

ENQUIRY

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Free thought and discourse

- ① *Dear Capital Campaign: Don't Forget the Academics*
- ② *Million Mask March*
- ③ *Guns and Mental Health*

Dear Capital Campaign: Don't Forget the Academics

By **PHIL PARKES**
STAFF WRITER

When Henry Allen, a journalist and a Hamilton alum came to campus last week, he told us that the art of writing is dying. Taking a look around at some of the academic trends on the Hill, I could not help but wonder whether Hamilton College, a school with a quill for a weather vane, might be turning a blind eye.

Learning to communicate and think well are two of the most important tasks we ought to take up while at Hamilton. For well over a hundred years, Hamilton focused on teaching students precisely that. "Pure liberal arts," blared the nine-page *Life Magazine* feature on Hamilton College in April, 1953, showcasing Hamilton's broad academic focus and the typical "small-class size" we still have today.

One cannot make any general claims about Hamilton students' writing because there is absolutely nothing general about the way they learned to write.

Times and the curriculum have changed, in some ways for the better. But like it or not, it was the unusually intense academic experience of Hamilton that helped students make a name for their school, not the other way around.

Now President Stewart, the first in her family to go to college, is putting the finishing touches on her own legacy of opportunity. The most recent capital campaign pledges fully 90% of its returns to greater accessibility and outcomes, and the last 10% to education. The precise numbers are 70% to financial aid, 20% to the Career Center, and 10% to communication, to be precise.

The proposal promises to deliver on what probably seem like the most important moments of an education: the beginning and the end. Financial aid increases the number of people who can afford to attend Hamilton. The Career Center helps students find opportunities during college and, hopefully, a post-graduate opportunity. Most people will agree that these things tie the Hamilton

college experience into a nice package, and it might very well be the case that they do, in fact, need more funding.

Regardless, the campaign is a reminder that we cannot forget what is happening in between.

Allen shed some light on the weaknesses in what is supposed to be our strongest skill. The truth is that while we know Hamilton's curriculum does a good job of teaching students to write, Allen's claims give reason to doubt that it does so on a nationally-leading level.

Allen said he and his classmates wrote roughly twice the number of papers that a writing-intensive class requires today, and that was before Hamilton had ever named itself the "writing" NESCAFÉ.

Meanwhile, standardized composition courses no longer exist, and prospective students everywhere are wondering why a "national leader in teaching students to write" no longer has an English major. We have

continued on back page

Million Mask March

By **AMY ELINSKI**
STAFF WRITER

"Remember, remember the fifth of November," read nearly every post on my Facebook feed on November fifth. As millions celebrated Guy Fawkes Day on social media, the internet hacktivist group Anonymous took to the streets in their fourth annual Million Mask March.


The group, which uses the Guy Fawkes mask as its symbol, gathered in over 600 cities around the world. Protestors carried signs and shouted chants about an incoherent hodgepodge of issues. They called for an end to corruption, police brutality, and "capitalism"—whatever they understand that to mean.


The largest protest took place in London, where the protestors gathered in Trafalgar Square. The crowd was initially contained within the square, the pre-approved area for the protest, but protestors quickly began to push outward. Upwards of 2,000 London police officers attempted to keep the crowd under control, remembering the outbreaks of violence during the 2014 march.


Protestors launched fireworks at mounted police officers, wounding four officers and six police horses. When one protestor, 20-year-old Daisy Greenaway, asked her


This Week's News in 140 Characters


EDITORIAL REPORT


- 
Hayden Barnes @rivertownlawyer · Nov 6
 At one point in time college students would have protested attempts by administration to tell them what to wear. Now they demand it.


↩
↻ 37
♥ 31
⋮
[View conversation](#)
- 
Jonathan Chait @jonathanchait · Nov 5
 October: HITLER
 November: PYRAMIDS
 --Message strategy whiteboard in Carson Campaign HQ


↩
↻ 183
♥ 220
⋮
- 
Gary Legum @GaryLegum · Nov 3
 Greetings from Bridgeport, CT. where the voters have elected as mayor a convicted felon by the name of Joe Ganim.

