



AHS on Campus: A Life-Changing Experience

Joseph Riley, University of Virginia '13

I graduated *summa cum laude* this past May from the University of Virginia, where I was one of the top 10 ROTC cadets in the United States. I am the founder of the Alexander Hamilton Society chapter at UVA and was its president for three years—making me, so far, the Hamilton Society's longest-serving chapter president.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share my experience with those who have so generously supported—or who are considering supporting—the Hamilton Society. There are hundreds of students like me at Hamilton's 50 university chapters, for whom the organization provides life-changing experiences while preparing them for service to our country. But the Hamilton Society cannot continue to do this without your help. Even as an undergraduate, I felt strongly enough about Hamilton's work to support it financially myself.

The Hamilton Society has contributed to my intellectual and professional development on many levels. I was fortunate to receive both the Truman and Rhodes Scholarships, and there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that I would not have been able to receive either of these scholarships had it not been for the Hamilton Society. The leadership role I was able to play in founding the UVA chapter has also prepared me to be a leader in the United States Army.

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The most important experience Hamilton provided was the opportunity to host debates at the University of Virginia. I was able to bring students together who might not otherwise have been interested in foreign policy, or who might not have thought about foreign policy from a conservative perspective. As a consequence of coming out to these events, these students got involved in AHS and learned a great deal more about foreign and security policy than they ever would have otherwise.

Through these debates, the Hamilton Society unquestionably brought something distinctive to the University of Virginia. I had several students come up to me after each event and say they had never thought of the issues in that way, or they had never seen a civil exchange of ideas on that level, between well-informed professors and professionals who had very different views.

It was wonderful for me to see, especially, younger students come into the Hamilton Society in their first or second year and get very involved, not only at UVA, but at the national level. For a first- or second-year student, there is really no way to replicate the opportunity to come up to Washington, D.C., for the Hamilton National Symposium, and listen to some of the nation's leading foreign policy experts having an exchange of ideas about the critical issues facing our generation.

Moreover, students have access to AHS's professional members, who have already succeeded tremendously in their respective fields, whether in business, law, politics, policy, or the military. Without a doubt, most of my important mentors have come from the Hamilton Society. They took me under their wing, helped me through my

applications, and wrote letters of recommendation for me.



Joseph Riley (l.) and AHS co-founder Aaron Friedberg speak at the AHS National Symposium in Washington, D.C.

After graduating from UVA, I transitioned to Washington, D.C., working on Capitol Hill for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, before leaving to begin my Rhodes Scholarship. This experience gave me an even greater appreciation for how widespread Hamilton has become, how many contacts it has, and how willing professional members are to reach out to students and to advise them.

The opportunity to meet and work with other students, who in 20 or 30 years will be my colleagues, and with professionals and professors who are already established, made my learning experience at UVA much more fruitful. The tremendous amount of real-world experience I gained through the Hamilton Society will allow me to contribute to our foreign policy in the future and, I hope, to strengthening America's role in the world.

My fellow Hamilton Society leaders need your help. Thank you for your attention, and thank you in advance for your support.