

Discomfort through Disconnection: Hamilton College's Online Portrayal of Students of Color

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Recent months have seen a massive change in the way that corporations and institutions display themselves to the public on their social media and websites. For this reason, the opportunity to research the complex relationship between colleges and their students (specifically students of color) through social media seemed too compelling to turn down. I opted into Professor Wang and Professor LaDousa's team, and began the research process. Joined by five fantastic peer researchers, I brainstormed the angles to attack the dynamic between institution and individual unfolding in front of us.

The months-long process led to the research questions: How do predominantly White, elite, liberal arts institutions present international and racially marginalized students on various social media sites such as Instagram, Twitter, the institution's website, etc.? And how do the students meant to be represented in the media feel about how they are portrayed?

While Hamilton College makes efforts to highlight students of color, the manner in which the college produces social media posts elicits disdain in the hearts and minds of the very students the college wishes to highlight. Throughout this paper, student accounts will outline issues with the school's intention behind the promotion, a lack of connection between the institution and students during the process, and the influence of the neoliberal market model of education. This is not to say that every response from my participants maligned the college, or that negative responses were entirely negative. In fact, no interview maintained constant criticism; however, all positive comments were quickly qualified with a related negative comment.

In this paper, I will offer background of Hamilton college's efforts to create a positive

environment for students of color, as well as address the importance of research such as the research done in this study. Additionally, this paper will offer analysis of relevant social media posts in order to gain a better understanding of the college's presence online. Finally, I will present the accounts of the participants, also including suggestions they had proposed during our conversations.

Campus Context

Diversity, Equality, Inclusion at Hamilton College

In 2021, Hamilton College began officially tracking their efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Since then, the college has maintained their own webpage to serve as a hub for all things "DEI". Their value statement, directly in the middle of the home page, reads: "At Hamilton, we embrace diversity, commit to work against systemic racism and bigotry, and support a community where all individuals, without exception, feel valued, empowered, and treated fairly". These initiatives show the public that the college is thinking about these issues, and even taking action to implement change. However, throughout this paper, the college's actions online will be challenged, perhaps in order to hold them to the value statement on their "DEI" page.

My Relationship to the Research

While my primary intrigue sprouted from the complexities of the subject matter, strong secondary intrigue grew from experiences in Professor Wang's classes. Professor urged analysis of media in each of the four classes of her's that I took, whether it be emails sent out by institutions, websites for charter schools, or ad campaigns of non-profit organizations. She and I

share a fascination with the relationship between an organization's intentions, messaging, and actual content. Because of this, I began to focus my papers and projects in the courses around media analysis. Most recently, a final project of mine saw a deep dive into race relations and the concept of empowerment in the large Brazilian education advocacy group, the Lemann Foundation.

In joining this research team, I understood my positionality on the matter, and the challenges it poses. As a white man, I cannot pretend to be able to offer my own *feelings* on the manner in which students of color are portrayed in Hamilton's media. It is not my place, nor will it ever be. Additionally, I questioned whether or not I was the proper student to round out the six-person research group, seeing that the purpose was to tackle the discourse surrounding minority and international students.

These two thoughts led me to the conclusion that the opportunity to amplify the voices of students of color was too important to leave on the table. By "amplify the voices", I do not pose myself as a voice higher or louder than theirs. What I mean by this is, I have a platform to gather as many stories from my peers of color as possible, and share them with the public in ways not necessarily being done before. That is exactly what I have done in this paper. Additionally, it speaks to the pressing nature of this problem that I, a white student, have taken enough issue with the matter to choose this topic of research.

This paper includes none of my thoughts as it pertains to the facts of my participant's stories. My analyses of their stories act to connect them to larger themes in play. The data analysis section is different, and although my experiences as a white man could lead me to miss key points of interest in photos and videos, it allows for my input.

