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Financial Validation Introduced by SFS

JOHANNA FLOREZ

Houghton's Student Financial Services (SFS) office is pushing to ensure that financial plans are in place prior to students starting classes each semester.

An email from President Mullen's office at the end of February announced an updated Financial Validation Checklist. The checklist clarifies the process of ensuring each student is able to pay their bill before the start of each new semester, and establishing a "financially validated" status which all students must achieve before moving into college housing and starting classes.

No bill deadlines are changed from past academic years. Rather, the checklist reflects the Student Financial Services office's push to have paperwork completed in plenty of time to send out accurate bills and set up payment plans before each semester's beginning. "What we're wanting is a concrete plan of how [students are] going to pay their bill," says Marianne Loper, the director of SFS. "That's what's going to constitute financially validated." From now on, financial validation must be completed before a student's return to campus, whether that



COURTESY OF SHARON McCUTCHEON ON UNSPLASH

means payment in full, an official monthly payment plan, or proof of an approved loan application which will cover the entire bill. Validation is required by the bill due date of August 8. Mindie Elwell, the assistant director of SFS, further clarifies, "The bill due date is not changing. It's the same as it was. ... We're trying to make the steps leading up to the bill clearer so that they're building in order to be ready to pay that bill in August."

The first step of the financial validation checklist is for eligible students to complete the Free Application for Federal Student

Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA for the 2019-2020 school year has been available since October, and Houghton's priority deadline for completing it was February 15. Many students who submitted the FAFSA have already received their aid award letters (mailed to their home addresses), but almost 20% of returning students have yet to complete this first step towards financial validation.

After completion of the FAFSA and, where requested, additional income verification, the next step is for students to register for fall classes as soon as they are able and then secure

their housing and meal plans for the upcoming year. Loper explains, "In order for [students'] bills to truly be accurate so they know what they're going to owe, students need to have, before they leave campus, registered for their courses for fall and made sure their schedule is set, and make sure their housing and meal plans are set. Because that all feeds into what the bill is going to be in July." Additionally, students who receive outside scholarships should submit those letters by May 1, and students with health insurance

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SGA HOLDS 2019/2020
ELECTIONS

KATELYNN STEINMETZ

The past few weeks have been an exciting and stressful time for Houghton SGA members as they prepared for the 2019/2020 elections. Throughout the course of the election process, current members and new candidates met together and attended meetings, discussed plans for the campus, and held votes for office. Each candidate was responsible for arranging a speech that highlighted their ideas and strategies to be implemented on the Houghton campus in the coming fall, presented on March 19. Elections were held on March 20 and results were posted on March 22.

Michaela Graham '22 was elected for Executive Officer of Student Life. She currently holds the position of President of the class of 2022, and is a double-major in Business Administration and Communications. She is a member of various clubs, and is part of the Houghton lacrosse team. Her experience thus far in the cabinet has allowed her to gain social skills, plan and execute events, and connect upper and lower class-

See **SGA** page 2

Psychology Department Welcomes New Professor

ALLISON STEVICK

This fall Dr. Alison Young Reusser will join Houghton's faculty as a professor of the psychology department. Dr. Young Reusser is a graduate of Houghton who earned her M.A. and Ph.D. in social psychology from Ohio State University. For the last five years she has been teaching at Olivet Nazarene University, a Christian liberal arts school in Bourbonnais, Illinois.

Dr. Paul Young, Chair of the Department of Psychology and Sociology, says that Dr. Young Reusser will bring a variety of strengths to the department. In particular he says "I am excited about the combination of teaching experience she brings—social psychology, statistics and research methods, and neuroscience—and her excellent record of research, including involving students as fellow researchers." The excellent record of research that Dr. Young mentions includes her work on person perception in politics, which was published in Psychological Science and featured in the Huffington Post. As Dr. Young also mentioned, Dr. Young Reusser works to involve students in research, something she says she's particularly excit-



Dr. Alison Young Reusser and her family

COURTESY OF DR. ALISON YOUNG REUSSER

ed about doing at Houghton. "I have my own research projects that students can jump in on," she says, "and I'm always happy to help students with their own research ideas."

For students, participating in this collaborative research as undergraduates is something they see as particularly valuable. Anna Hilzer, a sophomore majoring in psychology, says that this kind of collaborative research

offers an opportunity to for students to be more prepared for their work and study after graduation. "It's scary to go out into the world and be like, 'I'm not prepared for this!'" she says, "so if you can get as much research as you can and have opportunities like that, I feel like that'd be great."

As a Houghton graduate, Dr. Young Reusser has an appreciation for the integration of

faith and learning that Houghton offers in every discipline. "I had a wonderful experience as an undergraduate," she says, "and I want to continue Houghton's legacy of producing scholar-servants - people who serve Christ with their heart, soul, and mind." One of the ways that Dr. Young Reusser will help Houghton students to become these people is by pushing them to ask challenging questions. Dr. Young Reusser

says, "One of my favorite aspects of teaching psychology is that as a discipline, it asks difficult, complicated questions about what it means to be human." These questions include the problem of evil, and whether free will exists. Dr. Young Reusser says that some recent research in neuroscience suggests that free will doesn't in fact exist, and that she loves to talk with students about the implications of this research for people who believe in free will.

Besides her work in psychology, Dr. Young Reusser has a variety of interest and personal hobbies. Dr. Young Reusser plays guitar and sings for the worship team at her church. She also enjoys reading fantasy and science fiction, especially works by Dan Simmons and Brandon Sanderson. She says that she likes crocheting, and one of her favorite shows is Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood. She and her husband, George Reusser, have a 19-month old daughter, Isobel, and they are expecting their second daughter in July. Faculty and students alike are excited to welcome their whole family to our community. ★

International Perspectives//Puerto Rico



PAIGE COLLINS
with José Noé Santiago

José Noé Santiago, a freshman at Houghton College, is a student from Puerto Rico. Santiago explains how, on the island, there is an issue among the some of people about their status with the United States. Santiago states, "They [Puerto Ricans] are feeling left out... not heard by the whole world. They feel like their not being cared for in that sense."

Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States. The United States gained control of Puerto Rico in 1898. Previously Puerto Rico was under Spanish control, however, Spain ceded Puerto Rico to the United States by the Treaty of Paris after the Spanish-American war. Puerto Ricans have had US citi-

zenship since 1917 and gained commonwealth status with the United States in 1952.

Since then there has been a division of views among Puerto Ricans regarding their relationship with the United States. In 1967 the electorate of Puerto Rico voted their preferred statute of Puerto Rico in regards to the US. The polls found that 60.4 percent supported commonwealth status, 38.9 percent statehood, and 0.6 percent independence (Britannica.com).

Over the years these numbers have changed depending on the current political climate. In recent years the Puerto Rican desire for either statehood or independence have both increased, while the desire to remain commonwealth has decreased. A 2012 poll found that 54 percent of those who voted indicated that they were not satisfied with that status [territorial] (Britannica.com). In recent years, there has been a strong push for statehood in Puerto Rico, especially after Hurricane Maria hit in 2017. The Hill reports that in 2017 "97 percent of voters picked statehood" although, it should be noted that this was "with a historically low 23 percent participation rate [in the vote]."

There are a number of political parties in Puerto Rico, each favoring a different approach to

relations with the United States. Both the New Progressive Party and the Puerto Rico Republican Party favor statehood with the United States. The Popular Democratic Party prefers to remain commonwealth, while the Puerto Rican Independence Party seeks independence from the US.

Santiago remarks that there is some division within these political parties. He states that the Republican Party is divided on the statehood issue, though more due to economic factors that would be involved with gaining statehood, rather than social. Santiago also remarks that the left wing in Puerto Rico is largely silent on the issue. Santiago thinks that some Puerto Ricans fear the power of the US, while others want the choice to enter the United States freely, which is also why there is division among political parties.

After Hurricane maria hit in 2017, the people of Puerto Rico faced a multitude of hardships. The United States has sent over 10 billion in aid (Vox) to Puerto Rico, following Maria, though in some respects it was still not enough. Santiago remarks, "Aid was given, but in the mountains it wasn't given... they were the bottom of the pot because it was hard to get up the mountains." Santiago continues, "people

died of heat exhaustion up in the mountains." "I saw on the news, an old lady dying from heat exhaustion." "They didn't have power up there, they didn't have power for a long time." "To see that woman die of heat exhaustion and nobody helping, I just felt hopeless in that sense." Santiago concludes, "I tried to find hope that there was a way out of this."

The hurricane has made the issue of Puerto Rico's status in regard to the United States more evident. On one hand, becoming a state would likely result in gaining more aid, priority and support for the US government. While on the other, being independent would allow Puerto Rico to have more power over their own decisions and to no longer be dependent on the United States.

"Hurricane survivors who live on the island agree that the federal government would have responded differently to the disaster if Puerto Rico were a US state, according to a new survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Washington Post.

The survey also shows that hurricane survivors who live in Puerto Rico favor statehood over any alternative. About 48 percent want Puerto Rico to become a state, 26 percent would rather remain a US territory, and 10 percent want full indepen-

dence. About 16 percent were unsure or declined to answer." (Vox)

Despite these polls, Santiago states, "Right now I really think they [Puerto Ricans] are going to stay the same." He adds, "They are going to keep on having this for the rest of their lives until somebody decides to rise up. Either rise up for it to be statehood or rise up to be independent. He continues, "I hope that they pick one... and I hope they pick the best one possible." hope that I'm a part of helping them out in part of the transitions to anything they need to be." Santiago concludes, "Lord help Puerto Rico, they need you."★



SGA from page 1

men together. Graham is hoping to create a more diverse and desirable events for the students by planning events that everybody will enjoy, as she is fond of student involvement.

Joelene Quiah '20 was elected Executive Officer of Community Engagement. Quiah believes that Houghton students have a variety of talents and qualities to offer to the surrounding community. As she stated, "There is more to Houghton than the ice cream." Her key point of focus is to aid others in social aspects and to teach them how to embrace the differences and similarities of others in an exciting way. She also wants "Houghton College and Houghton Academy [to] do a sponsorship together because they are also part of this community."

Amy MODOZIE '22 has been elected for the position of Executive Officer of Diversity and Inclusion, and she plans on using the experience she has gained here at Houghton to help her make decisions on how to better advocate for diversity. She recognizes the differences amongst her peers and is ready to embrace them. MODOZIE is determined to continue interacting with students and encouraging them to be gracious and understanding individuals.

Jocelyn Kagoro '22 was elected as Executive Officer of Finance. Her major is in Music Education; she has been practicing music since she was young. Her family background has given her insight on different cultures, and allowed her to make better judgements on decisions she will have to make here at Houghton. As a senior in high school, she

was intrigued by her financial management course, which has inspired her to join the cabinet as the current class treasurer. She also said, "I really look up to Michaela Graham, and her efforts as President of the current 2022 cabinet. To be able to work with her again is something I'm looking forward to."

Ross Atherton '21 was elected as the Vice President of the student body. He is double-majoring in Biblical Studies and Communications Media. In high school Atherton had unfortunate experiences with Student Government, but this sparked an interest to try again in college. As stated in his speech, he is dedicated to the Houghton community and to the growth of the campus and its students. As Vice President, he is hoping to raise the bar even higher and incorporate even more community involvement and bring in new ideas from his peers.

