

**Dear Members of the Board/Communications Committee,**

Thank you for prioritizing efforts to improve communications between the Board and its membership.

**When considering two-way lines of communications on social media, we understand that one hindrance has been the operations of the Official/Original HCHSAA group on Facebook (which was recently renamed to ‘Original’) in that it is not currently administered by members of the organization.**

We apologize for the length of this document. It is long because it includes many screenshots of posts and messages from or related to the Official/Original HCHSAA group. We know that having so many screenshots seems like the actions of unhinged persons, but it is a natural evolution from participating in a forum where moderators have increasingly engaged in post/comment deletions without warning or explanation. This style of moderation continues to be a source of great frustration as well as confusion for many members. Multiple members of that group have taken measures to capture screenshots so that they are able to make sense of threads and posts and to preserve the record.

We hope the screenshots and other materials provided support the following positions:

1. The Official/Original HCHSAA Facebook Group (henceforth referred to as “FB Group”) was created as a forum for the organization to engage with membership and discuss AA-related matters, as well as alum-related activities, topics of interest, and news events. Historically, it operated as a forum for those discussions, and was previously strongly affiliated with the AA.
2. The FB Group is no longer an open or unbiased forum to discuss AA-related matters. Moderation has been inconsistent in applying rules and frequently biased in favor of critics of the current administration.
3. Some members want an unbiased, uncensored forum to discuss AA issues and have fled to other forums to escape onerous moderation practices. Others have fled to forums where drama and issues related to the operations of the AA are not persistent topics.

With 5,000+ members, regaining administrator rights to the FB Group would be pivotal in re-establishing trust in the Board and improving communications with its members. Whether the Board will seek to, or be able to, regain any control of the FB Group, it would behoove the AA to keep its members informed and apprised of this situation. **We wish for a forum to exist where alums are able to freely and openly discuss AA-related matters with members of the current Board that is moderated without bias.** Furthermore, **we wish for members of the Board and the alumnae/i base as a whole to be aware of the history and situation in the largest HCHSAA forum. As such, we consent to the sharing and release of this entire letter by the Board to anyone you wish. Additionally, we are not current/former Board members or employees, just concerned alums.**

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**1. The FB Group was the forum created as an “official arm of the AA” for the purposes of allowing the AA to inform and interact with alumnae/i. It should have an active role in the administration and content moderation of that forum.**

Below you will find evidence to support the claim that the Board is the rightful administrator of the Official/Original HCHSAA group. You will find records supporting the position that the FB Group was created as a messaging platform for the AA. There is also evidence of the historical ties between AA officers and FB Group administration/moderation. Furthermore, you will find that the current and sole active administrator, Gena Feist, obtained administrative control over the FB Group via this relationship. Finally, you will also see evidence that this same administrator now denies these historical facts and precedents and actively suppresses any mention of it.

**2. Content moderation in the FB Group has been capricious and inconsistent, and frustration has hit a boiling point for many participants. It no longer functions as an unbiased and open forum to discuss AA-related matters. Instead, it actively promotes views hostile to the current administration while silencing members who hold differing views or question the conduct of some of its critics.**

Below are screenshots of the original rules and guidelines that were approved by the Board in the early years of the FB Group. Additionally, you will find screenshots showing departures from those rules by current administrators and moderators. There are other screenshots showing concerns and complaints regarding moderation practices, abuse of power, and censorship.

**3: Members are discontent with the tone found in the FB Group. Some object to the moderation practices. Some members have gone to less drama-filled forums. Recently, others have gone off to create their own more open forum.**

The fact that not one, but two spin-off groups have been created within the past 4 years speaks volumes. However, there is also evidence of the current administrator, Gena Feist, explicitly rejecting requests for changes to moderation practices and instead encouraging others to create their own forum. Not only does the suggestion for members to start new groups to discuss important issues serve to displace our community, it is also a worrying departure from existing policies, practices, and philosophies of the FB Group since its inception.

**Our own conclusions** are that the Board needs to participate in an unbiased forum where it can openly engage with alumnae/i. Alums would like a thorough and fair assessment of the state of the AA. However, based on past conduct, we do not believe Ms. Feist is well-suited to hold moderation privileges for such a forum (nevermind being the sole active administrator of the largest alum forum). Finally, we would like a forum where we can address actions taken by current and former Board members, acting both in their official capacities and as private individuals, which have alarmed alumnae/i. Members have raised concerns about the financial and operating status of the AA, as well as risks to their privacy, stemming from those actions. Below you will find screenshots and other relevant materials which we hope will support at least some of our points. Readers are free to draw their own conclusions based on the materials provided.

