

**Hamilton College Strategic Planning Subcommittee Report, Summer 2008**  
*Athletics*

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In his 1976 book, Sports in America, James Michener identified Hamilton College as a model for collegiate athletic programs, because of the breadth of involvement of the student body, the concern with both excellence in varsity sports and health in the physical education program, and the coherence with academics. Over 30 years later, these goals remain equally important. Our subcommittee believes the College in the main continues to fulfill them, although we also identify problems, some significant, that need to be resolved if the athletic program is to continue to fulfill its educational and athletic goals in the future.

**Breadth of the Athletic Program**

A characteristic feature and the greatest strength of the athletic program at Hamilton is its sheer breadth. It encompasses:

- 28 varsity sports, in which over a third of the student body participates every year;
- 11 club teams;
- Physical Education classes;
- an intramural program, involving well over 500 participants;
- a health and wellness program that offers a wide variety of activity classes, a lecture series, the Hamtrek sprint triathlon, private sessions with personal trainers as well as community services such as CPR classes, blood drives and Weight Watcher meetings;
- wide availability of facilities such as the Blood Fitness Center, the Bristol Pool, the Little Squash Center, the Tompkins Golf Course and the Sage Rink for recreational use.

Clearly, athletics at Hamilton is not simply synonymous with varsity sports; rather, it is an inclusive program that encourages wide participation and enjoys broad support. This is documented by a campus-wide online survey conducted by our subcommittee. While participation in the survey was voluntary, meaning our sample is not random, we received 520 responses, more than most online campus surveys. (For comparison, the survey conducted by the

student representatives on strategic planning subcommittees elicited 132 responses.) One question asked respondents to indicate the extent of their agreement with the statement.

The athletic program at Hamilton (e.g. participating in varsity/club/intramural sports, being a spectator at athletic contests, using fitness facilities, taking activity classes and/or attending wellness lectures) is a positive feature of my experience at the College. Overall, 90.2% either agreed or strongly agreed; broken down among the various constituencies on campus, this figure was 79.2% of faculty, 85.7% of administrators, 92.6% of staff and 92.6% of students. (The full statistics are in Appendix A.) Some sample comments:

- *Wonderful opportunity for students to get outside the classroom and develop their talents in other areas. Athletics and Fitness programs are essential to the well-being of everyone, and adds richness to our community.*
- *I mainly use the fitness center, and though I have limited experience with the Wellness Classes I think they are a great addition to extra curricular activities. They give the rest of us (who aren't varsity athletes or have little experience in team sports) a physical activity.*
- *The wellness program is excellent. The fitness center/gym is a welcoming place to be and appears to appeal to a good cross-section of the Hamilton community. I've also enjoyed being a spectator at Hamilton athletic events and have had many positive interactions with coaches, Jon Hind, Dave Thompson - a great group of people.*
- *As a senior, many of my favorite moments at Hamilton are associated with participating in or attending athletic events. The remarkable network of support given to me by coach and teammates from my first day on campus freshman year has been continually present throughout all of my four years at Hamilton. My college experience certainly would not have been the same without it.*
- *The athletic program is quite strong, and I've enjoyed the easy opportunities to participate in club and intramural sports. Although the PE requirement was a bit of a hassle, I definitely benefited from having to take classes, as I'm now comfortable in the gym.*
- *I understand from many students that being able to continue to participate in competitive athletics was an important factor in their choosing Hamilton and that such participation enhances their lives. It is also clear that the Fitness Center and activity classes--aerobics, etc--are very popular. As a person wholly uninterested in watching or participating in team sports, I find it all a mystery, but I do approve of physical fitness and am very encouraged by the establishment of Dave Thompson's positions and his initiatives.*

- *The Fitness center has instantly made this campus healthier and happier. More people are exercising and Dave Thompson is providing great programs to help the community learn about taking care of themselves.*

The Wellness Program under the direction of Dave Thompson has clearly been successful at appealing to a large number of people, many of who previously did not consider themselves to be athletic. In addition, the intramural and club sports, also directed by Dave Thompson, are thriving. The current departmental model of dividing duties between Athletic Director Jon Hind, Fitness Coordinator Dave Thompson and Physical Education Coordinator Sue Viscomi is working and is a key to the strength of the program as a whole. At other colleges, responsibilities for intramural and club sports and physical education classes are divided among the coaching staff, who tend to give them little attention.

