says that she wants to avoid making students "victims of the discussion," the sub-text seems to be that she does not want the process to be delayed by students who don't understand the nuances of the situation. She is clearly concerned about protecting students, but she seems to be using that as a disguise for her more pressing wish, that the speed of the process be protected.

I find it difficult to argue with the victimization of innocent students; it's much easier to disagree with the sidelining of principles for the sake of expediency.

As it has been explained to me, the announcement of the Organizational Sustainability Taskforce's recommendations will be followed by a one-week period of discussion after which the document that gets sent to the Board of Trustees must be finalized. Over the October

Break weekend, the Board will vote to approve or disapprove the recommendations and by November 1, the recommendations that get passed by the Board will be actualized and made public in their more specific form.

I would like to know, then, what Mullen is referring to when she says, "this is a discussion, for the next two months, that really needs to happen among the faculty and the staff and the administration of the college." It now appears that the two-month discussion between faculty, staff, and administrators must be condensed into a single week. How, exactly, does Mullen envision the outcome of this weeklong "discussion"? If major problems with one of the recommendations are uncovered, will the Organizational Sustainability Taskforce revisit it in any meaningful way? If so, is one week really enough time to react to legitimate criticisms?

If, on the other hand, the recommendations are set in stone, why is a two-month or week-long "discussion" even necessary? Knowing that to announce major decisions in the past tense will foster resentment (i.e. many students' attitudes towards the four-credit change) is Mullen simply creating the appearance of meaningful and important dialogue when the decisions have already been finalized?

If the school simply cannot afford to consult the students before making dramatic changes to the programs that affect them, this should be made clear. If, in order to address the peculiar challenges we currently face, Houghton must temporarily shift to a strictly executive model of leadership, I would like to know about it. I imagine the same holds true for the faculty and staff.

I am sympathetic to the fact that the financial crisis, coupled with a historically unstable financial model, has required and will undoubtedly continue to require extremely difficult decisions. I am also sympathetic to Mullen's fears that opening the proceedings up to the entire community could prove divisive.

But whatever the policy on student involvement, or any involvement for that matter, it should be openly conveyed and not sugarcoated. If our contributions to the process are not welcome for practical reasons, don't patronize us by saying that it's for our own protection or by giving us two months (or one week) to garner votes when the final numbers have already been tallied.

*Joel Vanderweele is a senior Philosophy and Mathematics major and is Editor-in-Chief*

# lindsay HANSEN

poetry + digital media

*Artist's Note:* I like to write because I hate being bored. When you make your own fun, the amount of time you spend bored is very limited.

## AUGUST CRICKETS

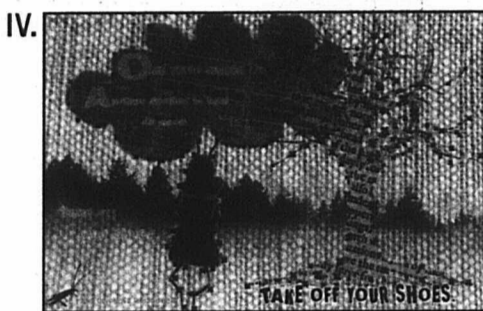
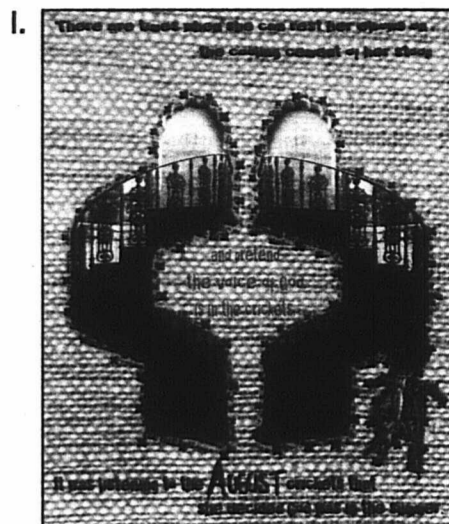
I. The August crickets provide parentheses around her scattered thoughts. She has always called them August crickets even though they usually appear in July.

