Ian Hower

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Letter of Intent

President of the Student Senate

Fellow Dickinsonians:

Student government at my high school was a glorified event planning committee, and I expected Student Senate would not be much different. My freshman year RA told me that Senate was much more than a group of event planners, that it was the representative student voice in the shared governance of the College. This energized me to run for Student Senate my freshman year. I ended up loving the ability for students to have a direct role in the governance of the College.

Shared governance was a term I had never heard before arriving at Dickinson. I have since realized the great importance and uniqueness of this system to Dickinson. The shared governance system ensures that Dickinson is a collaborative and welcoming environment, sensitive to student input and needs. For students, it means that you can run for a position to have a seat at a table where some of the most important decisions of the College are made. As equal members of the shared governance system, students ensure that their voice is not only heard, but seriously considered on all decisions that influence them.

Student senate is the only organization on campus in which every Dickinsonian is a member. We all have an equal opportunity to influence decisions, interact with administration, and voice our concerns. I aim to make Student Senate more accessible to the student body. Shared governance is not limited only to interactions between administration and Student Senate officers, but extends to you, the student body. It means that if a student isn’t someone that wants to run for a position or does not have the time to sit on a committee, they know that they can still influence decisions. They do not have to be intimidated by going into an administrator’s office, or fear that a staff member is too busy to take the time to hear their concerns. They know that someone with a seat at the table is one of their peers, someone living down the hall, or sitting next to them in the Caf. Through shared governance, students are able to ensure that the institution is receptive of their concerns because they are the institution, they are an equal member of the community. This equality and respect for students is unique at Dickinson and further promotes the kind of liberal arts education Dickinson provides.

My mission as Student Senate President will be to ensure that students play an active part in campus decision making through the shared governance process. This semester, I helped rewrite the Senate Constitution from the ground up. We wanted to create a more collaborative and representative Student Senate. The new structure will help share responsibilities and empower younger Senators. Student Senate will now play a more active role in the College policy making process. We will rely on our new Campus Life and Initiatives Committee, which will include non-senate students to represent their interests wherever necessary. We hope to build on the work already being done by College committees such as the Food Advisory Council, the Housing Advisory Board and the Public Safety Board to encourage a more active role and voice on the committee from students to encourage the committees to be even more active on campus.

We also changed the nature of class events. We wanted to create events where students not only get free food, but stay and meet their classmates, increase the sense of community and get a chance to talk to their Senate representatives in a casual setting.

We also built in new lines of communication between Senate and other student organizations. As President I will work to foster an improved environment of collaboration between Senate and our fellow student organizations. I hope to encourage more co-sponsored events between clubs, organizations and various departments on campus. We are also changing the way Senate interacts with student clubs. We created a Club Consulting position to aid clubs when necessary with resources and advice to ensure a vibrant and robust experience for each club. Senate will no longer review and evaluate clubs, but act as a resource when needed.

Senate has also changed its meeting location. We will now be meeting on a permanent basis in the Social Hall to increase our transparency and accountability. This change in location will hopefully encourage more students to attend our meetings, which are always open to any member of the Dickinson Community. In addition, we will have monthly open issue forums for students to come voice their policy and event suggestions and/or concerns. I also plan to change the way Senate initiatives are proposed, debated and passed. I want to create the opportunity for any student to suggest an idea at the end of each Senate meeting, which will then be referred to a committee to help the student realize their goals, and finally be passed by the Student Senate to institute their idea.

I also plan to use the experience I gained through my involvement in various organizations and clubs on campus over the past three years to inform my decision making. Since my freshman year, I have been involved with the Liberty Cap Society as a campus Tour Guide, worked on campus as a student worker in the Caf and Devils Den, and advocated for student interests as a Student Senator. I have also participated in other campus matters such as Orientation, Campus Housing Policy, Package Pickup Policy, and advocated for students in the Social and Academic Misconduct Hearing process.

As President, I promise a more open, collaborative and active Student Senate that maintains constant communication between Students, Faculty and Staff at Dickinson. I hope to lead the Student Senate in a direction where it is a more robust and active member of the Campus Community, anchored in a responsiveness to student interests. I don’t want your voice just to be heard, I want it to be respected and taken seriously. I want students to be trusted with the ability to make decisions that effect them. I pledge not to be just another white male running for a presidential position, but an active participant in the College governance on behalf of all students.