Candidates' Forum Minutes for 18 September 2008

Amber Zambelli, Elections Co-Head, '09: Welcome! We look forward to your questions and your answers. Here are the ground rules: When asking a question, please state your name and year. We are following proper meeting procedure, so you must be on the main lounge ground floor to ask a question or make a comment. You may supply points of information, but we request that you say them respectfully and within the spirit of the Honor Code. You may address any candidate with a question, but we reserve the right to call you or them out of order. There is no time limit to the amount of time given to either a question, the period of questions, or the period of answers, but be mindful that there are a lot of people both asking and answering questions. Erica will call you out of order so someone else can talk if need be.

Erica Seaborn, Elections Co-Head, '09: Please be respectful of one another. Feel free to ask and answer questions, in order to make you all informed voters.

Board of Trustees Representatives (2 positions)

Jill Walker, '09: Is this for one position held by two people, or is it two separate positions?
Erica Seaborn, '09: It will be held by two people as two separate positions.

Candidates for Board of Trustees Representatives
Rachel Corey, '10
Susie Kim, '11
Laurel Lemon, '11
Rodline Louijeune, '11

Paula Hidalgo, '11: Why do you feel you are a good candidate for this position?

Rachel Corey, '10: I've been in SGA for the past 2 years as a Member-at-Large. I've gotten to know SGA a little bit. I really like the position I'm running for, because it pops the Bryn Mawr bubble a little bit, and you get to see how Bryn Mawr is actually run by the board of trustees.

Susie Kim, '11: The Board of Trustees run the college. They take care of financial aid, fees, salaries, picking presidents, bi-co and tri-co relations, and student life. As a frosh, I had so much passion for the school because of all of the benefits I got. I want to continue what is good, and change what needs to be changed.

Laurel Lemon, '11: Basically, towards the end of last year, I got more involved, and want to get even more involved now. I'm involved in a variety of activities, clubs, and I'm also on SFC, but a really important part of this position is having a diverse background and knowing what's going on around campus. I want to represent everyone, and make sure they know what's happening so that actual change occurs.

Rodline Louijeune, '11: As a rep, you don't get to vote on the Board, you just inform them of what's going on, and persuade them both written and orally. I'm involved in a variety of groups on campus, and would be able to communicate about what might need to be changed.
Hannah Curry-McDougald, '10: Are any of you going abroad?

Susie Kim, '11: I'm positive that I'm not.

Rachel Corey, '10: I'm definitely going abroad next semester. I checked with Dean Tidmarsh, and learned that I can still stay on as a rep since it's a two year position.

Laurel Lemon, '11: I might be, but I might end up doing a summer program instead of a program during the school year.

Rodline Louijeune, '11: I probably will, but I don't know if it's going to be in the summer or next fall – I also talked to Dean Tidmarsh about this.

Katie Kellom, '09: If the Board of Trustees gave you 2 minutes to talk about whatever you wanted, what would you feel would be the most important student issue to bring to them? Thank you.

Susie Kim, '11: I'm passionate about diversity on campus. We represent 43 countries, 75% get financial aid, 33% are students of color or international students, etc. That's great, but how do we use our diversity to move forward constructively? I would bring that up to them.

Laurel Lemon, '11: I would talk about the gym – they are the ones that watch the budget, they are the ones who make actual changes. The gym is in a bad state right now, and I would talk about what we should do, and how we could attract more potential students with a better gym.

Rodline Louijeune, '11: I would talk about the gym, and also issues of diversity, which rings a bell with me as a Posse scholar, and since I would like to see a few changes on campus, I would also talk about Access Services, and making the campus more accessible to all students.

Rachel Corey, '10: I'm really big on the environment, and I think being on the forefront of green construction and building is awesome. I would also talk about the Teaching and Learning Initiative between staff and students, because it's a great way to expand diversity on campus and get to know each other personally.

Akua Peprah, '09: How will you balance your current activities with your new position?

Rachel Corey, '10: The Board meets three times a year, and before each meeting they want you to provide a written report about what's going on. The first one doesn't conflict with my schedule for lacrosse, I checked. Year after year, I know what I've needed to drop, and I only do the things that I am passionate about and can do.

Susie Kim, '11: We meet three times a year, so it's not a very demanding schedule. I work in the math department as a grader and TA, but that's about it, so I have freed my schedule for this opportunity.

Laurel Lemon, '11: This is pretty simple compared to my other meetings – this is really easy because this is just on a Saturday. I would have no problem.