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## HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FB GROUP & AA

There is a long established history of Board representation as administrators of the FB Group. Although the timeline below is not comprehensive, it shows a clear trend:

**Since the FB Group's inception in 2009, a sitting AA Board/Staff member has always represented \*at least one\* of the FB Group's admin/mod positions... that is, until recent years. From 2009-2020, the AA Board/Staff occupied multiple admin seats of the FB group. Beginning in January 2020, Gabe Rosenberg was the last Board member remaining, and with his departure from the Board in 2022, the AA lost all admin/mod presence in the group. Notably, Mr. Rosenberg was also not a very active admin/mod during his time of service.**

	Derek Kan	Jason Criss	Susan Spector	Elyse Reissman	Gabe Rosenberg	Ge Na	Artemis Anninos	Michael T. Rose				
	BoD?	Admin?	BoD?	Admin/Mod?	BoD?	Admin/Mod?	BoD?	Admin/Mod?	BoD?	Admin/Mod?	BoD?	Admin/Mod?
Oct.2009												
2010	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
2011	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
2012	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
2013	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
2014	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
2015	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
2016	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
2017	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓				
2018	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓				
2019	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓				
2020	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓				
2021	✓								✓			✓
2022	✓								✓			✓
2023	✓								✓			✓
2024	✓								✓*			✓

## Pre-2020

Indisputably, the HCHSAA was actively integrated in the FB Group with the Board approving, or sitting as, the group's administrators (higher than moderator status).

- **Oct.2009** - Derek Kan establishes the FB Group.
- **2010** - HCHSAA website links directly to the FB Group citing it as the *Official* group.
- **2010 to 2016** - Then Board members Derek Kan, Susan Spector, and Jason Criss are collectively all admins of the FB Group.
- **2016** - Board adopts rules for the FB Group. Admin & Board member, Susan Spector, posts them.
- **2017** - Board adds new requirements for moderators.
- **2018** - Board confirms Gabe Rosenberg (Communications Committee Chair of the Board) as admin, and Gena Feist (non-Board member) as moderator.
- **2020/2021** - Tumultuous discussions regarding the then Board and AA Staff decisions are rampant. A new spin-off, called the *Official \*Unofficial* group (recently renamed the *Original \*UnOriginal* group), is formed due to frustrations of censorship in the *Official* group.

**April 2017 - Then admin, Susan Spector, says the FB Group is “an official arm of the AA”, and that FB Group admins/mods are all current/previous AA officials, and that Group Rules/Guidelines were written and approved by the Board.**



Susan Spector ★ 4,232 points

Thank you, **Miggie**. I was just about to post that information. I did not create the group. It is an official arm of the AA. Some of the admins are Board members and some are employees of the Board.

7y Edited

6



Susan Spector ★ 4,232 points

Will, the article originally was posted because it was by an alum. The post was deleted because the comments were not about the article, but were abusive in relation to the author and other group members. I did not create the group, nor am I the only moderator. There are five moderators (see the Members link), two are employees of the AA, three are current or former Board members. This group is an official part of the HCHSAA, not my personal outlet in any way. The Group Guidelines, which appear in the pinned post, were written and approved by the Board. They have been amended as needed to addresss the way members of the group behave toward each other.

7y Edited

21

In the Executive Committee's response to a member complaint during July 2020, we see clear evidence that the AA had much oversight over the FB Group.

With respect to the moderation of the FB Group, following a review of Board proceedings, we can confirm that the moderators and guidelines were reviewed and approved by the Board, as evidenced in, but not limited to, the following:

- November 2016 Board meeting – FB Group guidelines were reviewed, discussed, and adopted
- October 2017 Board meeting – Requirements added for FB Group moderators
- November 2018 Board meeting - Moderators Susan Spector ('64) and Gena (Alexander) Feist '87 confirmed as FB Group moderators

Gabe Rosenberg ('94), the Board's Communications Committee Chair, is the Board representative and an administrator of the group and is consulted on various moderation issues but does not monitor the group day-to-day. The moderators, like you, are alums and volunteers. Is the FB Group perfect? No. (Is any online forum or group?) But since the moderators and Group Guidelines were established, the FB group has experienced more growth and participation than any of our other online forums, which are currently managed by staff, and abusive or toxic postings and comments have been greatly reduced. The Board's position that posts should not be censored is stated in the guidelines. It means that the removal of FB Group posts is not taken lightly and is done only in the context of enforcing the guidelines.

The Board has authorized the current moderators with appropriate discretion to enforce the guidelines it approved. This approach seems to be working as intended. Susan was able to repost her call for alumnae/i to post about themselves, and numerous alums have done so, including comments of appreciation for Susan's post. We do not believe that there is a clear pattern of abuse and we believe the moderators should be given the benefit of doubt in this recent matter.

