

The Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program: From a “Legacy” of Social Justice and Civil Rights to the Dustbin of History

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In 2011, Hanover College organized and named a scholarship program for Benjamin Templeton, allegedly its first Black student. The program recruits and retains undergraduate students passionate about social justice and campus change.¹ In 2023, the program was renamed the Social Justice Leadership program, which has the same goal of recruiting students who have a passion for diversity, human rights, or social justice.² Hanover College, with its Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program, has tried to highlight its commitment to diversity. Hanover College only had one student of color graduate in 2007, leading President Sue DeWine and the Vice President for Enrollment Management, Jon Riester, to brainstorm how to increase diversity at the College.³ DeWine and Riester used their knowledge of the first African American to attend Hanover College to influence the creation of the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program. The group acknowledged that they needed another staff member focusing on diversity to help the program’s development. This commitment led to the group hiring Monica Green Johnson to assist in developing The Benjamin Templeton Scholars program, and she became the program’s first director.⁴ The program took many years to develop, and the creators wanted to highlight diversity. Hanover College named its new program after a Black student with a complex history with the College to highlight its commitment to diversity. This act represents Hanover’s more profound culture of performative actions and rewriting history to paint the College and its legacy in the best light since the program’s inception.

Benjamin Templeton: The Myth

Hanover College was founded in 1827 by Reverend John Finley Crowe and is currently a liberal arts college.⁵ Benjamin Templeton, a formerly enslaved individual freed in his former master’s will, came to Hanover College’s Preparatory Department after dealing with racist attacks at Ripley College.⁶ Templeton attended Hanover College’s Preparatory Department in 1833 and 1834 just

¹ Hanover College, “A Historical Perspective on Equity and Diversity at Hanover College,” History of Diversity and Equity, 6 April, 2023, <https://www.hanover.edu/studentlife/diversityequityinclusion/history/>. Para. 12.

² Hanover College, “Social Justice Leadership Program Application,” Admission - Hanover College, https://explore.hanover.edu/register/sjlp24?_ga=2.131237769.782547051.1704680242-1242564171.1661272494, accessed 9 January, 2024.

³ Sue DeWine, “Origins of The Templeton Scholars at Hanover College,” 25 August 2021. Hanover College, Hanover, Indiana, 1.

⁴ DeWine, “Origins of The Templeton,” 1.

⁵ Hanover College, “A Historical Perspective on Equity,” Para. 1.

⁶ Ann Hagedorn, *Beyond the River: The Untold Story of the Heroes of the Underground Railroad* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 60-64.

six years after it was founded.⁷ This reveals that Hanover College might have always strived to be an inclusive space for everyone and this goal was achieved early in the history of the College. When Crowe founded the College, he wanted to “educate both whites and Blacks for the ministry,” and admitting Templeton to the Preparatory Department was a strong way to reach this goal.⁸ After two years at the Preparatory Department, Templeton entered Indiana Theological Seminary, which was associated with Hanover College, in 1836.⁹ Templeton did not graduate from the Indiana Theological Seminary and instead left for personal reasons.¹⁰ It does not appear that Templeton faced issues similar to what he experienced at Ripley College at Hanover College. But he did leave Hanover College around the same time that Hanover’s Presbyterian officers and other officials were frustrated with the creation of an Anti-Slavery Society on campus.¹¹ After leaving the Indiana Theological Seminary, Templeton went to the Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati to finish his studies and became a preacher before passing away in 1858.¹² In 2015, Benjamin Templeton was awarded a posthumous Bachelor of Arts degree from Hanover College.¹³ This was one hundred and seventy-nine years after he left Hanover but four years after the first cohort of Benjamin Templeton Scholars arrived on campus.

The Program’s Beginnings

The Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program had its first cohort class start in the Fall of 2011 but the idea of the program and its potential problems did not start with them. While recruiting for this class and others, President Sue DeWine wanted to ensure this group did not only focus on racial diversity but also included “diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ableism, religion, or any other trait used to marginalize peoples throughout the nation.”¹⁴ This definition leaves out a critical category for diversity: class or socioeconomic status. This category appears to be left out of the consideration for Benjamin Templeton Scholars. When the first group was

⁷ Hanover College and Indiana Theological Seminary, *A Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Hanover College and Indiana Theological Seminary, 1833-36*, Hanover College, Hanover, Indiana.

⁸ Hanover College, “A Historical Perspective on Equity,” Para. 1, 2.

⁹ Hanover College and Indiana Theological Seminary, *A Catalogue of the Officers*.