Rodline Louijeune, '11: This would be easy because it's 3 times a year, and I already go to SGA
meetings. I would make arrangements to be able to go to the meetings with the Board.

**Christina Frithsen, '10**: How do you plan to represent the campus while you are abroad?

**Rodline Louijeune, '11**: For me, I have Bryn Mawr as my homepage, I read Bryn Mawr Now. Also, I have contacts still on campus. There are tons of ways of keeping in contact.

**Laurel Lemon, '11**: I am a big fan of email and facebook to keep in touch. I also read through the SGA notes – a lot of my friends are active and I would keep in touch via email.

**Susie Kim, '11**: I'm not going abroad.

**Rachel Corey, '10**: It's important to have a voice that is abroad at some point since a third of our class goes abroad each year. It's not just the experience of being abroad, but also before and afterwards that is important, too.

**Erica Seaborne, '09**: Thanks!

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**Class of 2010 Presidents**

**MJ Crookes, '10**  
**Amanda Bowes, '10 and Simran Singh, '10**

**Kendalyn Brown, '09**: Why are there three of you?

**Erica Seaborne, '09**: For class presidents, it's up to two people who can hold the position, Amanda and Simran are running as a pair, and then MJ is running separately.

**Ashley Madden, '09**: Are any of you planning on going abroad?

**Amanda Bowes, '10**: I'm currently planning to do so, but I'm not too concerned, and I will still be here for this semester. Given that it is our junior year, it adds to this position, as half of our class is going abroad.

**Simran Singh, '10**: I am planning on going abroad, most probably a yes. Half the class is probably going abroad, so I feel like that will help connect us.

**MJ Crookes, '10**: For sure not, I decided not to in order to stay here and finish both my majors.

**Jessica Coulter, '10**: If two candidates are going abroad the same semester, what happens to the position?

**Amanda Bowes, '10**: Technically, we would have to resign the position before we go abroad. We would have people who would want to run in the spring, though.
Erica Seaborne, '09: We would run an emergency election.

Paula Hidalgo, '11: MJ, how do you feel running by yourself?
MJ Crookes, '10: I wanted it badly enough to do it without a partner. I don't plan on brainstorming by myself – I want 300 voices, and I have the connections to resources and time management skills to do it.

Taline Cox, '10: What ideas do you have for our class?

Amanda Bowes, '10: Having all of the class presidents meeting together as a way to talk to each other and be in touch with people who were Junior class presidents before us is one of or ideas, in order to talk about what worked and what didn't.
Simran Singh, '10: We were thinking about having a monthly newsletter, also for people abroad to notify people about what's going on. We want Junior specific events, too, so that we have opportunities to use the resources on campus. We figure that by having a CDO open house for juniors we would be able to reach out to our class in a different way.
Amanda Bowes, '10: In addition to mocktails, we want to work on welcome back teas for people coming back from being abroad and also for the people still on campus, as a way to open up the discussion and get back on the same page. We want to strengthen our community.

MJ Crookes, '10: I also thought about doing a Junior class newsletter, either biweekly or monthly. I got some feedback, and know that as the junior class with a sister class, we need get to know the frosh more, so we should have a sister class social and get to know them while we are still here. People aren't united right now, people stay in their cliques – so I would want to do more social events as a class, to get together and meet new people. My third idea is that, as we are entering a new era at BMC, getting to know new President of the College would be great. Next year we need to do a lot of fundraising – and I would want to get local businesses involved in the process, as well. We are beginning to lose our face in the community because other schools are branching out more, so I would want to work to build that up.

Ashley Madden, '09: How often is it that one runs for a position that two usually hold?

Erica Seaborne, '09: I don't really know. If someone feels that they can do the position by themselves, then they are more than welcome to run for it alone.

MJ Crookes, '10: I don't think it's a problem, in terms of attending meetings, etc. It's not like the time management is that big of an issue. I want it bad enough to do it alone.

Evan Schneider, '10: You all sound really passionate about this position now, so why did none of you run in the spring?

Amanda Bowes, '10: I already held an elected position as a dorm president, so I couldn't run, and was also in the middle of the Honor Board election at the same time.
Simran Singh, '10: I was working on a lot of other activities on campus with my clubs – towards the end of the semester, I was holding a fundraiser with my club, and by the time I found out, elections came and gone.
**MJ Crookes, '10:** I thought I was going to be on a varsity team this year, but I've decided not to do it this year. I want to take advantage of the time and spend it well.