**June 2021 - In her search for a 'diverse' set of moderators, the sole active admin ultimately selects Michael T. Rose and Artemis Anninos, both of whom are from her same graduating Class of 1987 and served as 2022 Class Reunion Coordinators together.**

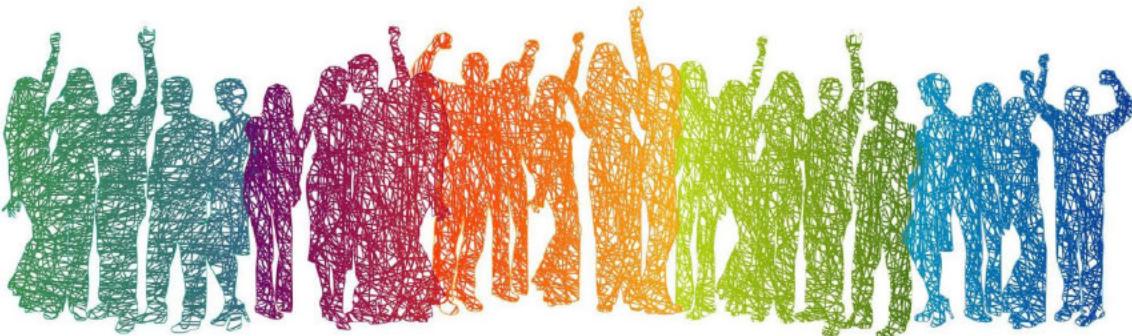


Ge Na

June 3, 2021 ·

...

Good morning! This is one of your admins, Gena Feist '87. As mentioned previously, we are looking to recruit additional moderators for this page. We are looking for a diverse group of moderators that span all ages, experiences, and backgrounds. The gig requires understanding the guidelines, consulting with the mod group on certain calls, patience, and humor. 🎉 If you are interested in volunteering, please DM me and your message will be shared with the other moderators and admins. It would be helpful to know when you graduated, how frequently you visit the group page, and any thoughts you have on how to improve page moderation. Thanks so much for being a part of this community!



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## Post-2020

Around this time, moderation activity in the FB Group begins to deviate sharply from its previously established norms.

- **2021** - Susan Spector resigns as admin of the FB Group. New moderators (who are not Board members), Michael T. Rose and Artemis Anninos, are selected by the sole *active* admin remaining, Gena Feist. (Note: both the chosen moderators are from the Class of 1987, same as Ms. Feist.)
- **2022** - Gabe Rosenberg is no longer a Board member.
- **2023** - Now the sole *active* admin remaining, Ms. Feist denies administration privileges to HCHSAA Hunterites, who identified themself as AA's current Communications Director, upon request. Numerous members including Ms. Feist repeatedly assert that the FB Group has no affiliation with the AA (creating the illusion that the AA has no right to claim, which leads to the AA also separating themselves from the group, stating the same: that they are no longer associated with the FB Group).
- **2024** - Gabe Rosenberg resigns as moderator of the FB Group. Heated debates about AA dealings and its incumbent Executive Committee rage on, and heavy moderation with arbitrary enforcement of ever-changing rules leads to the second spin-off, *HCHS Alums* group, to be formed for more open uncensored discussions.

**Importantly, this change to moderation practices did not appear to go through the Board, or any sort of visible, representative body.** Moreover, the holdover admin/mods now operate in a manner that aligns with former AA officials who are hostile to the incumbent Board, all the while denying any relationship between the FB Group's admin/mods and the AA Board ever existed, and most recently even outright censoring alums that mention the FB Group's origins and history.

**Long-time Board member and FB Group admin, Susan Spector, states that admins were appointed by the Board, and that Ms. Feist hand-picked the new moderators (in 2021).**



Susan Spector Top contributor

I was a member of the AA Board for many years and was admin of the group for more years than that. You can find the names of all admins and moderators in the members list of any group. For the official group, these are those people. Derek, who has not been active in running the group for a long time, created the group and cannot be removed as an admin or the group will cease to exist. Ge Na (Gena Feist) and Gabe were appointed by the Board to replace me. They chose Artemis and Michael. There are no defined powers that I am aware of other than those the admins set out.

Ge Na - Admin

Derek Kan = Admin

Artemis Anninos - Moderator

Michael T. Rose - Moderator

Gabe Rosenberg - Moderator

1y Like Reply Edited

3

**By mid-late 2024, Admin Feist asserts that FB Group is (now) *not* affiliated with AA. Additionally, she confirms her refusal to grant admin/mod privileges to accounts affiliated with the AA.**

**Please note: The status and control of the HCHSAA Hunterites account is unclear to most. However, that did not appear to be a determining factor in Admin Feist's decision to deny moderation/administration privileges.**



Ge Na updated the description.

Admin • Top contributor · 25m · ⓘ

...

A Facebook Group for all alums of Hunter College High School. This group was founded in 2010 and it is the original Facebook Group for HCHS. This group is moderated and administered by HCHS alums. Not affiliated with [www.hchsaa.org](http://www.hchsaa.org).

Like

Ge Na turned off commenting for this post.