Elizabeth Best '20 was elected President of the student body. She is a junior, studying Music with a Voice Concentration. As she said in her speech, she is grateful for the opportunity to bind together with the cabinet and with the students of Houghton to continue improving the campus. Best said, "When I first started, I really just wanted to be a more active member of the community, as I started to do more with SGA I saw how important it is to the lives of students even when they don't know [it]. I wanted to be a voice for the students in matters even behind the scenes." Best wishes to incorporate new ideas regarding sustainability, and has already begun instituting these ideas. She said, "I really want to look at the eco-footprint that Houghton leaves behind, I know we have a lot of stuff going around with the eco

reps and sustainability center, and I want to see how we can partner with different entities on campus such as Metz to see how we can reduce that footprint and create a brighter outlook for Houghton." Best expressed that she is honored to be alongside the rest of the SGA members and is ready to work towards their goals.

Aurora White '22 has stepped down from the position of Executive Officer of Spiritual Life. She issued this statement: "My decision to step down has nothing to do with a dislike for SGA or Houghton really. I love Houghton and would have loved to serve this community as EO of Spiritual Life next school year. I stepped down because I'm not sure I will be attending Houghton next semester, for personal reasons. This all came about very recently and I feel terrible that I made commitments that I can't keep."

According to Hannah Sievers '20, the newly elected will be taking on their duties starting on the last SGA meeting of the year, also known as the "transfer of powers" day, which was recently installed in the Student Body Constitution.

★ SFS from page 1

must waive Houghton College Health Insurance by June 15 in order for the bill (which will be visible on July 15) to accurately reflect their real costs for the school year. Financial validation - either payment in full, an official monthly payment plan, or an approved loan application covering the total bill - must be completed by August 8 in order for a student to return to campus.

President Mullen's email announcement cited "bring[ing] our financial aid process in line with 'best practices' within the larger world of higher education." Loper

says that at other institutions, "If you don't have your bill paid, you can't return." Besides best practices, another motivation drives this change: Houghton has discovered that allowing students to return to campus while behind on the process of paying for their semester does them a disservice. "It doesn't do students any good to start off on the wrong foot," Loper says. "The students that are coming to us in September are truly stressed about the situation."

Rather than letting students move in and start classes while they are uncertain about their ability to afford it, being stricter about early deadlines allows for discussion and planning to happen far in advance. "I think it can be positive to identify [financial difficulty] earlier, confront it earlier and work through it together, when you don't have the added pressure of courses and being here," Loper says. Students, she expects, will be able to focus on their classes and their college experience without questions and anxieties about money hanging over them. In a few cases, requiring financial validation before returning to campus will prevent students from coming back to Houghton; but they will learn that during the summer rather than having to leave part-way through a semester and being billed for several weeks of tuition, housing, and meal plans.

"Having everything laid out in one list makes me more aware of all the things I have to accomplish which is a big adjustment from asking various people what my next steps are as I go along," says Abigail Wilkerson in an email. Wilkerson is a sophomore who was financially unable to return to Houghton for the spring 2019 semester. She believes a

disadvantage to the stricter deadlines is that "students may feel more pressure to have things in order at an earlier time whereas before, not everything had to be done in a specific order." However, she says she is "thankful" for the financial validation checklist: "It now gives me a way to effectively plan, budget, and organize my choices based on what I know needs to be done and when. It makes me feel more connected with the people in the financial aid and registrars offices and has been very effective in my planning for the upcoming semester."

Loper hopes for that connection with students who may have difficulty affording college, and for them to be aware of the SFS office's availability. "[Students] really do have to be financially validated before they can return to campus. But we want them to totally feel supported by our office and that we're here to help them through that process," she says. "Really right now is the best time to be working through it." "We're accessible," Elwell adds. "Email us, call us, stop over." While students may stop over with any questions they have about finances through the end of the semester, they can also contact SFS during the summer, as it maintains regular office hours year-round. As students complete the validation process this summer, they will receive emails confirming their status and will also be able to check their status on Student Self-Service. All financial aid policies are also posted on the Houghton website.

The Student Financial Services office is located in the lower level of Fancher Hall. Email is sfs@houghton.edu; phone number is 585-567-9328 (or extension 3280 from a campus phone). ★

STAR Rerun

Seniors Celebrate Skip Day: Enjoy boat trip to Coburg, Ontario

This rerun column features various Houghton STAR articles from our archives. These articles do not contain current information, but are meant to show the past culture and events on Houghton Campus throughout the College's history. This particular article is from Volume 24 Issue 27 of the STAR published on May 20th, 1932.

Skip day has rolled by once again. Must have been good for the seniors are still talking about it. Contrary to all belief that these noble upperclassman would go on Arbor Day, they left bright and early Monday morning. Keeney and her load, believe it or not, were the first to leave the Campus. Evidently she had little faith in her chariot for she left 45 minutes early before he designated

hour. Five o'clock found most of the class at Mary K's ready to receive all sorts of instructions from Thurber. However he fooled'em and only told part. "Proceed to Farmsville while i go pick up another girl" ordered Thurber, and sure enough he drove clear back to fillmore to get Catherine McCarthy, a classmate who finished her A.B. in January. Catherine was all set and rarrin' to go. For once Thurber met his equal for "stringing a line"--

Having arrived in Farmersville President Alexis (better known as Walta) secured round trip tickets for Coburg via B.O. Railroad to Roahesterand Ontario Steamer Ship Lines to Coburg. The train arrived "Peg" Ackerman was excited enough for the whole crew; however everyone seemed to show his share. Prof. LeRoy was extraordinarily interested in seeing that fruit and doughnuts were safely boarded.-- the poor conductor, fared well with oranges and howl-- Some were good and some were good.

Were we surprised when we caught the first glimpse of the S.S.Ontario? Who expected

such a large boat--and Captain?--A jolly captain of a mere 276 pounds welcomed up to his ship and was responsible for royal entertainment all day.