I struggled with the idea of only including students of color in the analysis. At points, I

worried that the use of my peers' stories for my own research was not right, and perhaps directly against what this paper discusses. I eventually grounded myself in the fact that my motivation for writing this paper has always been the elevation of voices in collaboration with the students behind the voices, a dynamic that will be expanded upon later in this paper.

Methods

My job in this paper is to compile stories and accounts, but not until after we analyzed the media itself. In that portion of my research, titled data analysis, with the help of the research group, I take a look at the photos, videos, and text published on Hamilton College's social media pages and websites in order to establish the context in which I interviewed participants.

In interviews, I stuck to two main methods. Each interview saw an open ended first half. My participants opened up about their experiences, and we engaged in conversation rather than a rigid interview. Once my participants contributed all they wanted to share, I shifted gears to prompted questions, asking them to react to some of the photos and posts on the college's special media pages. When appropriate, these contributions will appear in the data analysis section.

To reiterate, the four participants are students of color attending Hamilton College. I solicited their participation through word of mouth, email, and recommendations from other participants and members of the research group.

I assured my participants of complete anonymity in this entire process. As students of color, they are already part of a vulnerable population, and speaking freely about the college could deepen that vulnerability. Each participant will have their name and identifying characteristics altered to maintain anonymity. In cases in which specific groups or organizations on campus are mentioned that might give away a participant's identity, the group's name may

also be altered.

The four students will be referred to as Charlie, Tim, Ricky, and Donovan. Past their pseudonyms, the only information that I will divulge is information pertinent to their points made during the interview process. This is to honor my promise of anonymity.

In addition to anonymity, every participant entered into the interview consensually, with the explicit understanding that they had the right to pull consent at any point in the process, even during the writing of the paper itself. Each participant's story is uniquely theirs and they have sole ownership of their experiences. It would be wrong to pose my relationship to their stories as anything more than a gracious amplifier.

Importance

Unsurprisingly, an acquired feeling of comfort allowed my participants to craft better experiences at the college. Unfortunately for many students of color on campus, comfort in their community is not the default. It is not the norm. Although not always explicitly, each participant alluded to their representation on media platforms as a contributing factor to this discomfort. In this lies the importance of this research.

Ricky, a participant of this study, put it best by saying, “you’ve got to talk to people to help them”. Hopefully this research paper can open a dialogue so that the school can hear those they should be helping. A clear disconnect exists between students of color and the school, seeing as though my participants have criticisms of the efforts made by the school to promote said students. Conversation, of course coupled with related action, can lead to an enriched relationship between Hamilton and its students of color. In the future, we could see the school acknowledge shortcomings and focus on the issues important to the students they wish to

support, rather than the issues the institution deems important.

Each participant mentioned feeling some level of discomfort upon coming to Hamilton. Two shared stories of discomfort on athletic teams. As athletes of color, their performance seemed to get put under the microscope, and friendship came only with excellence. Earning your spot in the lineup is a given in sports, but it was as though they had to earn their spot in the comradery of the team, whereas their white teammates did not. The two athletes, and all of my other participants, did not truly feel comfort until recently, but only after they sought out community themselves in the forms of fraternities and even existing groups of friends.

Data Analysis

For the sake of brevity, this data analysis will include the largest points of contention on each of the school's main platforms: instagram, twitter, and their website.