### **NESCAC Affiliation**

Hamilton currently competes in two athletic conferences, the New England Small College Athletic Conference, or the NESCAC, and the Liberty League. The NESCAC began in 1971, with Hamilton a founding member, but at its inception it was a loosely affiliated conference. In 2000, the NCAA mandated that conferences could no longer have loose affiliations if they wished to compete in NCAA tournaments. At that point, Hamilton chose not to be affiliated to NESCAC in seven sports (women's and men's lacrosse, women's and men's soccer, women's and men's basketball, and field hockey) and began to play them in the UCAA, which has since been renamed the Liberty League. Hamilton is the only NESCAC School that competes for championships in a second conference.

The subcommittee met with various members of the community to discuss the pros and cons of Hamilton's dual affiliation. After completing our research, the subcommittee feels that there is overwhelming support for Hamilton to compete in a full NESCAC schedule for all 28 varsity sports teams. We report more specifically on the opinions and perspectives we received below.

One of the questions on the student representatives' survey asked whether Hamilton should move to a full NESCAC schedule. Of the 132 respondents, 71 said yes, 41 said no, and 20 had no opinion. Unlike the subcommittee's own survey, this one was not focused solely on athletics, and therefore some of the respondents may not have fully understood Hamilton current dual affiliation situation. At our meeting with the Student Athletic Advisory Council (SAAC), most students expressed support for going to a full NESCAC schedule. Although aware of the cost of extra travel time, they were eager to compete in the more prestigious league. A men's

basketball player noted that the one home game they played against a NESCAC school drew significantly more spectators than their Liberty League games. Another representative suggested that having all sports compete in the same league would encourage school rivalries, which would in turn increase school spirit. In response to a question by Steve Stetson, in a show of hands, none of the reps was attracted to Hamilton by its membership in the Liberty League, whereas almost all were drawn by its NESCAC affiliation.

This was confirmed in the subcommittee's meeting with Dean of Admission and Financial Aid Monica Inzer. She reported that a significant number of students, particularly from New England, are attracted to Hamilton because of our NESCAC affiliation, whether or not they plan on participating in intercollegiate athletics. She explained that for prospective students, the NESCAC is more than an athletic conference. The NESCAC schools (Amherst, Bates, Bowdoin, Colby, Connecticut, Middlebury, Trinity, Tufts, Wesleyan and Williams) form a group that prospective students typically consider when also considering Hamilton. From top to bottom, NESCAC is one of the most academically elite groupings of colleges in the country and our association with it is important to the Admission Office.

In response to the concern some faculty have raised that moving to full affiliation might mean a lowering of admission standards, Dean Inzer explained that Hamilton already applies the same rigorous set of rules implemented by NESCAC to the seven teams that are affiliated with the Liberty League. The NESCAC standards are much more stringent than those stipulated by the Liberty League. All NESCAC schools are required to share data on every student admitted, not just the recruited athletes. Moreover, the NESCAC Admission Deans and Presidents meet on a regular basis, and their conversations are not exclusive to athletics; Hamilton has to report and defend every admission decision it makes at these conference meetings. From an admission perspective, adding seven teams to NESCAC schedules will not alter how applications are reviewed.

There are potential positive implications if Hamilton becomes a full member of the NESCAC. While it is true that many prospective students do not fully understand that Hamilton has dual conference affiliation and already associate us with the NESCAC, cementing our relationship with that league can only help us from an admissions standpoint. Anything we can do as a college to highlight our NESCAC affiliation will enhance Hamilton's reputation among prospective students as one of the nation's premiere liberal arts colleges. If we want our students to be motivated by challenge, then we as an institution should seek to become fully affiliated with the most academically and athletically competitive conference in Division III.