Ge Na

• Admin • Level 2 contributor

In a DM to me eight months ago asking to allow them to take over this group on behalf of the AA (!!!) HCHSAA Hunterites identified themselves as the "current Communications Director of the Hunter College High School Alumnae." Think for a minute what was happening 8 months ago when this simple request was made.

14m Like Reply

**July 2024 - Ms. Feist falsely states that the current admins/mods were not appointed by the AA. Above documentation shows she was indeed approved and confirmed by the Board in 2018.**



Ge Na

July 12 · 🌈

...

A message from your mods: Please follow the rules and do not use this space to callout mods or debate mod decisions. If we remove posts it is because they violate our rules. There should be details in the notice. If you are moderated and have questions, DM one of us and give us some time to respond if appropriate (click on us through the group info listing). We will put people temporarily on post approval if they don't follow rules. And "getting around" moderation will get you suspended.

For example, if you are on post approval and a post is not approved, do not (a) make the same statements in comments or (b) edit an unrelated post to include your statements that were not approved.

A few other things: This group supports the school, it is not run by the AA. **The admins / mods of this group are not members of, appointed by, or answer to the AA Board.** We try to be even handed about moderation while allowing important issues to be discussed. We are also alums and can participate in the discussion and express our own personal opinions. Being mods doesn't mean we can't participate in discussions.

We have a hard job and do it for free. We are not here to be the focus of any accusations or vitriol. Period.

Thank you.

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## GROUP RULES & GUIDELINES

### Promotes Free Speech, Prohibits Spamming, Precludes Censorship

Guidelines pinned to the top of the FB Group over several years have been consistent in promoting free speech while balancing the necessity to keep things civil and protect the dignity of its members.

**2014 through 2020 - Susan Spector (then admin) posts guidelines for the FB Group which remain the same throughout the years. Specifically, the guidelines discourage censorship.**

We believe that posts should not be censored and allow all group members to post without the prior approval of the admins. We reserve the right, however, to delete offending posts in the sole discretion of the administrators.

Rudeness, incivility, sarcasm about others, etc., will not be tolerated. Please treat others as if you were talking to them in person, face-to-face. Remember that we were encouraged to question and discuss, but not at the expense of others' dignity. People who abuse this policy once will be warned, people who do it repeatedly may be removed from the group.

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**May 25th, 2021 - Gena Feist (new admin) immediately sets a new tone after Ms. Spector resigned as admin just one day prior.**



Ge Na ► [The Original Hunter College High School Alumnae/i Facebook Group](#)

Admin

Top contributor · May 25, 2021 · 🎉

...

Good morning. As folks know, Susan Spector has retired as an admin for the group which leaves me as one of two remaining admins. Susan is a wonderful woman and she was an amazing admin. She did so much to build up this community and while her work as an admin will be missed, I am sure she will continue to post and enrich this group. I will be working to build up a larger moderation team so keep an eye out for posts. A few comments and observations on the activity this week: First, there have been many posts/comments by handful of members that violate our rules regarding treating other members with respect and dignity. These posts have not been moderated but that stops now. Do not personally attack other alums, treat them with respect, and treat them with dignity or your posts will be removed and/or you will be put on post approval. We are all adults, we can discuss things factually and civilly, and anyone that cannot will be moderated (please use the report button in the "..." menu to the right of any comment or post -- we cant read everything so you must report if you want us to see something in the group). Second, similarly our rule against multiple posts on the same topic have not been moderated on this topic but they will be going forward. Third, I have put a few people on temporary "post approval" I am making this a public statement because some of the individuals involved have been unhappy when moderated in the past, spamming the board with complaints about moderation or spamming moderators with lengthy argumentative messages. We have rules, please follow them, and dont attack moderators when you are moderated. Its a tough, volunteer job and being attacked for it isnt okay. Fourth, on the current hot topic, I assume volunteer board members of any such organization are doing their best out of a desire to serve. This is especially true when I dont (and cant) know all the details. I like Eniko and I have no idea what actually happened. But there are two sides to every employment dispute and while employees can say anything they like, the employers are unable to comment because it would violate the employees privacy. Finally, thank you for being part of the group and making this such a rich and vibrant community! Gena Feist '87.

**2024 - A series of three threads emerge during a time of increasing moderation, with the most recent post creating a new rule that is a complete departure from free speech.**

**March 2024**



Ge Na

Mar 15 · 81

Keep it collegial: We struggle as moderators of this group to allow critical discussions of events important to us all while keeping the tone collegial. Sometimes we succeed and sometimes we don't. We took down a series of posts today that seemed to step over the lines and generated a number of reports. Please do not post generalized accusations of illegality about individuals. Please do not post confidential information you obtained as employees or board members of the AA. Please do not encourage anyone to harass or attack anyone. Please DO continue using this group to organize and confer regarding issues that concern alums. Please DO continue to ask the AA to address your concerns. If you see something that might need review or removal please use the "report to admin" function. Alums WILL be suspended for a month if they cannot remain collegial in their discussions. Mods will not debate those decisions. Thank you for your cooperation.