The Creation of Implicit Hierarchies



Figure 1, Hamilton College's Instagram page

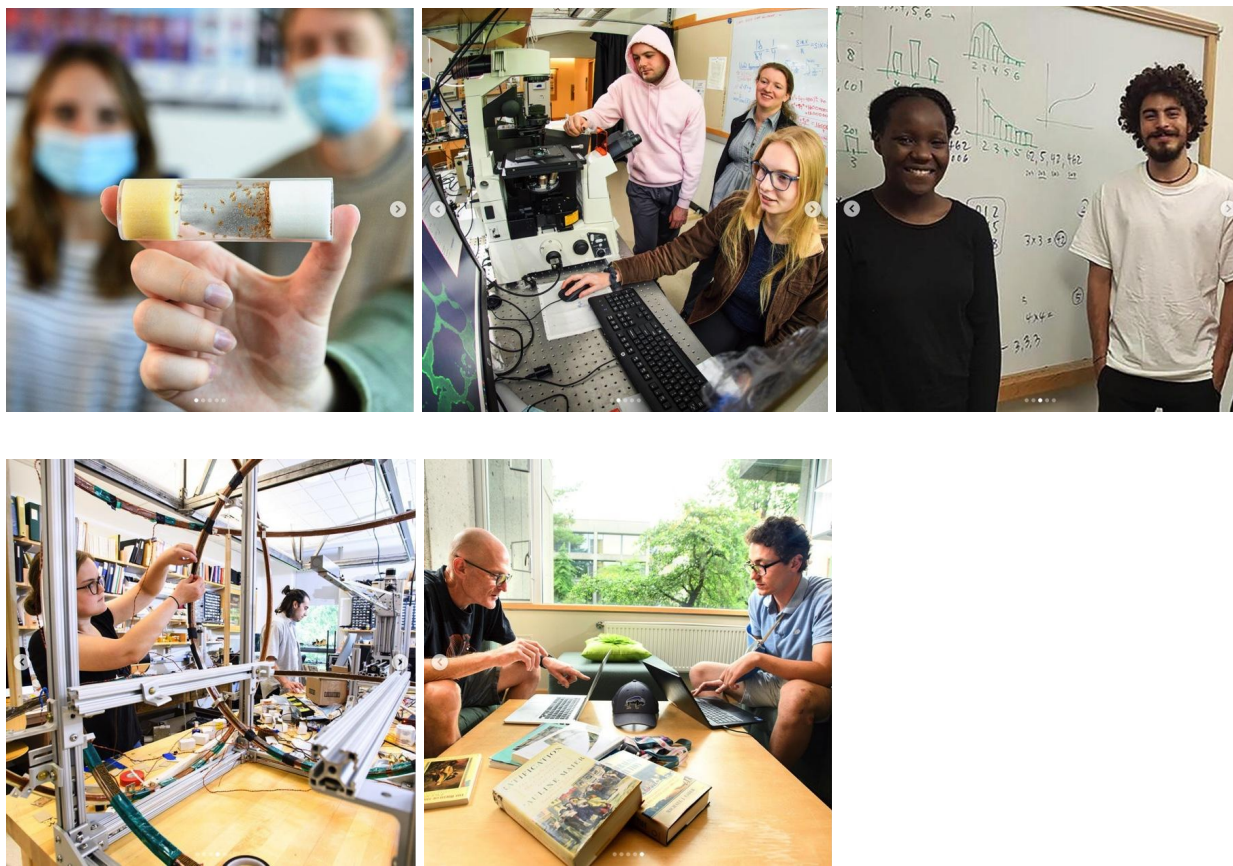
Figure 1 is the first slide of an instagram post from June 14th. Upon first look, the photo shows four students on a hike in Colorado. Annabelle Estera and Riyad A. Shahjahan wrote an article that contributes to the principles that influenced my second look at the photo. Their article discusses dynamics of a photo; who acts in a photo, and who is acted upon. Hierarchies exist everywhere, and Estera and Shahjahan properly explain the many racial and gendered hierarchies of photos. In figure 1, a white student is front and center. He is the focal point, but is also the actor in the image. He holds the walking stick, implying action, and thus importance, to the

viewer of the photo. Further, Corey, a black student pictured, although higher physically, is cast off to the side of the picture. The physical space between them, although possibly a result of convenience, can be interpreted as figurative space on the hierarchy.

None of this analysis is a statement of fact or intention. The only contribution being made is the possible interpretation of each image based upon the principles absorbed from Estera and Shahjahan, and similar projects in my previous years of schooling. To say the school's instagram team, or even the students taking this picture in Colorado, meant to convey this hierarchy would be an uninformed declaration. To say that the viewer of this image on the school's instagram page sees the dynamics of this photo and implicitly creates a hierarchy would be an appropriate declaration. The same lines of thinking go for the remaining figures.

