



**BRIDGE CAFÉ**

# The Bridge Café Returns

**By Xander Portner S25**  
Senior Staff Writer

Dec. 6 — The Bridge Café reopened on November 6 after being temporarily closed for nine weeks. Nancy Bristol—Manager of Dining Services—attributed the shutdown to a persistent staff shortage. She told Leapfrog that Hampshire Dining Services began the semester understaffed, but the unexpected departure of numerous employees forced the College to make the necessary “business decision” to close the Bridge Café in order to ensure that the Dining Commons remained fully operational.

When reached for comment, President Jennifer Chrisler echoed Bristol, and emphasized the important role of the Bridge Café. Chrisler wrote that she “asked our leadership team to make opening the Bridge a priority, [so] we brought in a con-

sultant to help us with both hiring staff and improving some of our operations in dining services.” President Chrisler tapped John Dineen—Associate Vice President of Finance—to spearhead implementing her goal of reopening the Bridge Café.

Dineen told Leapfrog that by mid-October Hampshire hired two consultants—Roger Weger and Gary Symolon—with expertise in food service. While focusing on accelerating the hiring process, they also provided Hampshire Dining Services with professional support in areas like “problem resolution, sourcing of products, and ... talent acquisition” according to Dineen.

By November 6, the logistical support supplied Hampshire Dining Services with enough personnel to reopen the Bridge Café to the Hampshire community. Bristol said that it is largely



LEAPFROG/BLAISE PAINE

The Bridge Café on December 5, 2025

reopening with minimal changes. However, there are some new menu items like fried Oreos and grilled cheese. Additionally, the Bridge Café’s hours of operation have changed from 3pm–10pm on Thursday through Saturday to 4pm–10pm on the same days.

Dineen noted that for the

spring semester, the consultants will look for opportunities to enhance the dining experiences. He also stressed that Hampshire is implementing measures like over-hiring high-turnover positions and streamlining the hiring process to prevent staff shortages in the future.

**NEW COLLEGE OF FLORIDA**

## APL installation memorializes legacy of New College students

**By Xander Portner S25**  
Senior Staff Writer

Oct. 28 — In May 2025, a memorial honoring the approximately 50 students who transferred from the New College of Florida (NCF) was completed in the Airport Lounge (APL). Two students among the NCF transfers—Libby Harrity F23 and Emma Curtis S24—spearheaded the artistic initiative to embed NCF’s story within the history of Hampshire College.

According to Harrity, NCF used to be “a haven for free thought and expression”. Like Hampshire, the school priori-

tized experimental learning and provided a welcoming environment for members of the LGBTQ community. For instance, Harrity referred to their initial experience at NCF as “paradise on Earth” before the inception of Governor Ron DeSantis’s “hostile takeover” of the institution in January, 2023. In an effort to eradicate “wokeness”, the governor usurped the school’s leadership by appointing sympathetic officials that were loyal to his conservative agenda.

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**HAROLD F. JOHNSON LIBRARY**

## Three new librarians join the library

**By Xander Portner S25**  
Senior Staff Writer

Nov. 21 — Over the summer, two longtime librarians—Rachel Beckwith and Suzanne Karanakis—departed Hampshire College. Beckwith, who had worked at Hampshire for 17 years, and Karanakis, who had been with the college for 21 years, were honored on May 15 during a send-off gathering in the library. Beckwith has joined Harvard and Karanakis is continuing her career at UMass Amherst.

By the start of the fall semester, Hampshire welcomed two new librarians: Samantha

Quiñon Snair and Andy Neuman. Leapfrog sat down with the new additions to the library team.

On August 11, Snair began her role as the director of the Harold F Johnson Library. She brought with her a wealth of experience in research, instruction and management at collegiate institutions like Lesley College and the Harvard Kennedy School.

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Leapfrog 3.1, print run #1  
Print circulation: 120

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

Congratulations on making it to the end of the semester!