**July 2024**



The Official Hunter College  
High School Alumnae/i Group

Ge Na · 11m · 1

A message from your mods: Please follow the rules and do not use this space to callout mods or debate mod decisions. If we remove posts it is because they violate our rules. There should be details in the notice. If you are moderated and have questions, DM one of us and give us some time to respond if appropriate. We will put people temporarily on post approval if they don't follow rules. And "getting around" moderation will get you suspended.

For example, if you are on post approval and a post is not approved, do not (a) make the same statements in comments or (b) edit an unrelated post to include your statements that were not approved.

A few other things: This group supports the school, it is not run by the AA. The admins / mods of this group are not members of, appointed by, or answer to the AA Board. We try to be even handed about moderation while allowing important issues to be discussed. We are also alums and can participate in the discussion and express our own personal opinions. Being mods doesn't mean we can't participate in discussions.

We have a hard job and do it for free. We are not here to be the focus of any accusations or vitriol. Period.

**October 2024**



The Official Hunter College  
High School Alumnae/i Group

Admin · Ge Na · 2h · 1

Please do not use this space to discuss AA employees/board members by name or title in the context of wrongdoing. Do not allege criminal action by any person. Your post / comment will be removed and you will be suspended if you do so. Discussions of the AA are okay. Thank you. If you see something that violates the rules please use the FB "report" function to report to the admins. Thank you.



## **Violations of these Rules by Current Admins**

Moderation practices are so inconsistent and decisions appear so opaque that many have asked for clarification, often to no avail, making the FB Group a poor venue for discussing the true state of and trajectory of the AA. Posts criticizing recent actions taken by the AA remain up for prolonged periods of time, sometimes indefinitely. However, when comments are made by members asking critics to elaborate and veer into uncomfortable territory, comments and sometimes entire top-level posts are deleted with little-to-no explanation. Sometimes, entire threads on subjects that concern members fall apart. Casual observers and those who rely solely on the visible comments in the FB Group are left to conclude that the AA is in crisis solely as a consequence of exceptional mismanagement by the current Board.

**July 2024 - Admins continue to delete posts under the guise of “following the rules”, when in reality it is censorship.**



Ge Na

Admin Level 2 contributor

The mods are following the rules of the group. Please read the announcements for those rules.

37m Like Reply



Paula Zagrecki

Level 2 contributor

Ge Na show me where censorship is in the rules. The rules specifically say that censorship is unacceptable.

**Below are several posts (among many more) that were deleted despite their contents not violating any of the rules.**



David Bodnick

Admins, help your community to follow the rules by actually posting those rules. The three rules you've pinned are a great start. But when you have removed helpful posts for unrelated reasons that this group would find strange, and then removed posts discussing the removal, it's a bit Orwellian.

1m Like Reply



Kenric Tam Top contributor

Thank you Ge Na I want to say that I am very thankful for your continuing hard work and commitment to impartiality unlike this other group I'm in that is very heavy handed in removing posts, putting members on post-approval, etc. That other group is also an alumae/i group but unlike this group, the admin/mods in that group were confirmed by their AA board circa 2016, 2017, 2018 and further reaffirmed in 2020. (Anyone that's interested in the details of the other group can certainly DM me.).

...

I only mention the other group to compare and contrast to this group which, believe me, is a huge breath of fresh air.

Again, thank you. It is indeed a difficult and thankless job and you and the mods likely don't hear the thanks enough.

3m Like



Halina Alter

44m · 🌐

...

Ge Na, It seems to me that comments have been cut off I April's thread or I can't figure out how to reply to @Raymond Tsao. He mentioned an NPR article about the Supreme Court and taking up a case dealing with what is posted on platforms such as Facebook. The article is from February of 2024. Just to keep the information current the Court sent back a case to the lower courts July 1 with the opinion written by Kagan. So who gets to control sites such as Facebook is not yet de...  
See more

The following thread, which was posted only once, was deleted and when the poster asked why, he was told by Admin Feist she removed it as “spam”.



Kenric Tam

Top contributor · 1m · 🌐

...

Raymond Tsao While I was awaiting your response in the other thread (which undoubtedly will follow since we seem to be in agreement that transparency is paramount) I saw a new thread posted by you (that thread cited 1,489 members participated in the 2021 Board elections). Unfortunately, it seems to have been removed for unknown reasons. I'm not posting a screenshot as I've been told I cannot post screenshots of posts deleted by admins.

Anyway, I have no frame of reference, being a newcomer to the operational aspects of the AA and its board, but I'm trying to listen and learn and I would've liked the opportunity to reply. So: 2021 was 1,489, 2022 was 89, and 2023 was 132. To provide a fuller context, would you happen have additional figures from prior years? Say 2017-2020?