Diversity for Diversity's Sake

The college's instagram seems to be the best example of throwing diversity into any post for no reason other than to seem more "diverse". Figures 2-6 were posted on July 13th with the purpose of showing off the college's wonderful student researchers. Figures 2, 3, 5, and 6 all depict white students in the act of doing work in high photo quality. Figure 4 depicts two students of color posed in front of a whiteboard with noticeably poorer photo quality. The project done by the students of color is conveniently absent from the caption, which offers brief descriptions of the four other projects photographed.



Figures 2-6: Hamilton College's Instagram page

The photo of the students of color was clearly an afterthought. Not only is the quality of the photo drastically worse, but the two students are absent from the caption entirely. If they were planned to be in the post originally, then the same photographer would have taken the photo with the same, or at least comparable, camera, and the caption would have been written to include them. Clearly, neither happened. It is almost as if the school realized that every single other student in the post was white, found these two students in Figure 4, and asked them to take a photo on their own and send it to be posted.

Second, the content of the Figure 4 tells a story relative to the content of the other pictures in the same post. The two students in Figure 4 are posed in front of the board, while

every other student is shown in the middle of an action. They are all the actors of their photos, while the students in Figure 4 are shown as passive. Action implies importance, and the lack of action places the students below their white peers on the hierarchy of perceived importance.

Third, the college may genuinely not understand how blatantly different the two types of photos featured in this post are, and thus not understand how blatantly obvious their motives are. The only alternative is: they do not care how blatant it is. Normally, a difference this grand would get caught during the process of posting. Whether it be the initial author of the post, or the head of the college's communications team, somebody would surely point out the blatant difference. Somehow this slipped through the cracks and made it onto the official page. Whether it be ignorance or apathy, I am not sure; however, a participant of mine offers significant insight into the background of this image and the processes taking place behind the scenes. Although organizationally, this does not fit in this section, the point is too relevant to skip.

Tim is a student at Hamilton. He has experience working in the school's communications department. During his time working there, employees of the department routinely told him to "portray more diversity". Tim did what he was told, but felt uncomfortable aiding in the creation of what he feels is a false reality at Hamilton. Further, he added that he understands why they do it, remarking, "it's strictly business for them, and maybe it shouldn't be, but it is". The themes of neoliberalism and the college as an actor in the market model of higher education will be explored in greater detail, but Tim's contribution lends a hand in clearing up perhaps what went on behind the scenes of Figures 2-6. Using Tim's account as a former Communications employee, the scenario in which they scrambled for any sort of student of color representation in for the sake of making themselves appear more diverse is very well a viable scenario.

Money Does Not Replace Connection Between the College and its Students



Figure 7: Hamilton College's Twitter page

The college's twitter demonstrates a critical misunderstanding of how best to deal with the problems of inequity on campus. Figure 7 says "remember to give to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion". A consensus among the research group, my participants, and myself is that the association of the solicitation of donations with the promotion of DEI sullies the perceived intent of the post itself. Using the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion to ask for money from donors cheapens this specific effort from the institution to garner outside support for their initiatives. Regardless of the school's plans for the funds acquired through the donations solicited in this post, the average viewer will most likely see the post as using the DEI initiative to make the school money, as did the research group and my participants. The big takeaway is the school making money off of the experiences of the students they wish to help in DEI initiatives.

Additionally, the stated need for donations to "promote diversity, equity, and inclusion"

implies the school does not necessarily see their own actions as part of the issue and forgets about deep rooted issues within the school's community. An institution that understands their role in the discomfort felt by students of color on their campus does not raise money from donors *not on campus* to solve them, but exhausts every option under their own power. The idea that money from donors can uproot the hurtful sentiments felt by my participants is naive. Money is not the solution to all problems, and in thinking so, the college absolves their own responsibility that they have with their students to connect on the personal level. As will be mentioned, students of color want to connect better with the college in order to be better served.