Understanding that changing our affiliation status may have implications for alumni satisfaction and/or fundraising, the subcommittee met with Vice President for Communications and Development Dick Tantillo. Tantillo reported that approximately 9,280 of our 17,000 Alums are connected to a sport; in general, alumni who played a varsity sport tend to give at a higher rate than other alumni. Aside from booster fundraising, approximately \$250,000 is raised per year for athletics, both for specific sports and the general athletic fund. In addition, about \$15 million has been raised over the past several years for new athletic facilities. From this perspective, the more we can do to advance the engagement of our athletes, the better. Tantillo believes that dropping our NESCAC affiliation and becoming a full Liberty League school would have negative implications for fundraising. On the other hand, becoming a full NESCAC school presents its own fundraising challenges. More money would be needed to cover additional travel costs (food, lodging and transportation), to increase the number of full-time personnel and to improve our facilities to a level comparable to those at other NESCAC institutions. Tantillo noted that it is difficult to raise money for several objectives at once.

The subcommittee also met with the coaching staff to discuss our conference affiliations. Several coaches expressed the concern that the faculty may not be supportive of the move to full NESCAC affiliation because it might increase missed class time. (We discuss the travel time implications in greater detail in the section on the integration of athletics and academics.) However, as Coach Stetson pointed out, one of the principal goals of the NESCAC is to reduce conflicts between academics and athletics. Part of the NESCAC mission statement reads:

*The Conference is committed to establishing common boundaries to keep athletics strong but in proportion to the overall academic mission of the member institutions.*

*In pursuit of this mission, the Presidents of each NESCAC institution control intercollegiate athletic policy. The day-to-day operation of the athletic program is conducted by the Director of Athletics. Students on all intercollegiate teams are to be representative of the overall student body and are admitted with the expectation of their full participation in the life of the college. In all sports, conference members give primary emphasis to in-season competition where programs have fixed starting and ending dates and where the number of contests is limited. The Conference and each member will manage competition and post-season play in a manner that minimizes conflicts with class schedules and examinations.*

Most coaches feel that being a full NESCAC school would be a recruiting advantage, as it would attract a stronger pool of prospective student-athletes. Playing in a more competitive league would also encourage current players to intensify their push for excellence. Finally, coaches in non-NESCAC sports said that given that they have to abide by the stricter NESCAC recruiting guidelines, they might as well play the NESCAC schedule.

The subcommittee also discussed the question of full NESCAC affiliation with Athletic Director Jon Hind and Associate Athletic Director and Senior Women's Administrator Sue Viscomi. Both emphasized that the decision is not Hamilton's alone to make. Although Hamilton is a founding member of the league, its dual affiliation with the Liberty League and its geographical distance from the other NESCAC schools have combined to give Hamilton outlier status within NESCAC. To other NESCAC Presidents and Athletic Directors, Hamilton's full participation creates problems with scheduling and increased travel costs and time. However, recently the NESCAC Presidents agreed to support the move, and asked that the Athletic Directors look for ways to address the problems it would incur.

## **Facilities**

Whether or not Hamilton is accepted as a full member in NESCAC, many of our athletic facilities are in dire need of improvement. The last time the college increased the indoor athletic space (with the exception of the Little Squash Center in 2006 and the Bristol Pool in 1988) was in 1978; the last time there were renovations or improvements to these spaces was in 1984. Not only are we well behind other NESCAC schools, we are behind other Liberty League schools.

First, we mention the best Hamilton has to offer. The Blood Fitness and Dance Center, including the Bruce Climbing Wall, is a state-of-the-art facility that probably has no equal in the northeast at this time. It serves as a valuable recruiting tool, according to the student representatives' survey, in which students were asked whether our athletic facilities had an effect on their decision to come to Hamilton. We quote some responses below.

- *The old fitness center was one of the largest negatives of the school ... now we have the most beautiful fitness center ever!*
- *I never did any athletic activities before I came to Hamilton. The facilities, however, are so good that they inspired me to begin going to the gym.*
- *I don't do sports; but I liked that the gym facility was new and up to date so I could work out.*

The only other athletic facilities specifically mentioned in a positive light by students in the survey were the Bristol Pool and the Little Squash Center. Many other facilities have serious deficiencies.