**Vice President**  
Ashley Madden, '09  
Hannah Curry-McDougald, '10  
Emily Reuman, '11

**Christina Frithsen, '10:** There were a lot of opportunities to run last semester, so why didn't you run then?

**Emily Reuman, '11:** As a frosh, I wouldn't have had a lot of experience, knowledge of community, issues, or people. I would not have been capable of doing this job.

**Hannah Curry-McDougald, '10:** I was anticipating running for another position, but that fell through.

**Ashley Madden, '09:** I was a Customs Committee Co-Head, so I was planning and running interviews, and was already committed to that.

**Sofia Nitchie, '09:** What is your previous involvement with SGA?

**Ashley Madden, '09:** I've never held an elected position, but I appointed to Customs Committee my sophomore year, and then junior year, I was appointed as Customs Co-Head, and sat in on interviews for the people running for Customs Committee. I got to see how appointments are run, and got to see the process more than just when I was going through it myself.

**Hannah Curry-McDougald, '10:** I have not been a voting assembly member, but I am a faithful attendant to SGA as a community member. I also genuinely enjoy plenary. I applied for an appointed position last spring, so I know how the process works.

**Emily Reuman, '11:** I've never been in the assembly, but I was on Plenary Committee, so I was appointed and saw the process. I have attended some SGA meetings, and I know people in SGA, and understand some of the problems in SGA and what I want to do.

**Shelley Gupta, '09:** Being VP is a really time consuming job. What are your other commitments?

**Hannah Curry-McDougald, '10:** I'm an HA, taking a normal course load, I work at Rhoads and Guild, and am president of Campus Girl Scouts, which sounds like more than it actually is. A lot of my study time and time at Guild overlap, so I have tons of free time – I also have a 3-day weekend built into my schedule this semester.

**Ashley Madden, '09:** As a senior, I have a normal course load without a thesis. Next semester, I will be student teaching, on campus at all times, but not taking classes. My commitment with the Customs
Committee will go away soon, unless there are problems with the customs people. I'm a 2nd year HA, and I'm Carnivore Club co-president, which, again, sounds more than it is. I'm also an Assistant teacher at a Kindergarten two hours a week,

Emily Reuman, '11: I'm customs on Merion 2nd, and President of the BMC Greens this year. I also work on campus as a lifeguard and at Canaday, and am a sophomore traditions rep.

Community Member: For Emily – you said that you didn't want to run as a frosh, because you didn't have experience, but what has changed from then to now?

Emily Reuman, '11: My involvement in SGA began last semester, really. I only went to one meeting first semester – it's surprising what a semester can do. Since then, I've learned a lot, and started talking to people. Since elections last year, I've been thinking a lot about SGA.

Community Member: What problems do you see and how do you plan to fix them?

Hannah Curry-McDougal, '10: We need more community members to attend and get involved in SGA-related positions. Through my own personal experience, it seems like qualified people don't get positions when they run, even when there are positions open. It seems like a waste, it's frustrating, and so people don't always want to run. It's difficult to deal with when you are rejected.

Ashley Madden, '09: Apathy is a problem, but also, there used to be an Appointments Handbook handed out at the beginning of the year that allows people to see what positions you can apply to and lets people know that it's a great way to get involved in SGA in a different way.

Emily Reuman, '11: I see SGA as an organization that's so bogged down by its own problems, like the fact that the Constitution and Bylaws need to be cleaned up. I see a plenary that most people don't want to attend. I would like to see issues of the community on the agenda. We shouldn't spend all of that time fixing ourselves. I want to see community issues at SGA instead of SGA focusing on SGA.

Sophie Papavizas, '11: Because this is an emergency election, you will be coming onto an Appointments Committee who is already established and run a round of Appointments. How do you see dealing with this situation?

Emily Reuman, '11: I see it as a benefit, because they know how it works, they know the issues. I don't see how it's a problem. I like working with people.

Hannah Curry-McDougal, '10: I adapt well and learn quickly. I'm more than happy to just jump right in, and figure out what's going on, figure out how to run the next round of positions.

Ashley Madden, '09: Being Customs Committee Co-Head, you're put in charge of a committee you don't choose, so it's a similar experience. I know with Appointments, you have to have a unanimous decision, so you a committee with a solidified base. I get along well with everyone, and can work through issues. Most of my positions have been co-heads, so I've had to work with people.
Molly Pieri, '09: Over the summer, the Exec Board has been working and making a game plan, and they've been doing a ton of stuff – how do you plan to work with them?