The Commodification of a Hamilton-Defined "Diversity"

Diversity, defined by the college itself, is used to market the college on perhaps the most visited site for a prospective student: the college's admissions webpage. Here lies a slideshow with ten reasons to apply to Hamilton College.

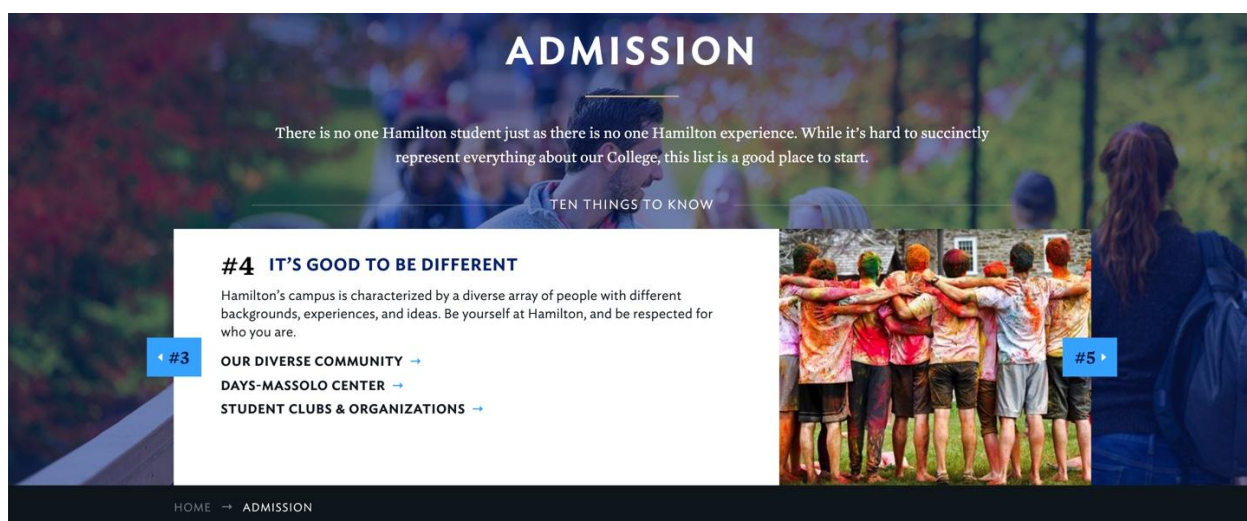


Figure 8: Hamilton College's website

The fourth slide, pictured in Figure 8, makes Hamilton's diversity into a selling point for the school. The issue in this case sounds familiar to the twitter donation posts' issue. The commodification of diversity on campus causes the institution to benefit off of the mere existence of "diverse" students. Students that the school defines as "diverse" now deal with the reality that their enrollment at the school helps *other* students in the long run, since diversity has become a desirable trait at educational institutions.

A deeper look into this slide brings up other issues. Primarily, the manner in which the school defines diversity comes into question. Their text includes "backgrounds, experiences, and ideas" as the three ways people can be different on campus. Then, the page includes three links, two of which being to pages devoted to resources for marginalized students. The largest resources include programming for racially marginalized students, international students, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Nowhere in the text on the main page are these types of differences explicitly mentioned, despite that being the purpose of the slide. In doing this, the school aims to benefit off of this "diversity" without actually mentioning the students that make up said "diversity" on campus.

Finally, the post formalizes whiteness as the default. Links to resources for students of color and members of the LGBTQIA+ community under the title "It's Good to be Different" establishes that these students are different. Prior to attending, or even applying to, the college, these students are told that they are not the norm.

Why Include These Posts?

All of these posts were shared with my research group, but more importantly participants. The students that agreed to take part in this study interact not only with the posts themselves, but

the sentiments behind them, on a daily basis. The posts, and the dynamics presented in them, are their real lives. In order to best understand how these students feel about their portrayals, it is imperative that we keep that fact in mind. Through an understanding of experiences, we can work with students of color to make our community truly communal.