Coburg was very interesting place in which to spend a couple hours. Everyone "did" the town and Ester Brayley found a nize Frenchman who sold her a pair of shoes.

The trip back was even better than going over there. One can explain effectually the best parts of the whole trip. However if you are interested ask "Squeek" to tell you all the stories the Captain told him, Art France how he enjoyed his merry-go-round ride, Foster where he learned his art for attracting the ladies' attention. Margaret Carter what Lake Ontario fishes look like, Louise Zickler what the third frock o the left is for, Ruth Burgess why the boat rocks sometimes, Isabelle Hawn what she knows about rook, Cyril Little how he enjoys English Brand Coffee, Ruth Kissinger if she must get her shoes shine in such places, Gordy Stevenson if anyone has seen Emelene, and so far into the night.

We missed those members of our class who could not go along. We wished who could not go along. We wished many times that "Bea" Jones could have enjoyed it all with us-- See you in June, Bea.--President Luckey and Prof. and Mrs. Franher were Senior guests for the day. To say the least the Seniors had some skip day. ★

Houghton

BASIL WELLS

This rerun column features various Houghton STAR articles from our archives. These articles do not contain current information, but are meant to show the past culture and events on Houghton Campus throughout the College's history. This particular article is from Volume 24 Issue 27 of the STAR published on May 20th, 1932.

At first sight houghton is an ordinary New York village. The scattered group of houses, strag-

gling along the uneven highway or snugly fitted into the shallow niches and benches of the hill-sides can be duplicated a hundred times amount these same hills. Nor does the gleaming ox-bow, made by the shallow Gene-see just opposite the town, set her apart from ny other hamlet. High above the narrow road, however, a wedge-shaped plateau juts defiantly out into the valley, bearing Houghton College on its broad green back. It is here that Houghton bears no resemblance to other small towns.

A sense of peace and isolation from the the harrying strife of modern business and thought comes to the visitor as the crosses the velvety smoothness of the campus of eh first time. He sees the students crossing the broad lawns and wondered at the fellowship and lack of animosity between the classes. He realizes that some fore beyond that exerted by the inhabitants of houghton is at work. And then, as he sees the serenity and beauty of the maple-cald kills above the quaint little village, he knows God is here. ★

Highlander of the Week

MATTHEW CICERO



PAIGE COLLINS

Matthew Cicero '22 has achieved the Highlander of the Week Award for the second-to-last week of March. Cicero is majoring in Chemistry, and is a member of the Houghton Men's Tennis Team. He achieved a singles victory against SUNY Delhi and then again later in the week against PSU Behrend, earning him the award.

Cicero states that his coach has helped helped him reach such a productive week. He says, "[With] our new coach and all the stuff she's implementing

in practice, I can improve a lot. Even from last fall to this season." He adds that, "A scrimmage before hand helped me to win those matches and then lead us to victory."

As the season continues, Cicero has a number of goals and aspirations that he would like to achieve. He states that he would like to, "Improve as a player for sure, it would be really nice to go undefeated in conference play. We beat Steavens which was really nice, that will give me a big confidence boost going into other matches for the E8 and into the postseason"

As Cicero is only in his first year of Houghton Men's Tennis, he has a variety of long term

goals as well. He says, "I want to keep playing a higher level tennis every semester goes that by." He continues, "My Senior year of High School was my best year and right now I think I'm a little bit better than my Senior year of High School." Cicero concludes that "I want to keep getting a little bit better, until I can hit with the top guys on the team."

One of the key aspects of tennis that gets Cicero out on the court is the execution of the sport itself. Cicero states that, "Nice shots and nice form are beautiful to watch. It's really fun when you hit them or fun to watch other people hit them."

To get to know our High-

lander of the Week a little better: Cicero is loyal to his sport. Although he watches some college football, his sole playing interest is tennis. There is a plethora of professional tennis players that Cicero is a fan of, but with so many to choose from, he admits that can't name just one he likes best. His favorite TV show is Futurama, and if you see him up in the dining hall at the breakfast hour, he'll likely have a heaping bowl of oatmeal, as it is one of his favorite meals. An additional note; he thinks porcupines and hippos are both pretty cool. ★

Write for the International Perspectives Column!

Are you an international student?

Do you want to report on current issues in your home country?

If so, the STAR wants to hear your insights!

Email editor@houghtonstar.com

Photo courtesy of Houghton Athletics website

Professor Connie Finney Delivers Valedictory Lecture

ANNA WRAY

On Thursday, March 28th, a group of students, faculty, and community members gathered to hear Dr. Connie Finney give her valedictory lecture—“Of Lilies, Laughter, and Learning: Hodgepodge for the Soul”. The group filled a large classroom to capacity, if not beyond, everyone eager to hear what Finney would say.

Valedictory lectures are a part of the faculty lecture series when retiring professors offer final wisdom to the Houghton community. Finney chose to divide hers into six

chapters. When asked why, she said, “I didn’t want to talk about just one thing, but a lot of different topics of my time at Houghton.” In the first chapter, “Consider the Lilies,” Finney suggested that wildflowers carry the antidote to stress, reminding her of God’s intricate craftsmanship. Since she is not only an admirer of wildflowers, but also an avid photographer, this chapter concluded with a slideshow of Finney’s pictures.

In the second chapter, “Antidote Number Two,” Finney talked about the difficulty of remaining cheerful during long

winters when everywhere she looks, both inside and outside, there is grayness and not much else. The antidote she suggests for this is laughter; in fact, she says that she tries to laugh every day. Anyone who knows Finney was not surprised to hear this. Johanna Florez, a sophomore English and Adolescence Education major, when asked what was most memorable about the lecture, said, “I like how much laughter she always draws. People are always happy when she talks to them.”