¹⁰ Hanover College History Department, “Benjamin Templeton, Hanover Student, 1833-1835 - - Learning in Black and White” Hanover College,” Hanover College, <https://history.hanover.edu/texts/bnw/sub-templeton.php>.

¹¹ J. Michael, Raley. “Colonization versus Abolitionism in the Antebellum North: The Anti-Slavery Society of Hanover College and Indiana Theological Seminary (1836) versus the Hanover College Officers, Board of Trustees, and Faculty,” *Midwest Social Sciences Journal* 23, no. 1 (2020): 80–117 (Article 9), <https://doi.org/10.22543/0796.231.1030>, at 82.

¹² Jeff Studds, 2020. “Who is Benjamin Templeton?” Zoom Lecture, Benjamin Templeton Scholars Retreat, Hanover College, 3 Oct. 2020; Raley, “Colonization versus Abolitionism,” 81.

¹³ Hanover College, “Commencement celebrates Diversity,” *Hanoverian* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 12-13 at 12.

¹⁴ DeWine, “Origins of The Templeton,” 1.

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brought to campus, Monica Green, the program's first director, stated, "There's a requirement for them to be change agents."¹⁵ Building this program places the goal of solving and reducing discrimination onto the individuals facing the discrimination, which is supported by the requirements to be a scholar. No college-age student can be a "change agent" without sufficient support, yet Hanover's support was focused on getting these students onto campus through scholarships.

The scholarship program gave out ten full-tuition scholarships a year, which students received for their four years from 2011-2022, with the program shifting to a \$2500 scholarship for up to 20 students starting in Fall 2023.¹⁶ The original scholarships provide significant support to scholars by allowing them to only have to cover room and board costs for four years. For a 2025 scholar the scholarship was quantified as "160K to Hanover College," revealing a strong commitment to diversity.¹⁷ While these scholarships offer support, it is not enough for the students to be "change agents" in their projects. The scholars lack clear instructional support and have only volunteer mentors.¹⁸ There are no records of the program bringing individuals working in social justice or advocating for diversity, which would help scholars have a knowledge base for their projects.

The program's first year started with eight women of varying races.¹⁹ These individuals were the foundation for this program's future and they worked quickly to establish themselves on campus with hopes of making lasting change. In the Fall of 2011, five of the eight Templeton Scholars shared their stories to be published in the *Hanoverian*, Hanover College's magazine, and the College connected them to "fulfilling the founder's mission" by being "student leaders committed to the causes of social justice, tolerance, and diversity."²⁰ The pressure on these students was likely intense. Changing the campus culture and increasing the diversity on Hanover Campus was placed onto eight students and program director Green—a daunting task for a group of virtual strangers.

¹⁵ Andrew Faught, "Agents of Change" *Hanoverian* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 26-29 on 27.

¹⁶ Jane Stormer, "Great Admission News and Diversity Initiatives" (17 Nov. 2010) *Internet Archive Wayback Machine*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150925005915/http://blogs.hanover.edu/students/2010/11/17/great-admission-news-and-diversity-initiatives/> (accessed 12 Jan. 2024) Para. 4, 5; Hanover College "Social Justice Leadership Program Application."

¹⁷ Phylicia Ashley, "Louisville Student awarded 160K to Hanover College," WAVE 3 News, Gray Television, Inc. 19, Feb. 2021, <https://www.wave3.com/2021/02/19/louisville-student-award-k-hanover-college/>, para. 6.

¹⁸ Faught, "Agents of Change," 28.

¹⁹ Faught, "Agents of Change," 26.

²⁰ Hanover College, "Fulfilling the Founder's Mission" *Hanoverian* 20, no. 1 (Fall 2011): 11-13 at 11-12.

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They had a mission of producing a diversity-related campus-wide event each year, and their first event was ‘Hands Across Hanover.’²¹ This event had people sign up to complete random acts of kindness for others and had individuals highlighting their commitment to diversity by putting their names on paper hands.²² The Templeton Scholars also worked on a campus tolerance pledge at the same time, which the president adopted.²³ Neither of these actions helps students facing issues connected to discrimination. One of the scholars described the event as a “request [for] the Hanover College community to promote tolerance throughout all aspects of their lives.”²⁴ This request is simply something that is asked but not required.

