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Harrison and Haas Elected as SC Co-Presidents

By Andrew Thompson

Juniors Will Harrison and Harrison Haas were elected as Haverford's next Students' Council Co-Presidents Thursday and began serving in that role immediately.

Harrison and Dan Kent '11 won the initial presidential election in April, but the pair resigned in August when Kent decided to take an internship in Washington D.C. during the first semester. Harrison and Vice President Robby Yoskowitz '09 served as Interim Co-Presidents until the elections took place.

Two other groups ran in the most recent presidential election: Dana Eiselen '11 and Eric Brown '10; and Adem Bunkeddeko '09 and Manny Zegeye '09.

The Bi-College News recently sat down with Harrison and Haas. This is a partial transcript of the interview.

What extracurriculars did you guys do before?

Haas: Well, obviously SAGA [Haas was SAGA Co-Head in 2007-2008]. I have a job at academic computing.

Harrison: I did SC last year, I was head of the Housing Committee last year, head of College Democrats for a while... I played cricket last year, I'm in chamber singers. I'm also UCA for Apartment 30.

Why did you guys decide to run for the Student Council co-presidency together?

Harrison: Really the name!

Haas: Yeah, you look at Harrison-Harrison, there's really nothing that can match it!

Harrison: Harrison [Haas] is a friend of mine, and he was here this summer, we were talking about people I might run with, and he expressed interest in it... As a friend, I knew Haas was a good person and wanted to do the job and [would] definitely be serious about these things.

Why did you guys want to be Co-Presidents?

Haas: It's a job that you want to see someone who's willing, competent, and able to do. I think we both had the interest.

Harrison: I really wanted to be able to do it again. I spent a lot of time over the summer on things that I wanted to see through.

What kind of initiatives did you start over the summer?

Harrison: I had a bunch of meetings about Ryan Gym and turning it into a student center... Everything from how should we repaint the walls, furniture, keycard access... I also spoke to the Provost about freshman and sophomore advising, and the social justice thing.

Do you think people appreciate the Social Justice [requirement]? Do they want it to come back?

Harrison: I think in general, students are in favor of it, they understand it's important. I think it's worthy, at least from an admissions standpoint, of saying we have this.

Haas: But I think you can't just have it on the books, maybe that's what people were feeling—it's just there, 'I have to take this class as part of an arbitrary requirement.'

Harrison: I think there is student support for doing something, but what that something is, is still unclear. This year it's something we'll definitely talk about, how are we going to replace this.

So what other, sort of secondary issues, are there?

Harrison: I'm not going to say that Social Justice is my primary issue. It's something that's sort of come up, that I've thought about a lot... In terms of our priorities, some of the things we talked about in the campaign. Definitely continuing with Ryan Gym stuff, the Campus Center is very poorly constructed in terms of meeting space for students... So having Ryan Gym, it's a great location in terms of being in the center of things, it's an area for hanging out, there will be tables for studying, clubs can meet there... Advising is also a big issue. Freshmen and sophomore advising doesn't always work that well... My freshman advisor didn't know my name, forgot about me.

Haas: I had a great advisor, always on time and everything, but he did Astrophysics, and I know nothing about Astrophysics, and it's definitely something I didn't want to specialize in. So I didn't get the expert help.

The freshmen class this year got to take advisor surveys over the summer. Before then it was random?

Harrison: Yes... I think we should see how this new survey thing works out—I'm curious... An idea is to incorporate advising into the writing seminar, or have only certain professors do advising.

So this is an issue that the administration and faculty are behind you guys on, right?

Haas: We have cooperation, yeah.

Harrison: Moving on to HCA. ... There are major structural issues in HCA, and sometimes issues with management.

Structural, like, building safety issues?

Haas: Yeah, let me tell you a story. Freshman year over the summer, we lived together in an apartment where the bathroom had a hole in the ceiling [from water damage]... We also had a mouse that lived in our stove... We should have better quality housing.

How old are the apartments?

Harrison: We bought them in the 70's, I think they were built in the 50's.

So they're completely, 100 percent under college control? You had said something about management issues.

Haas: We own the physical property.

Harrison: But they're managed by a company that's been there since we bought them.

Haas: And... they can't use email... If you get lucky, they will respond immediately. If you get unlucky, it's worse than playing phone tag.

What's the company called?

Harrison: The Starkman Company. And there are still some commercial renters. We can't really kick them out, but there are definitely some in the 800's. I've talked with Ron Tola, who's the head of Facilities Management, and he's said the apartments are really at the point where we can't keep putting money into them ... We need to make sure the Master Plan addresses this, because effectively a third of our campus is housed there. Students appreciate the apartments as an option, but it's always struck me as odd that it's not managed by the college.

Are those all the issues you guys wanted to cover?

Harrison: There's going to be a lot of introspection going on. Reaccreditation is coming up as well, students will be involved with that. The Master Plan addresses physical space, and the Strategic Plan addresses anything about the college that's not physical buildings. This year is going to have a lot of looking at what we do well, [and] what we need to improve on.

—With Contributions by News Editor Michael Novinson

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