The third chapter was called “The Third Way.” Finney talked about her experience as a Mennonite, ultimately leading her to become the pastor of Sojourners Mennonite Fellowship in Belfast. Interestingly, she was the first woman ordained in the New York Mennonite Conference. Finney also explained how these values impact her teaching. For example, Mennonites value the priesthood of all believers, so rather than approaching her classes as though she were “The Grand Knower of All Things,” she attempts to be open to the idea that her students may have valuable things to contribute too.

This transitioned into Chapter Four, in which Finney discussed her thoughts about teaching, including her insights into the drawbacks of the grading system. She emphasized the harmfulness of giving points for attendance, participation, and effort, which do not always reflect a student’s understanding. She suggested this practice, often intended to boost the grades of hardworking students, should not be necessary because “When a student



PHOTO COURTESY OF FACEBOOK.COM

Professor Finney's sense of humor leads her to be involved in lots of playful endeavors on campus. Pictured here: advising a “student”.

is putting forth so much effort, they should be rewarded with learning,” and not need a boost to earn a good grade.

Finney titled the penultimate section, “Hodgepodge,” suggesting that this mixture of breaded and deep-fried vegetables may be the food our souls need, rather than the classic chicken soup. She took this section to share humorous anecdotes from her time at Houghton, such as on her first campus tour when a then-student shouted from the fifth floor of Lambein, “Houghton is a jail! Don’t come to school here!”

In the final chapter, “The Communion of the Saints,” Finney discussed communion’s role in the Christian faith, in part by contrasting it against baptism. One impactful idea from this section was the idea the elements become a physical, inseparable part of the person who takes them, and that this cannot be undone.

The thunderous round of

applause at its conclusion was evidence that the lecture was enjoyed thoroughly by the audience. Emily Allen, a junior Theology major, enjoyed when Finney talked about different people she has known during her time at Houghton, saying, “To hear her reminiscing like that and think of all her memories, I thought that was really sweet.” She adds, “Everyone should listen to it [the lecture] if they get the chance.” Florez says that she appreciated the different sections because, “Some were kind of goofy, some of them were more serious, and some of them were very theological, so the mix was cool.”

When asked how she felt about giving a valedictory lecture, Finney said, “I greatly appreciate that the college gives that opportunity” and adds that she is “very excited about retiring.” She is looking forward to the opportunity to write down more of her stories and continue her wildflower photography. ★

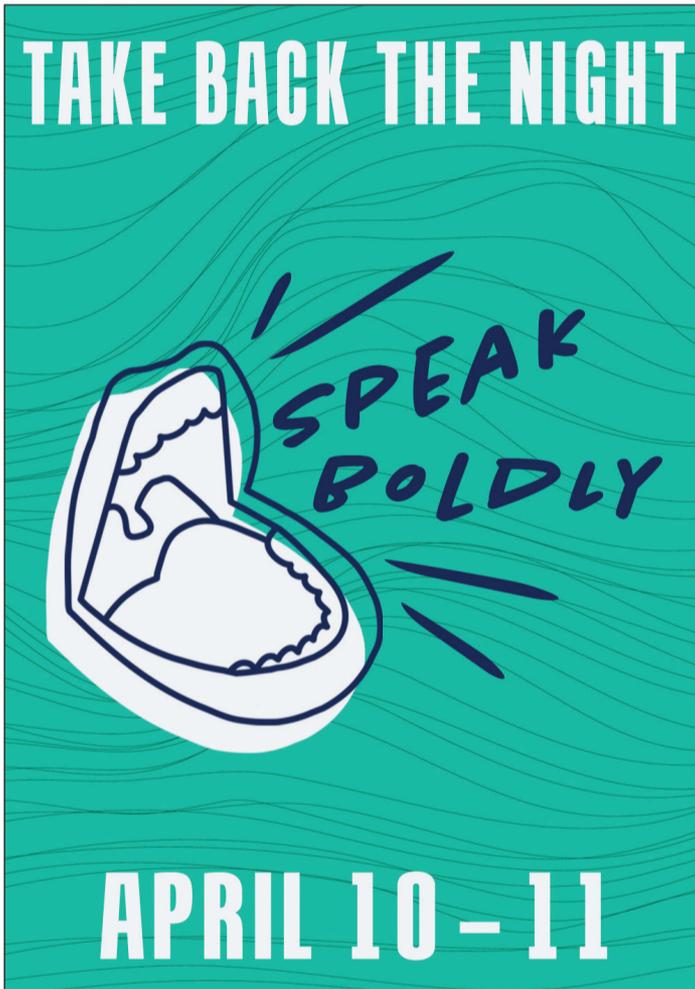


Photo of the Week

COURTESY OF JARED HOBSON '20

TAKEN ON A 2018 TRIP TO THE ROCKWELL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN WESTERN ART



Greenhouse Offers Refuge

MELISSA HODDE

Even in the midst of sudden-but-inevitable late snowstorms, a vivid and secure island of life is visible across the quad from the campus center, tucked against Paine so that it connects to the first floor lab. The Houghton greenhouse hosts ongoing experiments in botany and ecology, an ever-expanding collection of tropical houseplants, seating areas for students hoping to study or paint, and the first sprouts that will become Houghton's outdoor vegetable garden.

A curious investigator who finds the greenhouse unlocked on a weekday will have to carefully avoid disturbing the rows of thick-stemmed tomato plants against one wall and weave between overflowing baskets of pink-flowered Christmas Cactus to reach the center of operations. A few misting devices are aimed at the table and shelves dedicated to young shoots recently propagated from larger plants - among them a few aloes, some seemingly stemless snake plants and a practically never-ending supply of fat-leaved jade trees.