II. There are times when she can rest her elbows on the cooling cement of her stoop and pretend the voice of God is in the crickets. It was listening to the August crickets that she first decided God was in the summer.

III. As they chirped in a chorus around her ears her lonely childhood heart heard the words. "Take off your shoes for the place you are standing is holy ground."

IV. One verse dimmed and another swelled to take its place. "Take of your shoes," the crickets whispered, "Take off your shoes."

*August Crickets digital work is an adaptation of Artist's own poem. The entirety of Lindsay's digital artwork and the full version of August Crickets can be found at [www.houghtonstar.com](http://www.houghtonstar.com).*



# artist OF THE WEEK

## CLUES High Finance Edition

### ACROSS

- 1 Recedes
- 5 Not very hot
- 10 Granola fruit
- 14 "See you later!"
- 15 The Spectrum in Philadelphia, e.g.
- 16 Locket shape
- 17 "The sky is falling!" utterer
- 19 Contemptible fellow
- 20 Number that used to be popular?
- 21 Portions
- 23 Wine cellar container
- 26 Israel's national airline
- 27 Compelling evidence, often
- 30 Starfish cousins
- 35 Curious George creator H.A. \_\_\_\_\_
- 36 Stratum
- 37 "Hedda Gabler" playwright
- 38 Voiced one's amazement
- 40 Freeloader
- 43 Jellystone Park bear
- 44 White-collar crime
- 46 Yankees nickname
- 48 Puppy's misdeed!
- 49 Change abruptly
- 52 Chicago-to-Pittsburgh dir.
- 53 Bronze coin in the "Harry Potter" books
- 54 Be at one's \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

- call
- 56 Eggy Italian brunch dish
- 60 Lofty nest
- 64 South American capital
- 65 Group with the 2002 #1 hit "How You Remind Me"
- 68 Onetime Fed chief Greenspan
- 69 Calculator button
- 70 Avidly interested
- 71 Guitar part
- 72 Academic cake-walk
- 73 Barbecue supply

### DOWN

- 1 It's produced in a canyon
- 2 Jessica of "The Illusionist"
- 3 Brass or rubber follower
- 4 Like a 1-Down
- 5 Water source
- 6 "...exclaim \_\_\_\_\_ he drove out of sight..."
- 7 Keeps in a zoo, maybe
- 8 Strapped
- 9 Fluorescent
- 10 Treat fairly
- 11 Shakespeare's river
- 12 Like a Granny Smith
- 13 Bark beetle vic-
- 18 It helps raise dough?
- 22 Landlocked African nation
- 24 Jib or spinnaker
- 25 Last word of "Oh, Susannah!"
- 27 Unedited version
- 28 India's first prime minister
- 29 1980s bestseller "\_\_\_\_\_ in Provence"
- 31 Hate the thought of \_\_\_\_\_
- 32 In harmony
- 33 Kelly's TV partner
- 34 Long-billed marsh bird
- 39 Throw-for-charity carnival attraction
- 41 It's barred for little ones?
- 42 Word with fries and fires
- 45 "Quit it!"
- 47 Windshield sticker
- 50 Subtle difference
- 51 King of the Huns
- 55 Meat served on a skewer
- 56 Custard dessert
- 57 Tick off
- 58 Computer debut of 1998
- 59 Blackjack assets, often
- 61 Prego alternative
- 62 Pic to click on
- 63 Frequent E.R. tests
- 66 Corleone played by Diane Keaton
- 67 Pitcher's stat: abbr.

# CROSSWORD CHALLENGE

Bring your finished crosswords to the STAR office to claim the Leroy Townes and the Lone Stars CD!

Puzzle constructor Brad Wilber ('91) is a member of the library faculty. His crosswords regularly appear in the New York Times and Los Angeles Times.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15					16			
17			18						19			
20					21			22				
			23	24	25		26					
27	28	29		30		31				32	33	34
35			36					37				
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49					50	51				52		
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