Ashley Madden, '09: Everyone's going to come in with different goals in mind. I would keep in mind specific goals – I want to do things with Appointments, and then also just support the other Exec Board members. I know that they have been working really hard to go over the Constitution, and I am going into that, knowing that there is a lot of work having been done. Working as a team and as an individual is key.

Hannah Curry-McDougald, '10: My personal goals have to do with Appointments and improving the number of people who apply, and getting the word out about positions. I'm more than happy to support other members of the Exec Board to help improve their ideas and get them to work for the community.

Emily Reuman, '11: I think that everybody sees the problems with SGA as I do, but maybe they don't think they are as important as I do. I talked to Shelley at the last meeting, and we need to get rid of a lot these repetitive parts of the meetings. My goals are in line with that of SGA. Each member of the Exec Board will have their own role, but our goal is common.

President:
Shelley Gupta, '09
Sarah Khasawinah, '09
Aheli Purkayastha, '09

Lisa Lamrou, '09: For Shelley: As a senior, I have grown up here a lot, and I think that the SGA president does a lot at guiding the student body, and I'm concerned as to why someone who fought so hard to get a position last year is now trying to get a position that's even greater in intensity and commitment.

Shelley Gupta, '09: I didn't feel I was qualified to run for president last year. Even through Tuesday, I am still working on stuff for Appointments. Over the summer and up until now, I've been doing double duty. Even though I don't have the authority to act as president, people have been coming to me as if I were. I feel that I could do more for the community in the capacity as president.

Amanda Bowes, '10: Have you held any other elected assembly positions in SGA?

Shelley Gupta, '09: I was faculty rep '06-'07, and then VP.

Sarah Khasawinah, '09: I have not formally held any other elected assembly positions is SGA, but consider positions in clubs all around campus as part of SGA, and I've been in MSA, Apiary Association, and Chocolate Lovers' Club.

Aheli Purkayastha, '09: I was Class of '09 co-president my freshman and sophomore years.

Hannah Curry-McDougald, '10: Besides being a double major, what other activities do you all have
on campus?

**Aheli Purkayastha, '09:** I'm a tour guide for admissions and a writing center tutor. Aside from my thesis and 2 jobs, I'll be an SGA groupie if I don't get this.

**Sarah Khasawinah, '09:** Most recently, as a reaction to the Olympic scandal of the Saudi team not allowing women to run because of their faith, I started the Multi-Faith Running Initiative, with an eventual goal of running the Philadelphia Half Marathon. I also lead PLI in the Math Department, am a Peer Mentor, and am Haffner Head Supervisor.

**Shelley Gupta, '09:** I'm a Peer Mentor, and I work in the Bookstore. I don't have much else going on. I participate in SAW.

**MJ Crookes, '10:** I'm wondering how all of you plan on handling the changing diversity on campus. In my experience, diversity gets swept under the rug, and then explodes. How would you deal with this issue?

**Shelley Gupta, '09:** I would go to meetings of various cultural groups around campus, and then delegate with other Exec Board members to do the same, and then personally invite these groups to SGA, putting their issues on the agenda. We could have an open discussion about it, one that I hope shows that the community and assembly are open to new issues and ideas.

**Sarah Khasawinah, '09:** I have a holistic view of diversity, as I see it as encompassing cultural and ethnic issues, as well as diversity of interests on campus. I would want to do more by reaching out, but also inviting them to SGA by having each month, in addition to normal issues, devoted to a theme – one month could be the athletic theme – where we would reach out to athletes, talk about how we can better improve athletic facilities, etc. I plan to do the same thing for ethnic groups, in particular for a month, in order to make this come to life. I would offer incentives, where the group with the most members would get a stipend for something relevant to their group. I think by both reaching out and inviting them to come in, we would be constantly on top of diversity issues.

**Aheli Purkayastha, '09:** I see this as a really important issue. The role of the president is to work as a mouthpiece of the community and assembly members. Both as a student resource person and at TriCo, I've seen the existing structures we have in place, and I would want to work with them. They need to have help to be more effective. I want to work with people who are committed to this idea, like Chris McDonald-Dennis, and use my personal background to tackle these issues.

**Jodie Lin, '09:** There is a large part of our community that never comes to SGA, including me. What would you do to help that part of the community come to SGA and become more involved?

**Aheli Purkayastha, '09:** Thanks Jodie. I want to address this on two fronts. First, I want to make SGA meetings more accessible. I haven't been a voting member for the last six months, and sitting in SGA meetings, at times, has been frustrating. People want to know what's going on and how it relates to them. We go to such a diverse school, and SGA needs to promote us. We should use the “Two cents” segment to have people talk about issues that matter to you. I don't think every student needs to come to every meeting, because they are often times very procedural, but not everyone cares about that stuff, and that's fine. We can make plenaries more fun, and I can't wait for the awesome stuff that will
happen there this year. Although I want people at SGA meetings, I think we should use plenary, and also increase the community's access to their representatives.