Although very few things besides crocuses are blooming outside the greenhouse, a large Calla Lily's vase-like purple flowers contrast with the fragile pink blossoms spilling from several species of plants tucked around the tables. The thoughtfulness

of the community member who now cares for the greenhouse makes itself evident in the half a dozen pots with tiny fragments of older plants slowly growing into a life of their own, and the tupperware container with a few inches of water inside that houses fallen leaves and spare bulbs.

The greenhouse has waxed and waned in its activities over the years, and only came into major use as a place for student research under the supervision of Dr. Aaron Sullivan, the chair of the Biology department. Now, handwritten signs urge visitors not to touch the venus flytraps, the tomatoes or the little pop-up tents housing chrysalises where a week before there were caterpillars. Flats full of deceased pitcher plants from an old research project are tucked under the low platform that holds trays upon trays of sprouting onions, peppers, thyme, eggplants and various other vegetables and herbs just entering the first few weeks of life.

The flats are under the care of a team of Eco Reps volunteers and Center for Sustainability interns, guided by the Sustainable Food Coordinator, Honus Wagner '20. The plants won't be ready to move outdoors for a month, at least - the onions have yet to shed their seed coverings and seem to be wearing little hats, and the nearby flats of flower seedlings for the campus orchard



A view of the greenhouse, with beets in the foreground

PHOTO COURTESY OF MELISSA HODDE

are barely beginning to sprout - but local predictions don't expect the ground to stop freezing until the second week of May, so all seems to run according to plan.

Of the tables scattered around the greenhouse, two host a gathering of chairs and enough space for multiple laptops despite the cluster of cactuses often occupying the center. The merits of the greenhouse as a place of study vary depending on personal preference - despite its apparent serenity, the rumbling strain of shifting panels interrupts the silence every few minutes throughout the day, and occasionally the

misting devices produce a somewhat humid environment. One student who frequently visited the greenhouse in prior years, and still stops by after nearby classes to try the door, said she often finds it locked in the middle of a weekday. Nevertheless, the "peaceful" atmosphere (cited by the student above) consistently attracts guests aiming to polish off an assignment or conduct a quiet meeting with a few peers.

The jungle-esque giant leaves of monstera plants leaning into the walkway and neat, pink-and-green pinstripes of spiderwort beside the artificial pond appeal

to more than just the casual observers on campus. Professor of Art Ted Murphy brings his students to the greenhouse to practice watercolor and pastel painting, taking advantage of the year-round presence of flowering and active plant life as a useful subject material. In addition, some of the greenhouse plants have made their way into various student dorms through a plant sale that took place in the fall semester. Whether spreading plants elsewhere or bringing new ones in, each changing season will likely bring something new for the greenhouse. ★

Houghton Lyric Theatre Performs *The Marriage of Figaro*

MARY CHICHESTER

This semester, Houghton lyric theater performed *The Marriage of Figaro* directed by Professor Amanda Cox. This Operatic Comedy, written by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, was performed in the Wesley Chapel on March 21, 22, and 23. Every night drew a large audience, with long lines out the door and packed parking lots.

The performance featured a large set piece as the backing for every scene, courtesy of Deryl Stevenson, Tom Miner, and a team of set painters listed in the playbill. Above the stage was a projector screen showing translations from the original Italian. As the lights went down, the orchestra, conducted by Dillon Hirsch and hidden behind the set, began the show.

The first act opens with Susanna, a maid to the

Countess, trying on and adjusting her wedding bonnet while her betrothed, Figaro, Valet to the Count, measures the space where he intends to put their wedding bed. Susanna and Figaro disagree as to whether the room is a good fit for them, as Susanna believes it is too close to the Count's chambers. This is when she reveals that the Count seems to intend on reinstating the *droit du seigneur*, a feudal rule that the Lord has the right to any servant women on their wedding night, a law he had done away with upon marrying the Countess Rosina. This leads the Countess, Figaro, Susanna, and Cherubino (a page, who is madly in love with the Countess) to team up against the Count. In what is called "a single day of madness," secrets are revealed, plans are made (and come close to being ruined), and furniture is hid behind.

The response to the Lyric Theater performance was all around wonderful. Noah Wuethrich '22 simply called the show "Fantastic!" adding,

"The slides were a little bit behind, but I feel like it's hard for them to keep up with . . . the different languages."

Cast members had as much fun in the show as the audience did watching it. Cast member Rachel Schaarschmidt, who played Susanna on Friday and Saturday, said, "This was my first non-ensemble show and I am so blessed to have been a part of a show with such a talented and overall wonderful cast. They made this first lead role such a great experience for me and I will forever be grateful for it."

The Marriage of Figaro had several elements that made production more complicated than previous shows, such as unique costumes and a score completely in Italian. The director however, seemed to never have doubted her performers, stating in the playbill, "I have asked a great deal of our students this semester, believing that each of them, with the help of God, would indeed be able to step up to the task, do the work, and thrive as these incredible and color-



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOUGHTON LYRIC THEATRE

The Houghton Lyric Theatre performed *The Marriage of Figaro* on March 21, 22, and 23.

ful characters. And they did not disappoint me!"

In an interview following the performance, Professor Cox stated, "The bottom line is that I am so pleased and proud of my students for their monumental achievement of beautifully and successfully putting on this opera in Italian.

It was an experience that none of us will soon forget!"

The Marriage of Figaro was received well by the audience, and the cast made their director, peers, and most importantly, themselves, proud. ★

Why “Just” Friends?



COURTESY OF TIM PASCHALIS

PHOEBE MULLEN

“Are you two dating?”

This is a question I have always winced at. Throughout my life, I have tended to have an almost equal number of close male and female friends, and I’ve never once dated.

Maybe the friend who asks this question is well-meaning and simply wants to know what is going in your life. But there’s still a problem. When most of us are asked this question, the automatic response (unless you *are* dating them) is “No, we’re just friends.”

Why “just” friends? The very language at play here immediately devalues the relationship in place.