My Participants' Stories

Positive Display of Accomplishments

Prior to expanding on the many problems my participants have experienced, this portion of the paper will begin with the few positive bits shared. Charlie, a senior student, spoke highly of the college's general social media presence at points in our conversation. He explained that "what the college advertises is generally true" and continued that "the academic community is amazing and the professors are great". Speaking more to the school in general, Charlie admitted that the school had begun to make progress in their hiring choices, a point in which others agreed. This improvement has been well received, as Charlie and others cannot speak to the importance of representation in the faculty. Ricky, another participant, spoke highly of his heightened levels of comfort in classes with faculty of color, and in situations with other staff of color. He explained that he feels the opportunity to be honest and open in those times.

When asked about the portrayal of students of color specifically, the conversation turned to the highlighting of these students' accomplishments. Charlie told me that he finds this publicity great, "Why is it great? Because it highlights incredible, impressive, and real achievements from students of color". Charlie's words illustrate a belief held by many of the group of participants, that students of color deserve to have their accomplishments shouted from

the rooftops, and others added that at Hamilton, it is even more important.

Tim told me that “acknowledging success is always a good thing” and that “intentions don’t always matter... as long as it happens, and students of color are given proper shoutouts, it is positive”. It must be stated, however, that this view of his did become more nuanced as he discussed his involvement in the use of students’ likenesses on the colleges online accounts. Ricky, described the recognition as something “students of color do not mind getting” especially since they attend a school that “doesn’t really acknowledge us much”.

Overall, participants had more bad things to say about the matter than good, but their positive contributions needed to be shared. Further, each positive opinion on the matter included proper nuance. Charlie applauded the school for recognizing students of color as often as they do, but also explained that he wished the school would also highlight the barriers in the way of their success. In the specific, or in the general sense, Charlie asserted that it would go a long way to show the “strength and inspiration demonstrated by our school’s minority population” in each of the posts. Per Charlie, this resilience would never be put on display; however, because the school obviously does not want to broadcast the challenges students face daily on the campus that the school oversees.

Caring About Students versus Caring About Image

The other participants had nuanced views about the *intent* of the posts applauding students of color. Ricky, who had mentioned that students “do not mind” the praise on social media, still does not see the shoutouts as objectively positive. He feels as though the recognition is still bad if the motivation is not pure. Ricky posed an important question: if the only time you are made to feel a part of the campus is after quantifiable success, then how can you ever feel

comfortable there? By this, Ricky means that students of color normally feel as though they are not a part of the overall campus community. Only when they make quantifiable successes are they brought in; however, the only reason they are brought in is to celebrate their successes. This sets a dangerous precedent that students of color need to achieve quantifiable success in order to be embraced by the community.

To further complicate matters, the college routinely “does what it has to do on the basis of image”. They highlight diversity when they have to, and what cheapens the instances of recognition is that they are *instances*. The school does not prolong the exposure of students of color, but rather presents them every time they enjoy quantifiable success.

Ricky continued his contribution with a comparison between echoes and reverberations. Adapted from a previous professor’s ideas, Ricky explained that Hamilton currently makes *echoes* on their social media pages and website. Echoes venture out and make noise that eventually dies after a few hear. The school needs to make *reverberations*. In Ricky’s metaphor, reverberations are stronger and longer; they are *felt* by those around them and by those not around them. Reverberations, in this case, look like the sharing of stories. Similar to Charlie’s idea, the key is the individual stories behind success, and behind nonsuccesses as well. People connect with growth and they connect with stories. Grant recognition of high achievement, but also every day achievements in order to make students feel as though they serve a higher purpose than being shown off as “successful and diverse students” at the school. That must be the intent in order to foster a healthier community for students of color.