Campus-wide programs were not the only way the Templeton Scholars Program strived for diversity. Templeton Scholars were involved in many organizations at Hanover that focused on diversity, inclusion, and mentorship, such as the 7th-grade mentors, Kaleidoscope, and Sister-to-Sister.²⁵ These clubs allowed the Scholars to have leadership opportunities and share their knowledge with others. Creating clubs is a strong way to impact the campus community but none of these organizations are still present on Hanover’s Campus. The Templeton group also helped the College and the surrounding community respond to racially charged local events. One example was the Benjamin Templeton Scholars working with other campus organizations for a peaceful protest on campus in response to a nearby Madison, Indiana Ku Klux Klan rally in September 2014.²⁶ This event happened at the same time as the protest and allowed for “alternative campus programs supporting diversity and inclusion [with] more than 300 students attending.”²⁷ The protest shows how the Templeton Scholars can work with the overarching community while creating programs for the campus. This connection with the community has the potential to increase diversity on campus and the surrounding area. But no clear lasting relationship can be found, which begs the question, what is the long-term impact of this program?

To answer this question, one should go back to the projects the first cohort of scholars did before considering these impacts. The second project led to the creation of a simulation-style game. The activity, ‘The Game of Life,’ was suggested by two Templeton scholars who participated in a similar simulation during their experience at the Governor Scholars Program, a summer camp run

²¹ DeWine, “Origins of The Templeton” 2-3.

²² DeWine, “Origins of The Templeton” 3; Faught, “Agents of Change,” 27.

²³ Author Unknown, “Hanover College Benjamin Templeton Scholarship Program,” 2014, Hanover College, Hanover, Indiana, 3.

²⁴ Hanover College, “Fulfilling the Founder’s Mission” 13.

²⁵ Gage Richardson, “Last day for 7th-grade mentor program,” 17 April 2024, *Internet Archive Wayback Machine*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20130608111109/http://blogs.hanover.edu/students/2013/04/17/last-day-for-7th-grade-mentor-program/> accessed 12 January 2024.; “Fulfilling the Founder’s Mission” 13.

²⁶ Hanover College, “Students, Faculty Participate in Anti-Klan Rally,” *Hanoverian* 24, no. 3 (Winter 2016-17): 4.

²⁷ Hanover College, “Students, Faculty Participate in Anti-Klan Rally,” 4.

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by the Kentucky government for high-achieving students from across the state.²⁸ The game had students enter the Lynn Gym and then be assigned specific personal characteristics that impacted their opportunities in the simulation.²⁹ While this simulation highlights how others may experience discrimination, it is unlikely to create a lasting change. A volunteer at the event described it as a way to “show how different people have different problems in life for reasons they can’t control” and mentioned a discussion led by the scholars after the event.³⁰ In its defense, ‘The Game of Life’ does push for inclusion and understanding more than the ‘Hands Across Hanover’ pledge. This higher level of inclusion and understanding shows that the program is evolving as it ages, but is it reaching its highest potential?

The Templeton group did another simulation of ‘The Game of Life’ the following year on campus, even presenting the simulation at the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education (NCORE) for 500-600 students in 2014.³¹ The repeat of the event shows its success on and off campus by being recognized on a national level, but it does not address the question of whether it truly changes minds. In the final school year (2014-15) of the first cohort of Benjamin Templeton Scholars, they worked to ensure they had one last project to influence Hanover College. The group created a cement wall filled with negative terms for the campus to destroy.³² This event was based on something done in 2011 called “Wall for Hate,” which President DeWine stated: “was such a strong symbol of Unity.”³³ This may highlight unity but does nothing to help the students who see and hear those words in their dorms and classrooms.

The first cohort of the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program graduated in 2015, and the school ensured their commitment to diversity was strongly highlighted. The *Hanoverian* describes the “picture-perfect setting,” then immediately goes on to highlight that the class of 2015 was the most diverse class in Hanover College History.³⁴ This fact might sound impressive until one

²⁸ Gage Richardson, “Status update – 3/4/2013” 6 March 2013, *Internet Archive Wayback Machine*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20130606015053/http://blogs.hanover.edu/students/2013/03/06/status-update-342013/> (accessed 12 January 2024), Para 4; Kentucky State Government “Welcome to Kentucky Governor’s Scholars Program,” Governor’s Scholars Program, <https://gsp.ky.gov/Pages/index.aspx> (accessed 12 January 2024).

²⁹ Dakota McCoy, “Let’s Play Rugby” 18 March 2013, *Internet Archive Wayback Machine*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150922063841/http://blogs.hanover.edu/students/2013/03/18/lets-play-rugby/> (accessed 12 January 2024), para 8.

³⁰ McCoy, “Let’s Play Rugby,” para 9.

³¹ Gage Richardson, “2013 Benjamin Templeton Scholar Retreat,” 5 November 2013, *Internet Archive Wayback Machine*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150924002655/http://blogs.hanover.edu/students/2013/11/05/2013-benjamin-templeton-scholar-retreat/> (accessed 12 Jan. 2024), Para 8; “Hanover College Benjamin Templeton Scholarship Program” 4.