As a result, the question has bothered me since I was nine years old. I’d never thought it was strange to have friends of the opposite gender until I was in fourth grade and I met my friend Nathaniel.

Nathaniel and I clicked instantly. Fourth grade was the year that our class split into two large friend-groups: boys and girls. Nathaniel and I were excluded. I don’t know if it was intentional on the part of the rest of the kids in our class, but we’d always been a bit socially

which involved a lot of running and throwing things.

This idyllic state didn’t last long. We were soon berated with chants of “Phoebe loves Nathaniel,” and “Have you kissed yet?” That sort of behavior from our peers continued for years afterward.

Most college-aged people don’t act like the kids in my fourth grade class. And if they do, they are usually more subtle. But our culture still has trouble accepting the dynamic of male-female friendships which start platonic and remain platonic. Maybe this is changing, but at least at a Christian college I don’t have to constantly worry

I say this to a male friend? I want to. We should love all our friends, and need ways to express it. Of course, we can communicate this through actions, hugs, and other things we say; with our willingness to listen, and our commitment to spend time with and appreciate each friend. I suppose in the end how we act toward a friend is more important than how we talk, but I believe we should be able to express how we feel more freely without fear of misunderstanding. We should be open to showing our love. Love for one another should cross boundaries. What Jesus called for was radical love, and He crossed social boundaries for it. Love should be part of building blocks of any life.

Another issue I’ve been confronted about is what a friendship between a woman and a man should look like. A comment I’ve often gotten from female friends is, “You can’t expect a friendship between a guy and girl to be the same as a friendship between two girls.” And I don’t. No friendship we have with one person is going to be the same as with another, whether they are the same gender as we are or not. In order

to have realistic expectations in any relationship, no matter whom it is with or what kind of relationship it is, we must work to understand that person as they are.

And so lastly, boy-girl friendships are a perfect way to combat a lot of wrong assumptions that one gender can have about the other. We can’t go forward assuming that men and women are exactly the same, but it is an equal or greater danger to assume that men and women are from different planets. Loving someone well, getting to know them in all their beauty and imperfections, can counter both those assumptions. We can’t forget that for all differences between men and women, we’ve actually got a whole lot more common ground. Through opposite gender friendships we can reconcile misunderstandings and love people as individuals: fully female, fully male, but most importantly, fully human. ★

Phoebe is a Sophomore majoring in English and Writing

“...What Jesus called for was radical love, and He crossed social boundaries for it. Love should be part of...any life...”

awkward and we found we preferred sitting and talking, making an illegal fort behind the administration building, and pretending seagulls were enemy planes, to the girls’ game of house and boys’ game,

that people will misunderstand my friendships with girls.

As I mentioned before, a large part of this is language. I often tell my female friends, “I love you,” and they know exactly what I mean. Would

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made



COURTESY OF ANNA SCHILKE

JOSÉ NOÉ SANTIAGO

We all have access to the internet. Because of this fact, we also have constant access to inaccurate portrayals of people with autism. I have to question if these portrayals are causing unintentional bullying. For example, when we laugh at supposed “retarded” people in *America’s Funniest Videos* or on Facebook, we may actually be laughing at people with high functioning Autism. We are also not aware of the people on our college campuses that have Autism. Usually we think of these individuals outside

the context of higher education. However, they are among us, in our media and on our campuses, and even Houghton students may lack awareness of their lives. There are three particular areas I think autism awareness can be improved in college life.

Before I unpack these areas, I would like to define Autism. According to the Autism Society, “Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex developmental disability; signs typically appear during early childhood and affect a person’s ability to communicate, and interact with others.” This is a different term than “retarded,” which is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as “slow or limited in intellectual or emotional development : characterized by mental retardation.” The confusion between these two terms leads to unintentional cyber

“...Autistics are fearfully and wonderfully made by God; to say that autistics have issues due to their diagnosis is to challenge the goodness of God’s creation...”

bullying. By the using the word “retarded” to describe “autism” in Facebook videos and on social media sites we hurt our brothers and sisters that are diagnosed with Autism. “Retarded” is not a word that should be used to describe anyone.

The next point I would like to address is the disrespect shown to autistics on television. Shows like *Family Guy*, *King*

of the Hill, and *South Park* all poorly represent autism in our society. While television channel companies may think their portrayals are a joke, this kind of comedy is not amusing. Caught in the show, people laugh lightheartedly without any bad intentions and accidentally mock their autistic brothers and sisters. By recognizing the influence of television channel companies on what we find funny, we can stop supporting offensive jokes on our college campuses.

Finally, I would like to address the offensive ads that negatively represent autistic behavior. In 2009, Autism Speaks made an advertisement called “I Am Autism”. In it, they personify autism as a sinister illness that will damage the lives

who are diagnosed. This image makes me angry. The Bible states in Psalm 139:14 “I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.” Autistics are fearfully and wonderfully made by God; to say that autistics have issues due to their diagnosis is to challenge the goodness of God’s creation. We all should report, ignore, and post against such noxious advertisements. They are neither ethical or Christian.

In these ways, and in others, Houghton students should pitch in the fight against bullying those with autism. People unintentionally harass autistics on social media. Television shows intentionally make fun of those with autism in comedies. Advertisements poorly present the condition. It is only through awareness of these issues that we can hope to combat the negative effects they promote.★

José is a Freshman majoring in Theology.

“...By using the word ‘retarded’ to describe ‘autism’ in Facebook videos and social media sites we hurt our brothers and sisters...”

What About the (Gay) Children?



COURTESY OF ANNA SCHILKE
JONATHAN DURBIN

think of my friends, maybe some teachers, and probably the kids I used to teach karate to. I don't often think about what they might have learned from my behavior. Am I a positive experience in their memory? Did I instill a life-lesson without realizing it? I have no idea, and I wouldn't expect them to call me up and tell me.