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## CENSORSHIP / ABUSE OF POWER / MISINFORMATION & DISCORD

**In recent years, moderation in the FB Group has deviated noticeably from its founding principles and practices.** Posts that 1) question moderation practices, 2) challenge or investigate criticisms of AA performance, or 3) highlight controversial actions taken by critics of the AA, such as Raymond Tsao's uploading of every member's email to DropBox to solicit proxies, have been removed by the admin. **Several new moderation guidelines appear to be introduced after the fact to justify removal of posts admins/mods find objectionable** (with delayed or non-existent public updates to the group's official guidelines). Furthermore, members who made the aforementioned posts have at times had their privileges restricted.

**We believe allowing the current situation to go on unaddressed sets a very bad precedent.** The moderating practices of the FB Group allows a person to briefly slander without repercussions, and members who only occasionally visit the forum will be none the wiser. We can see why Board members would have little interest in posting in the FB Group under these circumstances. Even critics of the Board who have expressed skepticism of some of the more radical positions, such as dissolving a 50 year old organization, have halted or reduced their involvement.

The FB Group that was once a messaging arm of every prior AA administration is now hostile towards the current administration, all the while consistently evasive when transparency is demanded by alumnae/i. While Gena Feist's position as administrator to the FB Group was confirmed and sanctioned by the prior administration, this is not the case with the current administration. **Her refusal to return administrator privileges to the current administration and her flatout denial of the FB Group's historical ties to the AA effectively constitutes a hijacking of the FB Group.** While her actions may have been justified at a time when AA influence over the group was a concern, she has now come to blatantly ignore and deny both history and precedent. **Based on these actions as administrator of the FB Group, we believe Ms. Feist should not be trusted to continue in this role.** Unfortunately, resolving this issue is hampered by the fact that only admins have the power to remove/change admins & mods.

Currently, there are (4) remaining admins/mods. Since the group's creator, Derek Kan, has been inactive for quite some time now, this leaves Gena Feist as the sole administrator remaining who is active. The other two persons with moderation privileges are Michael Rose and Artemis Anninos, who are notably both from the same class as Gena Feist (1987). They joined when Ms. Feist recruited a "diverse" set of moderators in 2021. **Unless Gena Feist is willing to relinquish her control over the FB Group, it requires intervention by the remaining group creator, Derek Kan.**

**According to Facebook rules, only an administrator has the power to add or remove another administrator/moderator:**

There are two roles for people who manage groups: admins and moderators.

The table below outlines the roles and what they're able to do:

	<b>Admin</b>	<b>Moderator</b>
Make another member an admin or moderator	✓	
Remove an admin or moderator	✓	
Manage group settings (ex: <a href="#">change the group name</a> , <a href="#">cover photo</a> or <a href="#">privacy settings</a> )	✓	
Approve or deny <a href="#">membership requests</a> and <a href="#">participant requests</a>	✓	✓
Approve or deny posts in the group	✓	✓
Remove posts and <a href="#">comments on posts</a>	✓	✓
Remove and ban people from the group	✓	✓
Pin or unpin a post	✓	✓

## Previous Incidents/Complaints

Below are examples of member dissent, which ultimately led to the spin-off of the *Original UnOriginal Group* in May 2020 (previously known as *Official Unofficial Group*).

### April 2017 - Members feel explanations should be given for deleted posts according to group guidelines.



Josh Rabinowitz

The issue I see here here is that this group phrases it as 'the official' group -- in conjunction with a self-appointed moderator who unilaterally decides what's acceptable. There should be more accountability or people will stop taking SS and this organization seriously. Any post that's deleted should have an explanation of why, according to the group guidelines. This should not be a dictatorship (even if it is benevolent).

7y Edited



Susan Spector 4,232 points

No admin is "self-appointed."

...

### July 2020 - A member files a complaint to the Board regarding censorship on the FB Group, with implications that “group rules” are applied selectively.

Specifically, the administrators and moderators of the so-called official HCHSAA FB Group (hereinafter, the “official group,”) have censored me and others, and they seem to believe that they have your support. Since May, I have routinely been censored (my posts have been taken down and I have even been “muted,” i.e., blocked from posting in the official group) despite the fact that, prior to this weekend, my supposedly objectionable posts were simply advertisements of virtual events for the alumnae/i community, events that have only served to generate the engagement of alumnae/i. As of this weekend, my opinions have also been removed from the official group, and I have been prevented from commenting or even liking posts through July 11, with the threat that my banishment will continue for a month. Hence, this letter to you.

As explained herein, since May, I have tried to address the problems that I have encountered by reaching out to the individuals mentioned in this letter directly. To no avail.

Please note that, in the above exchange, Ge Na claims that HCHSAA board members asked her to get involved as an administrator of the official group and to “enforce the rules.” As you will see, the “rules” are arbitrarily and capriciously applied. I detail below the way in which these so-called rules seem to apply to me and some others in order to take down our posts, but they do not apply to...