Sarah Khasawinah, '09: SGA doesn't start at 7, and doesn't end at 8:30. SGA is an all around organization that exists to serve student body. It shouldn't just be the 40 people who come each week, since everyone pays dues. We want to help people see what SGA does, and also equalize the Bryn Mawr experience for everyone. Half of the international students don't have comps – they go 6 months to a year sometimes without them – and even recently, we do have 24 hour computing at Guild and in the basement of Canaday, but what options does that leave for people in Brecon? I want to serve everyone equally. Given our recent change in phone system, and now they have to manually install it, it's really hard to be connected if you don't have a cell phone. I want to institute the “wifi phone”, which has cut out 50% of the telecommunication budget at Dartmouth. I started talking about this 7 months ago, and it will benefit everyone by making everyone only one click away for free.

Shelley Gupta, '09: I'm not sure what new I could add to that. I would want to talk to as many people as I can, outreach is really important. Word of mouth, and getting the issues that they are interested in on the agenda. It's not necessary for everyone to come, because, yeah, our last meeting was super procedural. If we were talking about diversity, I would hope that most of the campus would come. I would want to target groups of people and discuss what people would like to see, and talk about how to get things done.

Paula Hidalgo, '11: One of the candidates running last year is not running this year, so what motivated you to keep going?

Sarah Khasawinah, '09: The events of last year strengthened, in my mind, why I started this journey. After all of the problems, and consistently standing up and being able to go public with the issues and having conversations with people really showed me what was going on. Especially with my honor board procedure, I learned about a lot more issues that I hadn't even know about. No one takes minutes at honor board hearings, so it's things like basic civil rights. We have parallels – we need a way to keep precedent. With elections problems, people need to do things differently. One of the major issues is that you cannot tell people to vote for you. Women are represented far less in congress than men, and women are much less likely to get involved and talk to people directly in this way, so it's yet another parallel we can draw, and a reason to change.

Fabiola Decius, '10: What was the question again?

Erica Seaborne, '09: “Why did they keep running?”

Michelle Khilji, '09: I thought that you had said that there was not going to be a specific time limit for any position or candidate. Can you explain this further?

Erica Seaborne, '09: We did say that there were no time limits. But we informed all of the candidates beforehand to keep time in mind, and we told them that we were going to keep it moving.

Aheli Purkayastha, '09: I'm still committed to the same goal – my goal is still to work with Erica and Amber and use my experiences of going through 4 rounds of elections and put in my two cents. I'm still very interested -- I want to work with people and make sure we don't have to go through last semester again. While I think we should acknowledge what happened, I think the key is moving
forward, and making sure that SGA becomes accessible, and set it up so that in 5 months, they have an easier time transitioning as an Exec Board.

**Katie Kellom, '09:** Point of information: Honor board hearings are only confidential to the people who sit on them, and anyone confronted is allowed to say anything – this is done out of respect to the person who's confronted.

**Tanya Kaur, '10:** Do not put each other down in answering this, but what do you bring to the table that sets you apart from the other candidates? Contextualized to your involvement on this campus, not abroad, etc.

**Aheli Purkayastha, '09:** One quality I think I bring is that I consider myself a pretty good listener – as president, you need to be able to articulate your views, but also take everyone's input, and be a liaison between faculty and students, and staff and students. Listening is so important, because nothing good can come of it by just bringing your own opinions.

**Sarah Khasawinah, '09:** I have a unique background, as I view humanity as a magnet with polar ends, both positive and negative forces. As an English and Math major, I use both sides of my brain equally, and I also speak Spanish, English, and Arabic. I love learning and books, and love working on my thesis, love running, hence the initiatives I've started like multi-faith and Virginia Tech Solidarity Project. Someone who brings people together must work not from one end of the community but both.

**Shelley Gupta, '09:** I've had a unique opportunity – I'm really lucky, and thank all of you, because I've been able to work with the Exec Board. I've been communicating with the Exec Board, the assembly, students, administration, and that communication is not going to breakdown. There is not going to be a switch go off with the Exec Board. It was really hard to make this decision, but I thought I could benefit the community more in this position.

**Erica Seaborne, '09:** Thank you all for coming, please stay and talk to the candidates! Make informed decisions!