I am excited to share with you some updates about The Hampshire Leapfrog:

Over the summer I created a new website for the paper—now live at [www.hampshire-leapfrog.org](http://www.hampshire-leapfrog.org)—with a complete archive of every article written for Leapfrog since it began over a year ago.

Additionally, I have done work behind the scenes to set Leapfrog up for continued success, including the development of plagiarism, AI, and conflict of interest policies; a fresh coat of paint on the paper's name, branding, and design; and the beginnings of a handbook which will centralize all the information necessary to operate The Hampshire Leapfrog.

Because Hampshire College does not have a journalism program to support it, Leapfrog is purely a labor of love from those who believe, as I do, in the importance of

a student newspaper at Hampshire College.

On that note, I would like to extend a thank you to Xander Portner and Jonathon Podolsky, Leapfrog's first Senior Staff Writer, and Leapfrog's biggest alumni supporter, respectively. They have both contributed their time, thought, and energy to the paper this semester, and stepped up to the plate while I have not had the time to contribute writing myself.

I would also like to thank those who have put work into Leapfrog this semester that has not yet come to fruition.

On behalf of The Hampshire Leapfrog, I am proud to present Leapfrog Volume 3, Issue 1, the semester-end print edition of The Hampshire Leapfrog, and the 8th print edition to date.

Thank you for reading The Hampshire Leapfrog.

Sincerely,  
Blaise Paine F23  
Editor-in-Chief

## Corrections & Updates

*Leapfrog welcomes comments, concerns, and suggestions, as well as information about errors that call for correction. Please email [correction-s@hampshireleapfrog.org](mailto:correction-s@hampshireleapfrog.org)*

*Corrections will always be printed on this page.*

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**Correction:** Starting in Leapfrog 1.5, the masthead said additional copies may be

requested at "distro@hampshire.edu", an email address that does not exist and would not reach any Leapfrog staff. The mistake has been corrected for this issue.

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**Update:** "Hampshire College Theatre announces F25-S26 season"; the fall main stage show *The Things I Do For Love!* was withdrawn from the season

by the show's producer at the beginning of the semester.

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### PUBLISHING INFO

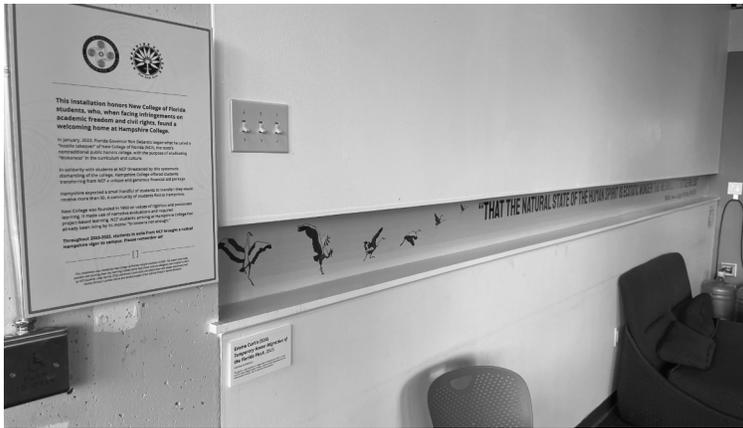
Each print issue of The Hampshire Leapfrog has an accompanying document containing additional information on its creation, available online at [hampshireleapfrog.org/archive](http://hampshireleapfrog.org/archive), at the "Publishing Info" link under each issue.

# News



## NEW COLLEGE OF FLORIDA

### APL installation memorializes legacy of New College students (continued)



LEAPFROG/BLAISE PAINE

The NCF Memorial installation in the APL on May 2, 2025

#### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Fortunately, Hampshire provided NCF students with a favorable deal to continue their nontraditional education. At their new institution, Harry led an effort to ensure that future generations of Hampshire students remember those originally from NCF. While Harry focused on writing and organizing, Curtis painted a recreation of her original mural that was destroyed at NCF during DeSantis's "hostile takeover". With assistance from Lorenzo Conte, Hampshire's Gallery Director, and Rachel Beckwith, the former Library Director, Harry and Curtis gained approval to use the APL as a location to preserve the memory of NCF through the installment.