**May 2021 - Members continue to exhibit concern about moderation practices. Admin Feist pointedly admits that this forum intentionally allows for bias towards critics of the AA.**



Sam Le Dily ★ 1,034 points

Ge Na what is the proper forum for discussing how this group is moderated? It seems like small potatoes to bring up to the entire AA, but in the past I have been displeased with what I perceived to be the stifling of legitimate political debate. That that same moderation style, let alone a stricter one, would be applied to issues directly affecting the AA is troubling to me. Of course I guess what choice do I have, this group has the monopoly on the name of the official hchs alumni group so I suppose it's the only game in town. But that's all the more reason why how it is moderated is a question that should be open for public discussion and decision, in my opinion.

3y

7



Susan Sterling

Sam Le Dily I agree

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3y

3



Ge Na Author Admin +1

Hi Sam. Please dm me about any specific history but note it's the opposite: the post critical of the AA have been treated more leniently to this point to ensure there was no appearance of favoring them.

3y

**May 2021 - Admins will not discuss moderation policies openly in the forum, and instead ask to discuss privately. However, private messages are often ignored.**



Sandi Charton

Ge Na - As I have said, thank you - it is not easy being a moderator/administrator of a Facebook group (and many thanks to you once again, Susan Spector). However, I was told (by you) that I had been placed in "post approval" status after a comment (which I thought was pretty innocuous) was removed. I realize that my status has now (presumably) reverted to non-post approval - if that's the appropriate nomenclature - but I'm honestly trying to understand why this happened in the first place so I can act accordingly in the future. Can you please let me know? Many thanks.

3y



Ge Na Author Admin +1

Hi Sandi you can DM me. thanks

...

3y



Jean Seo-Park

Sandi Charton yes, agreed, if a post/comment is removed, the reason for its removal should be given. I have been through this with what I thought was an innocuous post and didn't receive a response for some time even when I DM'd the mods. It would have been constructive to know the "why".

**May 2023 - Members complain about the continued arbitrary censorship (an inquiry about an AA event does not appear to violate any group rules).**



Ann Starer

May 1, 2023 ·

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Once again, the admin of the Official HCHS alumnae/i FB group is having a grand time arbitrarily censoring an alumna. (See [April Fef's removed post below](#).) I can't believe the admin is still at it. Her unacceptable behavior was brought to the attention of the Board a long time ago..



The Official Hunter College High School Alumnae/i Association



April Fef

13m ·

...

Is this a fundraising event? Is there a cost to attend? Is the number of attendees limited? Will we be given details as to the expenses related to these events and the funds generated from the events? Will announcements of events be posted in "The Official Hunter College High School Alumnae/i Association" group or just on the page administered by the AA?



April Fef

13h ·

This is my original post that was removed. The latest explanation for the removal of my post and comments is -

"April we have given you feedback on every deleted post. Your original post was inappropriate because you should have asked about an aa event on the aa page. Your later comments were against the rules about complaining about moderation. Please stop."

I've read the group guidelines and my posts and comments are not against any of the stated rules. At this point my issue is not about the original post but the arbitrary censorship.

## Current Incidents/Complaints

Member frustration with this continued moderation style hits new levels. In October 2024, yet another spin-off group (*HCHS Alums*) was formed in the spirit of having an open forum free of censorship.

**July 2024 - Moderation (deleting posts/comments, shutting off commenting, putting members on post approval and even suspension) are often without explanation. This causes not only frustration, but also great confusion.**



**Paula Zagrecki**

Level 2 contributor

[Halina Alter](#) I don't know. But comments I made were deleted and I didn't delete them. The whole discussion about the MTA subsidizing transport was deleted. And apparently, the mods don't want you to discuss moderator decisions on this page. Which is, itself, censorship. Feels very much like employers telling employees to not discuss compensation. That only benefits the employer.



**Faridah Gbadamosi**

Top contributor

I'm actually super frakking pissed, there are so many posts that literally rehash the same topic over and over again so that when you enter the group all you see is litany of complaints and no actual alum engagement but my post get deleted and I get censored. You get to keep your post up about censorship and lack of communication as the admins go around playing favorites. Who knows how many posts they have deleted if this is their approach?



**Deanna Ida**

14m ·

...

Hi admins. Y'all do thankless work and this is not an attack, and I hope I do not inspire a crusade brigade to antagonize you. However, can you please explain why you've shut off commenting on this post? It was inconvenient as there were ongoing conversations. Ironically, some of them did have to do with moderation policies.

**September 2024 - Many members have complained how comments that merely attempt to clarify the historical relationship of admins/mods with the AA (like the one below, and even more innocuous ones) are deleted by admins, who then proceed to suspend the commenter (even though the comment itself does not violate any of the FB Group's rules).**



Edwin Kim ★ 849 points

I'm just glad that they don't have moderating power over this group.

