

BRYN MAWR & HAVERFORD COLLEGES

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Haverford Board of Managers Discusses Tuition, Dining Services

By Andrew Thompson

The Board of Managers descended upon the Haverford campus for their quarterly meeting last weekend, February 7 and 8. Issues up for discussion included financial aid and the setting of student fees for next year, as well as improvements to dining services and the meal plan system, among others.

“It hasn’t been decided how much they’ll raise tuition, but it’ll be a lot less than it has the past few years,” said Students’ Council Co-President Will Harrison ’10.

President Stephen G. Emerson ’74 called student charges a “nondecision.” Normally tuition is set at the February Board meeting, he said, “but in this case it’s been deferred until the end of March. We’d love to not raise tuition at all, but especially when the financial aid needs of student’s are not falling, and the endowment is falling, every decision you make to raise tuition less means that that much more cuts have to be made.”

Vice President for Finance and Administration Richard Wynn said, “The Board knows it has to make a decision, but we’re deliberately trying to put things off until we have more information [about the economy.]”

Emerson added, “The increase considered was anywhere from zero to mid-four percent.”

Students’ Council Co-President Harrison Haas ’10 brought up that the Student Activities Fee would not be increased this year, as it has in years past. Instead, it would stay at the current level, and Student’s Council would have the same operating budget next year as it did this year.

The idea of raising the Activities Fee by \$14 and putting that money toward the rest of the college had been considered, Harrison Haas said, but “It makes more sense not to collect the money at all, let Haverford families keep the money.” Will Harrison called it a “tax cut.”

“There’s a good chance that we may see tuition go over \$50,000. While we’re actually pretty close to it numbers-wise, it’s more the image,” said Will Harrison.

Harrison Haas added, “It’s a psychological barrier. It’s not a good chance, but the possibility exists.”

Will Harrison expressed concern that since peer institutions with larger student bodies and endowments would not have to raise tuition as much, setting Haverford tuition that high could pose a problem for getting students to come here.

Freshman Representative to Students’ Council of 12 Liz Coward ’12 said, “It’ll still make a difference...if I was looking through the college books and \$50,000 showed up under Haverford’s name, that would be a problem versus some other schools.”

Will Harrison emphasized that “Financial aid policies are not changing. Our policies re-evaluate your package every year, and compensate for our changes and [changes in your situation.]”

Along with discussions on finances and tuition, Will Harrison and Harrison Haas also presented student dissatisfaction with the quality of dining services and the meal plan setup at the Board's Student Affairs meeting.

"Students feel like the [meal] plan can be a bit restrictive, everyone up-campus has to be on the full plan," said Will Harrison. "We talked about a points system, maybe finding more ways to incorporate the Coop."

Harrison Haas was cautiously optimistic. "I think the Board listened, but I wouldn't get your hopes up," he said. Will Harrison added that the Administration, specifically Dean of the College Greg Kannerstein '63 and President Stephen G. Emerson '74, were very open to talking about dining services improvements.

"The Board has heard enough about food issues, they're very receptive," said Emerson. "It is the major agenda for several of the Board members, many of them were students themselves. They would love for us to figure this out."

Kannerstein added, "Students really wanted us to look at the meal schedule. [While we can't stay open] 16 hours a day, where will we really hit the majority of student's needs?"

Will Harrison also mentioned that Haverford's Administration would talk with Bryn Mawr's dining services to find ideas to improve quality at Haverford. Bryn Mawr's food is generally considered to be better than Haverford's, even though Bryn Mawr uses the same foodservice supplier. Will Harrison mentioned that one possibility was the lower employee costs Bryn Mawr incurs through the use of student workers.

"It's the little things," Harrison Haas added. "Last year there were always bruised tomatoes, and part of the reason was they weren't kept as cold. Haverford chills things with ice, Bryn Mawr uses refrigeration."

The Master Plan was also discussed at the Board Meeting. Will Harrison said that ideas for the short-term included possibly building a new library behind Ryan Student Center, and tearing down part Magill.

"[Magill is] not the best of libraries, while it may seem useable to us, you go to any number of other schools and they have better libraries," said Will Harrison.

Will Harrison said that other parts of the Master Plan included building one or two new dorms over the Orchard Parking Lot by the Whitehead Campus Center.

The Board also talked about renovating Whitehead Campus Center to make it a permanent Student Center. Will Harrison said, "We expressed our concerns with Emerson about using Whitehead [as a Student Center.] Even if you were to add onto Whitehead, it still isn't a good location."

Freshman Representative to Students' Council of 12 Franklyn Cantor '12 added, "[Whitehead is] also so new, [renovations] would be a waste."

Will Harrison said that the Middle-States Working Group also presented issues to the Board, including increasing the hours of the health center, student academic support services and tutoring, and freshman and sophomore advising.

On the health center, Harrison Haas said, "Most incidents requiring hospitalizations happen on weekends. ... Some people will want to err on the side of caution [and go to the hospital, other's don't.]"

Harrison Haas added, "We don't have a health services partnership with Bryn Mawr. If you get hurt, you can't go to Bryn Mawr and get treated. It would be great if we could."

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