↩
↻ 1
♥ 1
⋮
- 
David Burge @iowahawkblog · Nov 3
 Title IX:
 1. College kids having sex without official permission slips=rape.
 2. HS girls can be compelled to shower with people w/ penises.

↩
↻ 653
♥ 452
⋮
- 
Daniel Lin @DLin71 · Nov 6
 Someone told me to "give it the old college try," so I crumbled into an incoherent mess when I heard an opinion that differed from mine

↩
↻ 2.2K
♥ 2.6K
⋮
- 
TheModernMan @AceofSpadesHQ · Nov 6
 can I see the info Hillary shared?
 -- no it's too secret for that.
 will you punish her for sharing it?
 -- no it's not secret ENOUGH for that

↩
↻ 240
♥ 164
⋮
- 
Rory Cooper @rorycooper · Nov 4
 Under President Obama, Democrats have lost 900+ state legislature seats, 12 governors, 69 House seats, 13 Senate seats. That's some legacy.

↩
↻ 3.9K
♥ 3K
⋮
- 
Sean Davis @seanmdav · 3h
 If you think universities are a hotbed of racism and rape culture, why are you sending your kids there and forcing gov't. to subsidize it?

↩
↻ 31
♥ 34
⋮

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MILLION MASK MARCH *cont.*

fellow protestors to not harm the animals, her requests were met with indignation as the individuals claimed that horses could not feel.

Protestors lit a police car on fire, posing to take pictures with it as it was in flames. Many physically assaulted police officers. Fifty people were arrested before the end of the night.

Anonymous claims, when convenient, to be anti-authority, yet they use the same tactics as authoritarian governments.

Washington, D.C. saw another particularly aggressive crowd, where protestors shattered the doors at the Environmental Protection Agency.

continued on back page

Jeb?

By **ALEX KLOSNER**
STAFF WRITER

For the past few months, former Florida Governor Jeb Bush has struggled with low poll numbers and dwindling support in the Republican presidential primary. His poor performance at the recent CNBC debate put his campaign on life support.

While Donald Trump and Ben Carson continue to lead the field, a recent Quinnipiac University poll showed Jeb Bush plummeting to a mere 4 percent support among Republicans. To add insult to injury, only 25 percent hold a positive view of Bush, while 58 percent have a negative view.

Top Bush donors likely suffered

continued on back page

to work harder if we're going to live up to our reputation.

The difficult but important task before us is to advance Hamilton's ability to teach writing without backtracking on other worthy causes. In light of the capital campaign, we should acknowledge that greater accessibility and career services are a good thing. Financial aid diversifies the student body in a variety of ways that benefit everyone on campus. Ideally, one's ability to afford school should not affect whether or not they attend. And the Career Center provides amazing support at all levels of the Hamilton experience.

But we need to make sure we are balancing these goals with a high quality of the education, given the money available. We may be off kilter.

But there is greater reason to believe the problem goes deeper than a single capital campaign, or even a series of capital campaigns disproportionately focused on accessibility or career services. The 2010 bicentennial initiative, for example, allocated the largest portion of money to accessibility, but more than half to other initiatives.

In other words, we need not blame accessibility or career services for the lack of writing focus. Rather, it probably stems from the lack of standardization across departments inherent in the open curriculum. Lab reports are intense, and they cultivate valuable writing skills, but one cannot possibly equate them to tried and true English, history, or philosophy papers, and there is nothing to prevent students from avoiding those altogether.

We can debate the merit of each department's courses, but the open curriculum ultimately leads to the same logical absurdity every time: one cannot make any general claims about Hamilton students' writing because there is absolutely nothing general about the way they learned to write.

Students benefit when they learn to make their own decisions. But as the so-called leader in teaching students to write, shouldn't Hamilton be the last school in the country to leave it up to students to figure it out for themselves? I think we can do better, but not with our present curriculum.

A. ELINSKI *cont.*

What, after all this violence, had been the point? Was there one? So many groups were there to represent their own interests that it was impossible to define a single goal.

Anonymous has struggled to articulate its purpose since its founding. Originally founded to carry out pranks, the group quickly diverged onto path of internet

hacktivism, chasing a nebulous and perverted sense of "justice" rather than a set goal.