³² DeWine, “Origins of The Templeton Scholars at Hanover College,” 3.

³³ Sue DeWine, “Cherishing Hanover,” *Hanoverian* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 2-4 at 4.

³⁴ Hanover College, “Commencement Celebrates Diversity,” 12.

remembers that in 2007, Hanover College only had one person of color graduate, and the source provides no information on how diverse “most diverse” is defined.³⁵ The phrasing of this statement is very deliberate. Hanover College underscores how this claim is positive, whereas giving the number of students would likely be less impressive. Furthermore, Benjamin Templeton was given a posthumous Bachelor of Arts degree at this graduation ceremony.³⁶ Why would Templeton be given an award? The history around him leaving Hanover did not appear to be negative, so this raises the question of what is missing in the story of Benjamin Templeton.

Benjamin Templeton: The Man

Benjamin Templeton was born to Pompey and Tarak Templeton in Spartanburg District, South Carolina in 1809.³⁷ Templeton and his family were freed in their master’s will in 1813, and consequently his older brother became the fourth African American college graduate in 1828.³⁸ Templeton’s brother’s success in education likely led to his desire to get a college degree and become a minister. Templeton first went to Ripley College, where he was a target of racist attacks, before coming to Hanover College’s Preparatory Department in 1834.³⁹ Templeton returned to the preparatory academy the next year but never formally enrolled in Hanover College.⁴⁰

Regardless, Templeton’s lack of formal enrollment to Hanover College did not stop college officials such as John Riester and President DeWine from stating he was “the first African American to attend Hanover College.”⁴¹ This line is repeated in both Hanover marketing and in external discussions referencing the program. While describing the Benjamin Templeton Program, Louisville, Kentucky’s WAVE news stated Templeton is “the first African American who attended Hanover College.”⁴² Despite these claims, he did not graduate or attend Hanover College, as shown by how he is listed in the *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Hanover College and Indiana Theological Seminary*.⁴³ He is listed as Benjamin Templeton, and then there is a blank line next to his name where the College he graduated from would be listed.⁴⁴ Templeton also did not graduate from Indiana Theological Seminary and left Seminary right after College officials became

³⁵ DeWine “Origins of The Templeton,” 1.

³⁶ Hanover College, “Commencement Celebrates Diversity,” 12.

³⁷ Hagedorn, *Beyond the River*, 60.

³⁸ Hagedorn, *Beyond the River*, 60.

³⁹ Hagedorn, *Beyond the River*, 62-63; Hanover College and Indiana Theological Seminary, *Catalogue of the Corporation*, 1833.

⁴⁰ Hanover College and Indiana Theological Seminary, *Catalogue of the Officers*, Feb. 1834.

⁴¹ DeWine “Origins of The Templeton,” 1.

⁴² Ashley, “Louisville Student awarded 160K to Hanover College,” para. 1.

⁴³ Hanover College and Indiana Theological Seminary, *Catalogue of the Officers*, 1835-36.

⁴⁴ Hanover College and Indiana Theological Seminary, *Catalogue of the Officers*, 1835-36.

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frustrated with the Anti-Slavery Society Templeton helped form.⁴⁵ It is likely that Templeton left Hanover, Indiana, due to his college's lack of support for the Anti-Slavery movement and failure to defend the group's right to protest. Templeton attended Hanover Academy, but he was never a student at Hanover College despite the College's insistence on his being the first Black student to attend Hanover College.

Hanover College likely points to Templeton as the first Black student since the school does not have a good history with diversity. Without Templeton, the College had no positive representation of American Black diversity until its first Black graduate, Alma Gene Prince, in 1951.⁴⁶ Thus Benjamin Templeton cannot be cited as an example of Hanover College's commitment to diversity. When one looks deeper at The Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program, the same can be found.

Performative Action

One of the goals of the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program was to increase diversity at Hanover College. The first project of the 2015 cohort was 'Hands Across Hanover' was very performative and did not make them change agents. A tolerance pledge does nothing to change what is said or seen on campus. A student can see the tolerance pledge with signatures, return to their dorm, and see slurs written on a whiteboard. These events are very surface-level in increasing diversity and inclusion. On paper, it highlights inclusion, but it lacks action. Writing one's name on a hand, signifying one's connection to diversity, does not lead to a more diverse campus since nothing has changed. The campus is the same, with or without these names listed. This project has had no lasting result or impact on Hanover College.