Different from Ricky’s responses to this portion of the conversation, some of my other participants offered stories of run-ins with the social media team as clues to their true intentions. Tim’s story already appears in this paper, but he revealed deeper clues as we spoke more. Tim

added that at times, his bosses rejected potential posts for not including enough “diverse” students, meaning often students are only included in posts because of the color of their skin. Their value to the school is not in their talents or their experiences, but rather in their appearance and how “diverse” they can make the college seem.

At a predominantly white institution, it would make sense that white students are featured more often than non-white students. There are simply more white students. Perhaps contrarily, the argument can be made that students of color should be highlighted more at these institutions to celebrate said students. The problem arises when the students are used solely for their perceived racial features and nothing else. At that point, the college implicitly tells the students their worth is being a “diverse” student that can be shown off on their social media pages. The students feature on these websites rarely for their own benefit, but for the prospective students and the college’s benefit. The college hopes to get their “diverse” image out to as many potential students as possible in order to maximize their potential yield of customers. I use customers in place of “students that enroll in Hamilton and pay tuition” not only for the sake of brevity, but because the modern system of higher education acts like a business.

A story told by Charlie fits this concept perfectly. Charlie, a former athlete, had been practicing his former sport with two of his white teammates. At some point during the small workout, the three of them noticed a Hamilton photographer waiting around at the side of the facility. Eventually, Charlie’s teammates left, but being the hard worker that he is, Charlie stayed to do a little extra work. At that point, the photographer politely asked to take Charlie’s photo while practicing. Charlie obliged and that was the end of it. In the moment, Charlie was happy to be considered for the college’s Instagram, but his feelings on the matter changed afterwards. He explained that he would have loved to have been able to finish his workout uninterrupted,

realizing that he was only approached once his two white teammates had left. He held nothing against the individual photographer themselves, but got the feeling that he was being used just so the college could have another “diverse” photo for the internet.

Another participant, Donovan, shared a similar experience. His student-run organization had planned a speaker to visit campus for Black History Month. The organization did all of the planning for the event, and near the end of the planning process, the school approached them with a proposition. In the name of community building and publicity, the school asked if they would like the event to be featured on their instagram page. Normally, this would seem to be a good thing: the college joining with students to promote an event celebrating Black History Month. The speaker would discuss topics like mass incarceration, criminalization, and wrongful eviction of black Americans; all being truly important issues that the school’s community should hear and actively discuss.

The issue came from the fact that the college wanted nothing to do with the creation of the post being made in support of the event. The students were to write descriptions and produce their own digital fliers. That is not outside of the norm for these types of agreements, but when the event rolled around, the school did not even send any representative. They then asked to do a follow up post summarizing the whole evening. Since they sent no photographer, or any person from the college whatsoever, this meant that any photo, video, or summary would come from the students themselves. Further, the idea that they had no hand in the organization of the event, did not attend the event, but wanted to include the event on their social media cheapens the sentiment of posting it at all. A school that truly cares about the contents of the speech, or simply wants to support their students of color *goes* to the event. Making matters worse, they wanted to post about it as if they had gone to the event, giving the impression that all they cared about was

that the public knew this event happened on their campus. The Hamilton logo above a black speaker during Black History Month goes a long way in inflating an image for the school, an image that attracts future customers when it is perceived on their social media accounts.

The College in the Market

Through Charlie and Donovan's stories, they communicate a resentment towards the use of the bodies of students of color for the college's gain. While that gain may be difficult to see immediately, the participants tackled that idea in conversations with me.

Tim told me "[the college] is a business". Charlie stated that in his mind, "what the college advertises is generally true". The diction used in both of these quotes is market-based. It poses the school as an actor in the capitalist system, and perhaps for good reason. Every day, the college looks to find more customers interested in buying their product: an education at Hamilton College. It stands to reason that they will do anything within their power to increase the number of potential customers. That is what a rational business would do, and like Tim said, that is what the college ultimately is. For this reason, the school obsesses over its image. Ricky hit on this point earlier, explaining that the college does what it has to do in order to improve public perception.