Anonymous lacks a distinctive structure, and has no leaders to direct its actions. It has split into factions that often work in complete opposition to one another. One encounters everything from socialists to libertarians to anarchists, those who oppose police and those who support a police state. While in general the group has a propensity for anarchy, as is demonstrated by its lack of leadership and structure, the group encompasses a wide variety of ideologies.

This lack of clear message poses a problem for those involved. It is impossible to know what the group stands for. Beyond the lack of message, the group often resorts to problematic methods for conducting attacks and bringing judgement. While they claim that they want to fight back at austerity and harsh policing, their actions are their own way of policing the world.

Those who do not conform to their shifting and self-contradictory ideologies are exposed and shamed. Those who do not comply with their desires are shut down.

Anonymous claims, when convenient, to be anti-authority, yet they use the same tactics as authoritarian governments. And then they hide their faces, afraid to accept responsibility for what they do.

Some of the groups they have targeted, North Korea for example, completely deserve the punishment they received from anonymous. But with their lack of a coherent objective, as the Million Mask March showed, it's hard to know who will draw their ire next.

With *Anonymous*, it is important to remember what they have set out to get since the beginning, and what can only summarize much of what they have sought after since: their own whims and wishes—"lulz."

A. KLOSNER *cont.*

massive heart attacks after witnessing his mundane and mediocre performance at the debate. His attempt to criticize Marco Rubio for missing votes in the Senate backfired. Bush pointed out that Rubio has missed 34 percent of Senate votes and "should be showing up to work."

Rubio questioned why Bush suddenly started criticizing him. "The only reason you are doing it now," Rubio said, "is because we're running for the same position and someone has convinced you that attacking me is going to help you." For comparison, President Obama missed 64 percent of votes in 2008 while running for president.

Jeb's tendency to entertain even the most ridiculous questions from the media does not sit well with the Republican base

CNBC moderator Carl Quintanilla asked the candidates if the federal government should treat fantasy sports as gambling and begin regulating the industry. Bush responded that the government should regulate virtual games such as fantasy football and equated it to "day trading without any regulation at all."

Chris Christie gave a much different response: "we have \$19 trillion in debt, we have people out of work, we have ISIS and Al Qaeda attacking us, and we're talking about fantasy football?" The CNBC debate was supposed to center around crucial economic issues. Jeb's tendency to entertain even the most ridiculous questions from the media does not sit well with the Republican base.

Despite a series of poor debate performances and plummeting poll numbers, Bush still has several key advantages over his opponents. Most other GOP candidates can only dream of attaining Bush's campaign infrastructure and vast network of donors. According to F.E.C. filings, he has raised substantially more money than any other candidate. Bush's campaign and groups supporting him

have reported over \$120 million in campaign contributions.

Comparatively, Hillary Clinton and her supporters have raised a total of \$67.8 million. Of the GOP candidates, Ted Cruz comes in second place with donors filing \$52.7 million in campaign contributions.

Bush also boasts a shining resume as governor of Florida. During his tenure, he vetoed \$2 billion in new spending, balanced the state budget, and saved Florida taxpayers \$19 billion through several tax cuts. The Florida economy grew an average of 4.4 percent every year and added 1.3 million new jobs. No other candidate, Republican or Democrat, can boast such a strong track record of accomplishments.

Bush's lack of charisma and second-rate debate performances are not living up to his abundance of campaign resources and political capital. In order to defeat Hillary Clinton next November, Republicans must not only nominate an intelligent, articulate candidate with a record of success, but a charismatic leader.

To his credit, Donald Trump's most accurate assertion this campaign season is that "Jeb is a very low energy person." To resurrect his campaign and revive momentum Bush must perform exceptionally well at the next debate and inject new energy into his campaign.

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Mike Adamo
Editor in Chief

Michael Levy
Layout and Design

STAFF WRITERS

Alex Klosner	Amy Elinski
Will Swett	Phil Parkes
Ryan Glenn	Will Utzschneider
Elizabeth Barry	Sam Benevelli

The opinions expressed in these articles are the views of their authors and do not represent the views of Enquiry or the Alexander Hamilton Institute.

Enquiry accepts articles of 500 to 800 words at madamo@hamilton.edu. Please be aware that we do not accept anonymous submissions.