Curtis' mural depicts numerous cranes in flight over a skyline with bright colors. Describing its symbolism, Curtis remarked "The cranes represent transition from one place of nourishment to another. They are reflective of the experience of each cohort of students coming to school, dancing together, and then leaving all on our own paths. For NCF stu-

dents at Hamp, we made that transition twice. It was worth it both times. Sandhill cranes are native to Florida, and the colors in the piece represent both a sunset and a sunrise, beginnings and ends."

As many NCF students graduate from Hampshire, the installation takes on extra meaning. The plaque accompanying the mural encourages the Hampshire community to remember the NCF students. It reads "throughout 2023-2025, students in exile from NCF brought a radical Hampshire vigor to campus. Please remember us!"

Reflecting on his experience of working with Harry and Curtis, Conte saw the enthusiastic spirit brought from New College firsthand and affirmed its lasting legacy upon the Hampshire community. He remarked "in my time working with students at Hampshire, the students that transplanted from New College have been some of the most driven and creative and active participants at Hampshire College. Having a chance to honor them in this installation is meaningful. But they've definitely left their mark on this place for sure."

## HAROLD F. JOHNSON LIBRARY

### Three new librarians join the library (continued)



PROVIDED

Samantha Quiñon Snair, Director of the Library (left) and Andy Neuman, Access Services Coordinator (right).



PROVIDED/LORENZO CONTE

Carrie Evans, Outreach and Research Instruction Librarian on November 6, 2025.

#### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

She expressed excitement about her new role and referenced Hampshire's emphasis on creative experimentation, accessibility and combatting oppressive power structures as reasons for her enthusiasm. After approximately two months as director, Snair specifically pointed to the students as the salient reason she sees Hampshire as a special place. She remarked, "The students here are... so passionate, so driven; the questions that they ask are so amazing. And it's just really a privilege to be able to engage in that kind of thinking with them." Snair was also eager to develop plans for the future of the library, but emphasized the necessity of gauging the needs of the campus first.

In late July, Andy Neuman joined the library staff as the Access Services Coordinator. Previously, she served as a User Services Associate within a larger department at Smith College. Because of the smaller staff at Hampshire she appreciates her newfound ability to seek input from student workers and the larger community in order to pursue creative ways to enhance the library.

In addition to hiring Snair and Neuman, Hampshire also welcomed Carrie Evans, an Outreach and Research Instruction Librarian, to its library staff. Prior to joining the library team in early November, Evans engaged in a diverse array of experiences including working at Hampshire in a different capacity several years ago. She told Leapfrog that "I love Hampshire, so I'm really, really happy to be back." Evans expects her role in the library to be concentrated around helping Division III students navigate the research process and making the library's resources as accessible as possible.

Leapfrog also spoke with Lorenzo Conte—Hampshire's Gallery Director—about the recent change of staff. He commented, "turnover is not easy. But this...library is a team that's incredibly...close and is incredibly collaborative. And that spirit is continuing strong."



# Opinion



OP-ED

## Hampshire College at a Crossroads

By **Jonathon Podolsky 94F**  
Guest opinion

Sept. 25 — Some may be aware that Hampshire College is in the midst of a presidential search. This is a high-stakes moment, full of opportunity and risk; the wrong choice now could mean the end of Hampshire College.

After the community rallied to change Hampshire's direction following a near closure in 2019, the recovery is faltering. Hampshire needs excellent leadership and a new direction.

Hampshire can move beyond endless cost-cutting, a strategy that was necessary in the short term but lacked some key elements needed for a turnaround. I write more about why Hampshire needs a new business model in upcoming part two: "Hampshire Needs to Rethink Higher Ed, Again?" An exciting alternative vision will also help attract excellent presidential candidates, but first, Hampshire should address some key flaws in its search process.