- 1) Margaret Bundy Scott Field House: Intercollegiate and intramural sports are continually fighting one another for time and space in our antiquated field house. It is entirely normal to have men's or women's basketball practice, along with men's and women's track practice, along with either baseball or softball practice in the batting cage, all going on at the same time. There is also foot traffic coming and going during most practice times. Intramural and club sports are often pushed to very late time slots. It is worth noting that all of the other schools in NESCAC have a basketball/volleyball facility, and a separate indoor track/tennis/basketball facility. In addition, the floor of this facility is extremely hard. All athletes who play or train in the field house, as well the athletic trainers, will attest to the severity of this hazard. The men's and women's basketball teams now play on a wooden surface, but other teams are not so fortunate. It is inexcusable to have a facility that actually contributes to athletic injury.
- 2) Softball and Baseball Fields: What normally would be a routine fly ball for an out in most baseball facilities is a routine homerun at Hamilton's home baseball field. The drainage ditch lining the baseball field has rocks in it, and is in the field of play. Neither field has a warning track, which would increase safety for the players and avoid potential lawsuits. In fact, the baseball team routinely practices in Rome to avoid playing on our surface.
- 3) Crew: Crew team members state they have lost participants due to a lack of a decent indoor space for training.
- 4) Astroturf Field: The surface is overdue for replacement. In light of the recent national title won by the women's lacrosse team, it is worth properly maintaining this field. In the coming years, it is conceivable that a home playoff berth could be in jeopardy due to sub-par facilities, which would be an embarrassment for the college.
- 5) Alumni Gym: The walls of Alumni Gym are in a state of total disrepair. This space is an embarrassment to the college. The office space in this area has no climate control.
- 6) Locker Rooms: The entire locker room situation is deficient both in terms of quantity and quality. There are no locker rooms in the field house. Some of the locker rooms are too small to accommodate an entire team. In some cases, men and women share a bathroom between two locker rooms, compromising privacy.

- 7) Steuben Field: Like the baseball, softball and Astro turf fields, the football field is more like a high school field. The press box dates from the 1960's.
- 8) Outdoor Facilities for Spectators: Seating for spectators is very limited at Love Field-Pritchard Track, the Astro turf Field and the Gray Tennis Courts. It is non-existent at the Royce Baseball Field and the Ferguson Softball Field. There are no outdoor restroom facilities. The parking space is inadequate.

### **Integration of Academics and Athletics**

Hamilton College is probably not unique in experiencing persistent tension between the academic and athletic arenas. However, the subcommittee believes that Hamilton is well-positioned to become a leader in the integration of academics and athletics. Athletic Director Jon Hind strongly believes that the purpose of the athletics program is to contribute to the educational mission of the college and is willing to work hard towards achieving a cooperative rather than an adversarial relationship with the academic faculty.

We believe that participation in athletics, especially but not exclusively at the varsity level, has valuable educational benefits. It requires the development of both mental and physical skills in the pursuit excellence. To attain their potential, athletes learn to exercise self-discipline, to sustain their commitment to a long-term goal through daily training, to cope with setbacks, to work cooperatively with others, and to perform at their peak in a public setting. Varsity sports, along with the performing arts, are one of the few areas in which students can be the highest achievers in our community. Spectators at athletic events witness the value of these skills and participate in a sense of shared community. Physical education classes, wellness programs, and other aspects of the athletic program allow all members of the community to develop these skills on a more personal scale, as well as encourage habits that can lead to longer and healthier lives for our students and employees.

Of the eleven NESCAC schools, Hamilton is one of four that have a Physical Education requirement. It is surprising that this is one of the few requirements that survived the move to an open curriculum. While our survey generated some minor complaints from students regarding this requirement (in particular, that participation club and intramural sports yields no credit), we detected no impetus for eliminating it. Coaches appreciate that the existence of the program gives them faculty status – a status they wish to retain.

There is concern among both professors and varsity athletes at Hamilton College, as well as other NESCAC athletic directors, that moving to a full NESCAC schedule would increase missed class time. One solution is to separate the conference into eastern and western divisions,



or to schedule most games on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. As pointed out by A.D. Jon Hind, the travel time implications would be significant, but not exorbitant.

- Within the Liberty League, Hamilton's average travel distance is 127 miles; the school with the longest average travel distance in the league is Vassar, at 230 miles.
- Within NESCAC, Hamilton's average travel distance is 275 miles. If Hamilton is excluded, the school with the longest travel distance in NESCAC is Middlebury, with an average travel distance of 212 miles.
- Within the Ivy League, Cornell has the longest average travel distance of 280 miles; within the Patriot League, Holy Cross has the longest average travel distance of 302 miles.