4h Like Reply

1



Ge Na ✨ Admin 4,022 points

Edwin Kim they have requested it in the past. And I hear they stated in the meeting they might seek it in future.

3h Like Reply



Dorothy Tse ★ 3,354 points

Ge Na That is strange to hear you say, since the Board did at one point (and I believe at all points since the inception of this FB group) have moderating privileges until 2021-ish... coincidentally when they approved/appointed you (and others who were current Board members at the time) to be the admins. 😊



The Official Hunter College High School Alumnae/i Group

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Faridah Gbadamosi · 7h ·

EDIT: Just a heads up, my posts are on post approval, which means admins have to approve all of my posts. This is also the case for several members of this group and the moderation team actively refuses to engage as to why and is actively deleting posts. This feels odd given that the reason the moderation team changed out previously was for this very reason. I hope to be able to do more prompts like this but honestly not sure given some of the hoops I have to jump through just to engage.

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One of my favorite parts about Hunter was that each class got to come up with their own mascot. Does anyone know when that tradition started? Also what was everyone's mascot?

Class of '07 was Habeas Porpoise

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## **DESIRE FOR A NEUTRAL, TWO-WAY FORUM**

Moderation practices in the FB Group have deviated so far from its original purpose that even active and attentive participants in the group have concluded that it is a forum which in no way is affiliated with the AA. It is considered by some to be a bubble which does not present a comprehensive picture of the situation facing the AA. Furthermore, **by removing only some posts, it appears to be actively advancing a one-sided narrative.**

We recognize that an admin/mod group that is heavily represented by AA officials can be, and perhaps has been, problematic in the past. If members of the current Board are the only moderators, it jeopardizes the real and perceived objectivity of the forum. However, the Board's lack of moderation privileges in the forum runs the risk of being/feeling silenced (not necessarily due to censorship, but because of unchecked cyber-bullying) as recent years have shown.

Likewise, the complete opposite is also far from ideal as it has allowed for a situation that has also abandoned objectivity. **The venue is not neutral; it is a bubble that has enveloped some members without their knowledge.**

We believe there are better solutions that lie somewhere in the middle that allow the community to move forward with improved communications. In a forum where we can conduct neutral and open discussions between alumnae/i and AA officials, trust can be restored and progress can be made in improving the organization. **It is in the interest of the Board, its critics, and alums that all voices can be heard and the forum is merely moderated for tone.** It should be extremely clear to participants when posts need to anonymize those being discussed.

**July 2020 - In the Executive Committee's response to a member complaint, then President writes that the Board will take 'diversity' into consideration when selecting admins/mods. To date, they have not demonstrated commitment to this goal.**

As mentioned earlier, we will request that the Communications Committee take up this issue as part of the AA's overall communications strategy and recommend how the association can improve the experience for our members. **We appreciate your suggestion that the FB Group add Black and Latinx alums as moderators and the Communications committee will discuss this matter further in the Fall.**

**July 2024 - Members express the desire for neutral admins/mods, which as shown in many examples above, Ms. Feist has not been.**



Holiday Haber ★ 783 points

So wait. Let me try to parse this out. Whoever is moderating this page actually has no ties to the AA? No interest at all in defending or criticizing the AA's actions and is a completely neutral party? Does not feel any inclination to censor the membership on behalf of the AA or HCHS? Because that would be great.

12w

4



Faridah Gbadamosi

5m ·

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A general reminder, this is NOT an official channel for the AA. Posting on here does nothing beyond feed into the vacuum that is this group. What is presented here by anyone is their interpretation of whatever limited information they have gotten their hands on. If you want direct information, hit up the AA directly. The AA is not required to respond to anything in this group because it is not an official channel. The moderation in this group has nothing to do with the AA. The comments made are not endorsed by the AA. When a member of the AA attempted to make comments, he was informed by members of this very group who are pushers of the alternative slates that he legally could not make some of those comments, so take that into account when you try to get a response via one of the many posts about the exact same topics. It is all speculation. This is a social club made by an alum who wanted to connect with other alums. This is NOT a governance group.

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## APPENDIX & RESOURCES

What's been included in this correspondence thus far is not exhaustive of all supporting material. Due to the size and length of some references (too large for attaching), additional resources can be supplied upon request.

### Available Upon Request

- [FB Group Rules](#)
- [Deleted Posts](#)
- [Moderation Complaints](#)
- [AlumNotes](#)
- [HCHSAA.org website archives](#)
- [Board Minutes](#)
- [Member Complaint Letter RE: Censorship \(July 2020\)](#)
- [Board Response to Member Complaint RE: Censorship \(July 2020\)](#)

To the people who made it all the way to the end of this post: again, we apologize for its length. Lastly, if we somehow misinterpreted or took out of context any comments/posts in which you were included, please correct us and accept our sincere apologies.

- Team Sunlight