### Qualities Needed in the Next President

Mike Bills, who has been a trustee for two different colleges, wrote in his dissertation about the different types of leadership needed in various stages of a college's recovery. The problem with Hampshire's leadership since the 2019 crisis is that it has adhered to the crisis manager prototype instead of demonstrating flexibility to return to shared governance, deferring on a case-by-case basis to those with more time, knowledge, or skills related to a particular issue. Good leaders skillfully calibrate between hierarchy and collaboration depending on the type of issue and level of urgency.

Besides a strong fundraising background at small liberal arts colleges, leaders should have knowledge of their own weaknesses and a demonstrated ability to compensate for that by delegating to others. Many

agree that it's rare to find all the necessary skills to be a successful college president in one person. There are various ideas for splitting up the functions among several roles. I go into more details and link to a report in the presidential search section of the article *Is Hampshire Still Hampering Good Governance?*

### Presidential Search

On January 6 of this year, President Wingenbach announced that the interim president would start on July 1st, but he didn't state that she would be in the running for the permanent position. It wasn't until an open webinar that it was announced that Chrisler was in the running. Unfortunately, research shows that an interim president becoming a candidate can have a highly problematic effect on the search process. Hampshire has had a flawed process in the past.

### Rewind – 2017/2018 Presidential Search

The 2018 search committee chose Mim Nelson. Her term was a disaster and nearly led to the college's closure; she resigned after serving less than a year. I spoke with several committee members and found that they were intelligent, diligent, and cared about the process and Hampshire. So what led to such a terrible pick, and what can be done differently?

Hampshire had a search committee in 2017 that didn't end up selecting a finalist and was reconstituted into a second committee with changes to its leadership and some of its members. Some felt pressure to choose someone because of the realities of what could happen if they went back to the drawing board: some candidates might drop out, better candidates might not emerge, and it would look bad, as the search had already been extended. Since the current selection could be as existentially impactful for the college as the one in 2018, we need to fix current problems in



LEAPFROG FILE/BLAISE PAINE

The Harold F. Johnson Library building, August 30, 2025.

the process.

### Committee Composition

Dr. Christopher Tinson, a member of the 2017/18 committee, told me that he thought the presidential search committee should comprise close to the same number of faculty as trustees. Hampshire's board has a couple of trustees elected by the alumni body, but most are selected by the board itself. I notice that the current committee is skewed: neither of the two trustees elected by the alumni body is on the committee, and trustees still outnumber faculty. The article "Colleges in Peril Can Be Rescued, but Only if Governing Boards Transform" discusses some of the issues with the composition of college boards.

### Mim Nelson Playbook and the Dire Need for Better Vetting

Hampshire doesn't conduct "open" searches for president, which means that candidates are promised anonymity. The idea behind this is to encourage top candidates who wouldn't otherwise apply because it could endanger their current job. This secrecy puts more of the onus on skillful vetting since those who know more about the candidates can't warn the committee before the selection is announced.

Dr. Jaime Dávila, who was on the 2017/18 search committee

and now teaches at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, told me that, "There were interesting differences from which we could then choose what was important...You have to remain committed to what's essential, especially at a place like Hampshire. So someone that could lead an institution and a community through change was important. And she [Nelson] had, in her time, led institutions through some changes." This was reasonable thinking because Hampshire did need to change.

The Hampshire community received an anonymous tip-off with the heading "Mim Nelson Playbook" and details about what happened at the Thomson School through a sharing of this Reddit post. At Thomson School, a reimagining process was undertaken that purported to be inclusive but actually masked the dismantling of most of the program. It appears that her interim leadership there was part of what Hampshire's committee saw as her being an experienced leader of academic change and dealing with challenging budgetary issues.

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## Hampshire College at a Crossroads (continued)

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Unfortunately, it was too late—since the tipster had no way to know that she was in the running for the Hampshire presidency, the warning came only after her appointment was announced. This post should have been discovered through proactive vetting; it could have raised serious doubts about her story as an educational reformer, leading to fact-checking of the allegations.