In addition to travel to away contests, many professors complain that student-athletes choose to avoid late afternoon classes and labs because they begin to get ready for practice before 4:00 p.m. Conversely, coaches complain that professors are continually asking students to attend lectures or study sessions that cut into practice time. While not all conflicts can be resolved, we feel that it is important that the academic and athletic faculty continue to work to keep lines of communication as open as possible, and avoid putting students in the middle.

The subcommittee has a number of suggestions that could increase integration of academics and athletics on campus.

- 1) There is a growing acceptance of sports as an academic subject, from sociological, mathematical, psychological and philosophical perspectives. The recently developed sophomore-level course Sociology of Sport has proved very popular; an interdisciplinary course, housed within the College Courses rubric, would probably be equally popular.
- 2) The college should continue to bring in prominent speakers on sports-related topics. Recent lectures by NCAA President Myles Brand and commentator Frank Deford were successful and widely attended.
- 3) Athletic faculty should be encouraged to participate in the regular Think Tank series to discuss sports topics of current interest (for example, politics and the Olympics).
- 4) In 2001, the Committee on Athletics sponsored a campus-wide forum on the role of athletics; such forums should be offered more regularly. Public debates or panel discussions on more specific topics should also be offered.
- 5) To increase informal communication between academic and athletic faculty, there should be an "Ask a Professor/Coach to Lunch" fund. On a more formal level, at least once or twice a year, there should be an "Ask Jon Hind" segment at faculty meetings.

- 6) The role of team advisors to varsity teams needs to be redefined and strengthened. Currently, the Student Athletic Advisory Council (SAAC) is studying ways to do this. In our meeting with SAAC representatives, several student-athletes mentioned how important it is to them to see faculty attending their home (even some away) contests. This theme was also apparent in the student comments on this year's teaching award recipients.
- 7) Use the Raffle Dinner for senior athletes as a site for a lecture, or at least brief remarks of intellectual significance so that student athletes and other attendees might have a final chance to place their experience as athletes in a broader context. Also, invite a broader selection of faculty, not just team advisers and those associated with the Athletic Program. As with the annual SAAC Scholar-Athlete Luncheon, athletes should invite a favorite professor.

### **Athletics and Student Culture**

In a survey of admitted students conducted by the Admissions Office, the one adjective students most commonly associated with Hamilton College was "isolated" (66% of 2006 admits; 64% of 2004 admits). Not surprisingly, this survey also identified the quality of Hamilton extra-curricular offerings as being a very important factor in admitted students' decision to accept to come to Hamilton; moreover, this is an area where Hamilton is currently perceived to do better than other schools. The very broad athletic program plays an enormous role in this by providing a valuable recreational outlet for both varsity and non-varsity athletes. According to the student representatives' survey, although students may not base their decision to come solely on athletics, it is one of the many factors that come into play.

- *...having sports, esp. intramural is REALLY important to kids who were athletic in high school but [are] not über competitive.*
- *...once I got here I have found that the athletic facilities have greatly affected my life here. I love the new fitness center and we have great options to become active.*
- *I was very encouraged by the fact that intramural sports were important and widely played at Hamilton; and having available field space is necessary for that kind of involvement.*
- *I loved the Blood Fitness Center! I also really wanted to get involved in club and IM sports and I most certainly have. I think expanding the field house or building another gym for recreational purposes would be great because then people could play sports or IM sports at all hours of the day instead of just when varsity is done!*

The team bonding provided by varsity and club teams can give individual students a sense of belonging to a group, which, in turn, can increase their satisfaction with their college experience and could lead to a higher student retention rate. The Athletics and Academic Performance Summary Report prepared by the Office of Institutional Research shows that in the 1997-1998 cohorts, retention rates are significantly higher for athletes than non-athletes (over 10% higher in the case of high-profile sport recruited male athletes).