My parents were probably the biggest influence on me. They taught me how to behave in a world full of crazy people. Under their care, I learned what to do and what not to do in so many complicated situations. I couldn't be more grateful to them for their quiet patience, thoughtful wisdom, and careful

“...I learned that everyone should be shown love, no questions asked...if you are Christian you should start from this baseline...”

complex intricacies behind the LGBTQ+ topic.

During my freshman year, I had an encounter with two gentlemen who loved each other. They were gay, and this was my first major experience with anyone who wasn't heterosexual. I won't give specifics, but it wasn't necessarily a positive experience, and that stuck in the

a traditional view of marriage. He is a fantastic individual who I could write much more about, but I'll just say I'm extremely grateful to have a close friend like Joe.

One Thursday night sophomore year, I went to a talk hosted by students who wanted to share their experiences dealing with their identity under the LGBTQ+ banner. I went to the talk because I wanted to understand. Joe is a close friend and this talk was important to him, therefore it was important to me. The stories shared at the talk were full of hurt and confusion. Those students told me about pain that I have never felt. Their experiences were dramatically foreign to my own. I felt guilty that it had taken me 19 or so years to learn about an issue that an increasingly large group of people deals with. I also felt guilty (maybe selfishly so) that I couldn't come up with a simple solution to the problem. The Bible is frustratingly unclear about how a gay woman, for example, ought to approach her sexuality. Is she not allowed to experience deep, romantic love

from another woman? There are so many other difficult questions that don't have a solid enough answer. What I learned from that talk is not just that there are lots of hard questions that can't easily be answered. I learned that everybody should be shown love, no questions asked. As a straight Christian white male, I'm called by God to love everyone around me. This includes those who don't share the same sexual attraction as I do. No matter your stance on the LGBTQ+ topic, if you are a Christian, you should start from this baseline.

I'm not writing this to give you a conclusive answer to any of the difficult questions of today. Instead, I'm writing to ask you a question. How will we teach the next generation? It's clear that we must be more conscious of the struggles LGBTQ+ children go through – how will we respond to this as Christians? Will you use the influence you have to show the next generation how to love one another? I, for one, hope to teach my future kids that no matter who they may have attraction for, they are loved regardless. ★

Jon is a Senior majoring in Physics and Computer Science.

“...It's clear we must be more conscious of the struggles LGBTQ+ children go through...will you use the influence you have to show the next generation how to love one another?...”

discernment. Because of them, I can't wait to raise my own children someday. My parents set a hard-to-reach standard for raising children, but I dream to meet or exceed that standard. They didn't teach me everything, however. It wasn't until I spent a year or two in college that I finally began to understand the

back of my head for a while. I didn't let it completely define my opinion on the LGBTQ+ issue, but it had some influence on me.

I became an RA in Roth after my freshman year, where I had the distinct pleasure of working with Joe Miner. Joe is an openly gay Christian who has chosen to be celibate in keeping with

The mission of the Houghton Star is to preserve and promote the values of dialogue, transparency and integrity that have characterized Houghton College since its inception. This will be done by serving as a medium for the expression of student thought and as a quality publication of significant campus news, Houghton area news, and events.

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Artist of the Week

Matthew Heady

// senior art major



“From the time I was a child I knew I would make art. When the teacher told me to paint a landscape in second grade I painted a turtle. That’s the thing about being an artist. You don’t always play by the rules. Rules were meant to be broken.”



Thin Black and White Skull, glazed ceramic



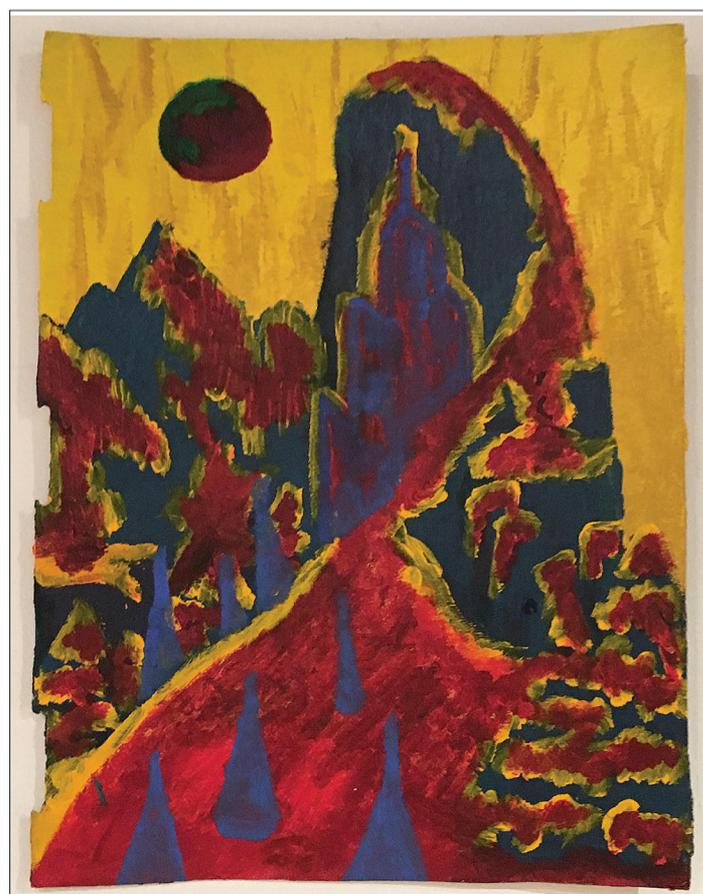
Spartan Skeleton, acrylic and hot glue on cardboard



The Face, acrylic on cardboard



Jehovah Tree Landscape, acrylic on cardboard



Space Mountain Landscape, acrylic on cardboard