Another challenge for vetting is that the search firms are not incentivized to communicate about seemingly minor flaws. These firms may not see one hire as existential for the college; typically, their goal is to get their placement fee and move on by finding an adequate candidate who will work out for a few years. The college's own stakeholders have a better understanding of Hampshire's unique culture. The search committee itself or special advisors, with deep experience both with Hampshire's culture and recruiting in general, should handle reference checks and online searches to confirm information relevant to candidates' job performance, especially for the finalists. Reasonable concerns can then be passed on to the committee and subcommittees.

### Subcommittees

Loren Pope wrote in his 1996 book, *Colleges That Change Lives*, that "Hampshire students have built-in crap detectors," which remains true to this day. The key is not simply to include them on the main committee, but to have a separate, empowered subcommittee for each stakeholder group (students, alumni, faculty, and staff). Each subcommittee would separately interview the candidates and submit its own report to the main committee. This separation is to prevent problems like students hesitating to push back on faculty opinions in a mixed group.

### Interim Becomes Candidate

A trustee announced that Chrisler is in the running during an open webinar in August. While Chrisler has provided a steady hand and continuity through the interim presidency, an interim president running for the permanent position can create a host of problems. It's

obvious to other potential candidates that the interim president has a home field advantage, such as established relationships with the board, influence on timing of media outreach, on-campus events, one-on-ones, and webinars. Chrisler's candidacy may also benefit from large donations that happen to come in this fall, coinciding with the 55th anniversary of the college.

*A Mandate for More Interim Presidents* highlights some of the problems associated with including an interim president in the search for a permanent one. Ideally, the board should have first identified whether there were strong internal candidates that should have been considered instead of having a costly national search.

Hampshire has used a firm called The Registry in the past, according to an IRS filing. The Registry specializes in higher education and their website states that the firm has placed more senior leaders than any other organization in the country. In "The Age of Interims: Temporary Appointments are Everywhere. The Costs are Real," Kevin J. Matthews, who was their CEO, said, "The Registry strongly discourages its interims from competing for the permanent positions so they will not be influenced by a desire for the job."

Hampshire is a member of the American Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities (AGB). In *Presidential Search: An Overview For Board Members*, AGB wrote, "Many experts suggest that interim presidents serve best when they are not candidates for the permanent position; some boards stipulate this arrangement in the interim president's contract."

In *Trusteeship*, AGB's magazine, Robert Hastings Perry wrote, "In other situations, trustees are unprepared to lose their president and are taken by surprise. Faced with the daunting task of launching a search without the benefit of a game plan, the board often acts precipitously. Believing that the office should not be vacant, they appoint an acting president, logically the institution's No. 2 administrator. What is essential at this point—and in many cases

completely overlooked—is a determination of whether that individual will be a candidate for the permanent post. Simply put, if the acting president is permitted to be a candidate, the process will suffer greatly, as will the institution.

But far more serious than these internal obstacles is the negative effect on the external marketplace. The message from the university and its search counsel that the process is open and all-inclusive falls on deaf ears. The best prospective candidates, believing the search is wired, choose not to apply or to accept nominations. There can be at least two results: The final slate of candidates is missing the horsepower it otherwise would have had, or the institution and search counsel lose face because of the perception that they cooperated in a sham."

Hampshire should:

- Implement the reforms suggested above
- Withdraw the interim president from the race

- Task a volunteer committee of alumni with marketing the position to widen the candidate pool
- Include the opportunity for reforming the business model in the job profile, to attract superb candidates.

These reforms will provide a process with more integrity and maximize the chances of finding a great match. If the search doesn't work out, the board would still have the option of offering the position to the interim president or relaunching the search later on.

The upcoming part two: "Hampshire Needs to Rethink Higher Ed, Again?" provides further details on what Hampshire needs to do to thrive.



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OP-ED

# Hampshire Can Thrive

## Let's help rebuild enrollment

By Jonathon Podolsky 94F  
Guest opinion

Dec. 8 — One of the biggest challenges for Hampshire's new president is increasing enrollment. Hampshire reduced admissions staffing, and enrollment is back down to approximately the 2019 level, the year it declined an incoming class. Hampshire has the power to turn things around by rebuilding staffing, developing a cutting-edge strategy, and leveraging community talent.