However, team bonding can also lead to the formation of specific and closed cliques. This may be due to the fact that sports teams are closely identified with fraternities and sororities, with many societies comprised largely of athletes from a single team. There is also the perception that Hamilton athletes, in accordance with the perception at most other colleges, drink more than non-athletes. We do not have the statistics to refute or confirm this. Currently this is a problem of image, regardless of what the truth is. When an individual student that belongs to a particular team gets into social trouble, rightly or wrongly, the image gets attached to the whole team. In order to attempt to change this image there needs to be a different mode of education about drinking at Hamilton.

Another common perception is that certain teams foster a non-academic culture. The second question on the subcommittee's campus-wide survey asked respondents to characterize the current relationship between academics and athletics at Hamilton. Overall, 33% characterized the relationship as "mutually reinforcing", 43% thought athletics and academics were "independent – neither reinforcing nor undermining", 6.5% thought "athletics undermines academics", 9% had no opinion and 8.3% checked "other". When broken down by constituency, significant differences emerge. While 48% of varsity athletes believe that the two are mutually reinforcing, only 20% of non-varsity athletes share this opinion, which interestingly is less than the 29% of faculty who have this view. At the other end of the spectrum, 11.1% of faculty believe that athletics undermines academics, while only 6.5% students believe this; however, 11.8% of students of color and 14.3% of first generation college students think this. We include some more detailed responses below.

- *My sense is that the relationship varies by sport, by coach and by participant. For the most part, I think the relationship is healthy, with sports taking an important and needed place in some of our students' lives. But there will inevitably be competition over a player's time and attention, and while we--faculty and coaches--can assist with planning, this is something students have to work out.*

- *It's a mix. Most sports are wonderful opportunities but an important, high profile, few sometimes bring the whole system into disrepute.*
- *Some teachers are not understanding of the commitment varsity sports requires and it creates a tough situation for the player in which the player has to decide who he/she can appease: the professor or the coach. There needs to be more communication between coaches and professors because they both expect so much from student-athletes and it is impossible to do everything for everyone.*
- *I have mixed feelings. For some very good students, especially women, I have to say, they seem to be mutually reinforcing. Often the most organized women students are also athletes. Unfortunately in the case of weaker students, I think athletics can bring their grades down.*
- *Some professors are not supportive of athletics and others are great. Athletics are definitely supportive/aware of academics.*
- *I think it totally depends on the sport... some are much more reinforcing than others. Some not at all.*

The actual academic performance of athletes, as reported in the Athletes and Academic Performance Summary Report, is more nuanced than most might think. Male athletes, particularly in the high profile sports of football, basketball and hockey, have lower class percentile ranking and tend to be clustered in the bottom third of the class. However, the problem is worse among walk-ons than among those recruited by the coaching staff. Low profile male athletes perform academically (using these measures) quite similarly to non-athletes; this is also the case among all female athletes, where walk-ons actually perform better than female non-athletes. Another measure used in this study was the awarding of graduation honors; by this measure, even high profile male athletes performed better than expected, and in some cases better than male students at large. Worth emphasizing is that female athletes, particularly walk-ons, accumulated graduation honors at a significantly rate higher than any other group. We reproduce some of the tables from this report in Appendix B.

The subcommittee investigated the extent to which the athletic program contributes to diversity at the college. The Office of Institutional Research provided us with the Data Report for the 2005-06 cohort prepared for the College Sports Project. This project compares data across 72 institutions similar to Hamilton (including all other NESCAC schools). Within this group, Hamilton fares well regarding racial/ethnic composition. At Hamilton, 70% of both athletes and non-athletes are categorized as "White, non-Hispanic"; among all CSP schools, 70% of non-athletes but 78% of athletes fall under this classification. More detailed information is provided in

the Hamilton-specific Athletes and Academic Performance Summary Report, based on the 1997-1998 cohorts. In terms of underrepresented groups (Blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans), the highest representation was among male athletes, at just over 8%. For comparison, among male non-athletes this figure is just over 6%; among female students at Hamilton, these numbers are approximately reversed. Tracking other types of diversity, such as socioeconomic status or political viewpoint, is more difficult, and no doubt varies widely among the different teams.

Several comments made on the student representatives' survey suggest that athletics at Hamilton promotes a strong school spirit and sense of cohesion.