The idea of public perception slips into their diction choices on their website. Donovan noticed on their "Just the Facts" page (Figure 9), the college includes the following: "Here's a sampling of Hamilton facts* — things we take seriously, what we think we're good at and, in some cases, what other people think we're good at". This line puts forth the notion that the "facts" of this college are based entirely off of public perception, not reality. Donovan told me that he finds it strange to not say "what we ARE good at" and leave it there.

Because public perception is ingrained in everyday life of the institution, the school takes pictures of students like Charlie after their white friends have left and asks to post about Black History Month events that they have no part in organizing. Perceived “diversity” brings customers to the table. Most often the case for Hamilton, these customers are wealthy white customers in search of a college that makes them seem more experienced. A “diverse” student body is the perfect way to make that happen. The ultimate results are as follows: the college benefits off of “diverse” students because students apply to the school and pay tuition, the white student seeing the diversity of the school benefits when they get hired for attending such a “cultured” institution, and the “diverse” students watch as they are used by the other two groups. This market model of higher education uses the bodies of students of color to benefit everyone other than students of color, and it starts on the social media sites.

Solutions from the Participants

Stories from Charlie and Donovan demonstrate the disconnect between students of color and the institution pertaining to how they want to be portrayed. Upon asking each participant for suggestions on how to move forward and fix the issue, all of them had essentially the same idea: celebrate both tangible and intangible successes of students of color and acknowledge the shortcomings of Hamilton as an institution and a community.

The participants appreciate what the school does to celebrate tangible achievements for students of color, but wish that the school could acknowledge the hardships they faced along the way, simply by being a student of color. Additionally, the college should include more about the students’ stories when highlighting them. It helps to humanize the effort rather than giving the impression that Hamilton is featuring this student to show off diversity.

Further, acknowledgement of the dangers of the status quo at Hamilton, both institutionally and on campus, will help to create a better online presence for the college and its students. The formula is simple: tell the public: this is what is happening, this is how it affects our community, and this is what we are doing to stop it. That should take the place of staged photos of “diverse” students. Perhaps more students of color would feel more comfortable attending Hamilton if there was more accountability and less manipulation of the realities of the school on the internet. Rather than cherry picking students of color to post online, the college should represent the reality of the college, acknowledge shortcomings, and tell the public what the college is actually doing to help their “diverse” community. Ricky and Tim would rather see action than empty gestures, or a picture of two racially marginalized students eating lunch together.

True connection with the students could create reverberations instead of echoes for the school. “You have to talk with people in order to help them”, Ricky states, “create a space to talk, step back, and listen”. Involving students in the discussions and the processes required in facilitating diversity, equity, and inclusion can cause massive change. According to Ricky, “change compounds itself. It only takes a few people to feel validated to create space for more”. Finally, the school should be more involved in the events of student-run organizations. Not only would it help with organization, but it would bring the two sides closer.

The participants shared hope that the school can shed light on and demonstrate support for all types of social movements for change, seeing as though movements like Stop Asian Hate are not discussed enough by the school.

Parting Thoughts

As I mentioned before, the purpose of this paper is to open conversation. Students on this campus do not feel comfortable not only with their portrayal on the internet by the school, but on the campus as well. Perhaps this starts with feeling like nothing more than an image of a body to be used in the name of promoting a more diverse school, or perhaps it starts elsewhere. Regardless, the points raised by the participants of this research study should catalyze a conversation that must be had.

The desire for change does not rest solely in the hearts of those affected by the college's practices. The problem exists so blatantly that students all across campus have taken notice. This paper itself is a great example. As I mentioned earlier, I am a white student at Hamilton College, and I have noticed the obvious problems with the college's social media presence. The student body as a whole is ready to have the conversations, but is the school's administration?

It would be hypocritical after writing this paper to not stress the importance of action coupled with that conversation. Empty gestures and hollow words do nothing. I listed the many solutions suggested by the participants at the end of the paper. As a student writing this paper, I can only hope these suggestions reach the institution, and the institution is willing to hear more from students of color around the campus, and take appropriate action to improve their lives on campus.

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