Hampshire had increased enrollment by 68% from Fall 2022 (500) to Fall 2024 (833) but now is back down to 750, roughly the same level as Fall 2019. In 2024, Hampshire made cuts to close its budget deficit, including 1/3 of admissions staff.

I asked Hampshire's spokesperson why they made these cuts, given the possibility that they could affect enrollment. They indicated that it was in response to lower enrollment revenue and that the changes they made, combined with external factors, further affected enrollment. Scan the QR code at right to read their statement in full.



Was this outcome predictable? Out of 54 higher ed institutions responding to a survey by Niche.com in the article *Spring 2022 Higher Ed Pacing Towards Undergrad Enrollment - Niche Instant Insights*, "Only 12% of those with fewer staff reported an increase in deposits compared to 45% of those with similar staffing and 57% of those who increased admission staffing."

Put another way, 88% of the institutions that reduced staff didn't increase enrollment. Hampshire's strategic recovery plan forecasts enrollment growth, and deviations from that require further budget cuts.

I wrote to Angel B. Pérez, PhD, CEO of the National Association for College Admission Counseling, who told me that, "In my experience, as a former Dean of Admission—the more counselors I had on the road, working with families, reading applications, and cultivating relationships with high school counselors and students—the more my applications and enrollment pipeline grew."

Dr. Pérez is also the author of *The Hottest Seat on Campus*, which provides wisdom for handling the pressures on admissions deans. A number of exceptional deans were featured in the book, including Hampshire's former Dean of Admissions, Fumio Sugihara, who was quoted as saying that at Hampshire, "I'm the happiest I've ever been." (February 13, 2024). This was prior to the budget cuts and restructuring.

As Pérez wrote in his book, "Without the admission office, there are no students. Without students, there is no revenue. Without revenue, there is no college." Going forward, Hampshire should rebuild staffing levels, hire an experienced permanent dean, have that dean return to being a direct report to the president, and protect those positions.

I interviewed Teege Mettill, author of *The Admissions Counselor Malaise*. Counselors' jobs have changed over the last twenty years, with an increased focus on data, which can hurt morale since counselors are more people-oriented. Staffing cuts can exacerbate pressure on



LEAPFROG FILE/BLAISE PAINE

The R.W. Kern Center on September 2, 2025.

staff, leaving them with a larger number of prospects per remaining counselor and further increasing the need for strategies and technologies that help them stay focused on what moves the needle. "The drive needs to be towards more, not less direct individual engagement with students. Someone at the institution has to find a reasonably good way to identify which students on any given day to be interacting with...to look for those little signals."

Students who are excited about Hampshire's model and community may want to help enrollment thrive in various ways, such as by volunteering. One way is to approach the admissions staff to offer to table at your former high school, or to speak to the guidance counselors there who advise students on colleges. The admissions office should support student volunteers with table materials and some suggested talking points.

Eventually, Hampshire might want to see whether there are aspects of Deep Springs College's admissions process to emulate, as described in *Diamond in the Rough: A Century of Education and Democracy at Deep Springs College*: students conduct interviews, read appli-

cations, and have prospective students spend a few days on campus. According to an interview with former Dean of Admissions Julie Richardson by Jessica Doanes 10F in *Inside* (vol. 5, issue 2) Hampshire used to have overnight stays for prospective multicultural students and had a hometown high program, so those programs could be revitalized. Phil Stone, who was president of Sweet Briar College after its brief closure, demonstrated an attitude around enrollment that Hampshire should emulate when he, "instructed admissions officers to bring every prospective student to him, whether he is in his office, in a meeting or somewhere else on campus. He wants to say hello and encourage prospects to enroll," according to Gary Robertson in "Redefining college ties", an article in *Virginia Business*.

I wrote in *To Succeed, Hampshire Must Get a Lot Weirder*, that Hampshire needs a community-wide effort, and to improve marketing, it needs to show, not tell: be bold and straightforward. Hampshire has a short time to restore its enrollment trajectory and, simultaneously, add other revenue streams.

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