- *I am not an athlete but like the facilities because they seemed to promote a strong school spirit. School spirit is something I found when coming here; could be something the college could try to foster through better clothing apparel; a good mascot; and other events around big men's and women's sports games. In response to the question below; moving to a full NESCAC schedule is a necessary thing for Hamilton. This would foster rivalries and a sense of school spirit.*

Representatives on SAAC echoed the sentiment that moving to full NESCAC membership will increase school spirit by creating school rivalries across multiple sports. Similar attitudes were expressed in the subcommittee's survey.

- *i think that it is a way to unify the student body to some point, because otherwise we are just 1800 kids who happen to be taking classes together. if athletics were to improve slightly (i.e. football, hockey, baseball, lacrosse even) then i think students would take more pride in being a hamilton student, and come support athletics more often as well*

The sense of pride and excitement both within the Hamilton community and surrounding local communities fostered by the women's lacrosse NCAA Division III national championship title this year provides ample evidence of this effect.

Varsity athletes tend to feel that attendance is low at athletic contests across all sports; women's teams feel especially neglected in this respect. This may be because of the discouraging weather for a large portion of the year. SAAC representatives suggested that many student-athletes do not attend contests outside their own sport, and in order to bump up attendance students must support each other within the student athletic community first. Another suggestion was to organize one big sports weekend a semester, with multiple sports contests occurring at once.

With regard to gender equity, Hamilton currently is average among NESCAC schools, in having about a third of its head coaches female and two-thirds male. However, Hamilton actually does considerably better in terms of the percentage of women's teams coached by men, as

Hamilton has only 29% coached by men compared to an average of 45% at NESCAC schools. Maintaining the relatively large representation of women in the coaching staff is a priority of both Jon Hind and Sue Viscomi. In addition, the department is working to equalize the booster funds between men's and women's sports teams. Currently, the College is in the process of ordering banners that the women's teams have earned.

In the results from the Admitted Student Questionnaire conducted by the Admissions Office in 2006, the quality of social life at Hamilton ranked lower than at all other schools considered by applicants. The subcommittee believes that the athletic program can contribute to reversing that trend by helping to build a strong and cohesive school culture that values competitiveness, sportsmanship, and a drive to excel.

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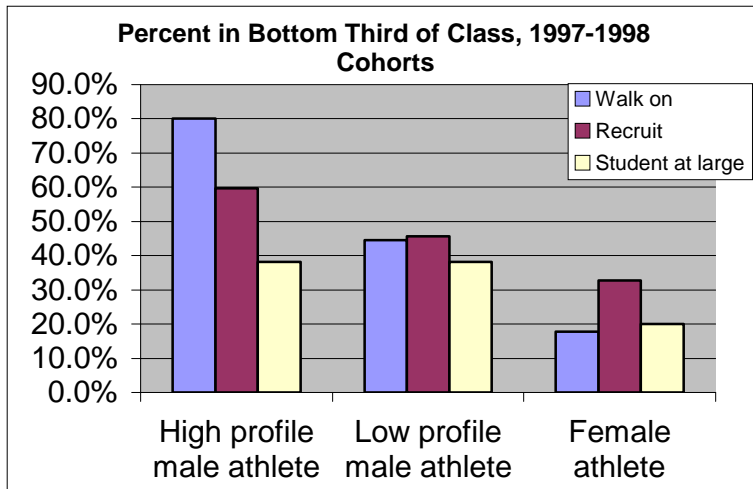
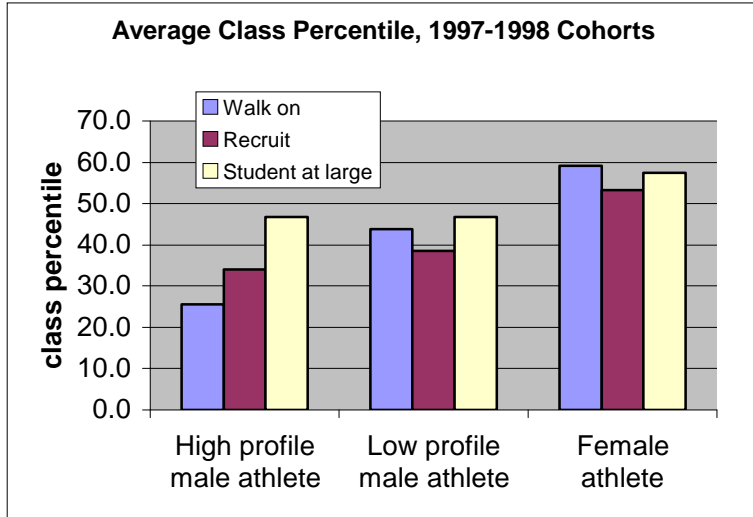
*Selected Results from 2006 Admitted Student Questionnaire*, Admissions Office.

## Appendix A: Subcommittee on Athletics Survey Results

RELATIONSHIP	Reinforcing	Independent	Undermining	No opinion	Other	Total
<b>Total</b>	172	224	34	47	43	<b>520</b>
	33.1%	43.1%	6.5%	9.0%	8.3%	100.0%
<b>Faculty</b>	21	26	8	3	14	<b>72</b>
	29.2%	36.1%	11.1%	4.2%	19.4%	100.0%
<b>Coaches</b>	7	5	0	1	2	<b>15</b>
	46.7%	33.3%	0.0%	6.7%	13.3%	100.0%
<b>Admin.</b>	13	20	2	16	5	<b>56</b>
	23.2%	35.7%	3.6%	28.6%	8.9%	100.0%
<b>Staff</b>	8	5	1	9	4	<b>27</b>
	29.6%	18.5%	3.7%	33.3%	14.8%	100.0%
<b>All Students</b>	124	170	23	18	18	<b>353</b>
	35.1%	48.2%	6.5%	5.1%	5.1%	100.0%
<b>Varsity Athletes</b>	91	67	11	4	16	<b>189</b>
	48.1%	35.4%	5.8%	2.1%	8.5%	100.0%
<b>Non-Varsity</b>	33	101	12	13	2	<b>161</b>
	20.5%	62.7%	7.5%	8.1%	1.2%	100.0%
<b>Club/non-varsity</b>	12	33	4	0	0	<b>49</b>
	24.5%	67.3%	8.2%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Dean's List</b>	43	93	10	9	9	<b>164</b>
	26.2%	56.7%	6.1%	5.5%	5.5%	100.0%
<b>Students of Color</b>	2	12	2	0	1	<b>17</b>
	11.8%	70.6%	11.8%	0.0%	5.9%	100.0%
<b>First. Gen.</b>	5	15	4	1	3	<b>28</b>
	17.9%	53.6%	14.3%	3.6%	10.7%	100.0%

ATHLETICS POSITIVE	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Str. Disagree	Total
<b>Total</b>	321	148	42	6	3	<b>520</b>
	61.7%	28.5%	8.1%	1.2%	0.6%	100.0%
<b>Faculty</b>	38	19	10	2	3	<b>72</b>
	52.8%	26.4%	13.9%	2.8%	4.2%	100.0%
<b>Coaches</b>	14	1	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
	93.3%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Admin.</b>	29	19	7	1	0	<b>56</b>
	51.8%	33.9%	12.5%	1.8%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Staff</b>	15	10	2	0	0	<b>27</b>
	55.6%	37.0%	7.4%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>All Students</b>	228	99	23	3	0	<b>353</b>
	64.6%	28.0%	6.5%	0.8%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Varsity Athletes</b>	148	35	6	0	0	<b>189</b>
	78.3%	18.5%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Non-Varsity</b>	77	64	17	3	0	<b>161</b>
	47.8%	39.8%	10.6%	1.9%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Club/non-varsity</b>	30	15	3	1	0	<b>49</b>
	61.2%	30.6%	6.1%	2.0%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Dean's List</b>	101	48	13	2	0	<b>164</b>
	61.6%	29.3%	7.9%	1.2%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Students of Color</b>	8	8	1	0	0	<b>17</b>
	47.1%	47.1%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>First. Gen.</b>	20	5	2	1	0	<b>28</b>
	71.4%	17.9%	7.1%	3.6%	0.0%	100.0%

Appendix B: Selected Figures from *Athletes and Academic Summary Report*, based on the 1997-1998 cohorts





**Percent Receiving Graduation Honors, 1997-1998 Cohorts**