The second and third project from the cohort has the same troubles. The school Newspaper, *The Triangle*, described the first event as:

The Benjamin Templeton Scholars of Hanover College hosted a life size version of 'The Game of Life' in Lynn Gym this past Saturday. Students walked around a giant game board, attempting to become successful by receiving an education, earning money, and starting a family. Students were given a nametag and were assigned a certain economic class, gender, and ethnicity. Students were unaware of their stereotype and were treated differently based on their stereotype.⁴⁷

The lack of awareness of their "stereotype" in the game may have helped them build the connection that treating people based on factors they cannot control is bad but does nothing to help them treat people less differently based on these factors. This simulation requires the participants to think deeply for any change to happen. While the game did end with a presentation about how the students were discriminated against and how this discrimination is present in the real world, there

⁴⁵ Raley, "Colonization versus Abolitionism," 82.

⁴⁶ Hanover College, "A Historical Perspective on Equity," Para. 3.

⁴⁷Rudy Uhde, "Hanover Students Learn About Discrimination Through Giant Board Game," *The Triangle*. 15 March 2013. Hanover College, Hanover, Indiana. 3.

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is no illustration of people's minds being changed.⁴⁸ The article quotes a student who stated, "It seems like a great experience," highlighting that he did not gather anything from this experience, but believing others must have.⁴⁹ A student blogger discussed his experiences at 'The Game of Life' and had similar mentions of no lasting impact.

Dakota McCoy '15 attended the event, and his life did not seem significantly affected by it, connecting to the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program and creating performative events. The next day, McCoy went and played rugby, and in his blog post, he spent 299 words discussing rugby and only 182 words discussing 'The Game of Life.'⁵⁰ McCoy did not mention anything he learned from the simulation; instead, he summarized the premise of the game but connected his mental processes with his rugby game.⁵¹ This lack of connection reveals that this program is unlikely to have a lasting impact on McCoy and others who attended the event. McCoy is more likely to remember his hurt ankle from the weekend due to its impact on his life than the simulation game. While McCoy was not the only student in attendance at the event, his experience was not necessarily unique and matched interviews of students in *The Triangle*. When the Templeton group repeated the simulation of the 'The Game of Life' the following year on and off campus, its success marked through recognition on a national level.⁵² However, it does not negate the performative nature.

In the final school year (2014-15) of the first cohort of Benjamin Templeton Scholars, they worked to ensure they had one last project to influence Hanover College. The group created a cement wall filled with negative terms for the campus to destroy.⁵³ This destruction is a prime example of performative action. Acknowledging dispiriting terms and destroying them does nothing to reduce the number of times they are said on campus and instead forces marginalized groups to show off their trauma for the benefit of the school. Even more so, the scholars consented to this event and saw terms that may hurt them, but the rest of the campus did not, meaning students might relive their traumatic experiences in a location they were not expecting. This act is performative because it did nothing to impact or change the system in which these words were allowed to be spoken. Hanover College has not been subtle in its desire to rewrite its history connected to diversity.

⁴⁸ Uhde, "Hanover Students Learn About Discrimination," 3.

⁴⁹ Uhde, "Hanover Students Learn About Discrimination," 3.

⁵⁰ McCoy, "Let's Play Rugby."

⁵¹ McCoy, "Let's Play Rugby," para 3, 4, 9 & 10.

⁵² Gage Richardson, "2013 Benjamin Templeton Scholar Retreat," 5 November 2013, *Internet Archive Wayback Machine*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150924002655/http://blogs.hanover.edu/students/2013/11/05/2013-benjamin-templeton-scholar-retreat/> (accessed 12 January 2024), Para 8; "Hanover College Benjamin Templeton Scholarship Program" 4.

⁵³ DeWine, "Origins of The Templeton Scholars at Hanover College," 3.

Program Changes but Performative Still

With the graduation of the first Templeton Scholars, two things changed about the program and the College as a whole. The first change was that President Sue DeWine retired in 2015.⁵⁴ She was a champion for the program, and the loss of her shifted how the program works and how it is supported on campus. Monica Green left the school and the program in 2015.⁵⁵ Her leaving started the rotating circus of six different directors in four years, with the appointment of David J. (D. J.) Walch Jr. ending the cycle in 2019.⁵⁶ The chaos of the organization did impact the scholars, but some projects were written about after Green's departure. This did not prevent the few projects from still being performative. Sierra Nuckols '18, a white woman, had a transformative experience in South Africa, which led to her creating a Community Food Box Project to help with food deserts in her hometown.⁵⁷ She got old newspaper boxes from NUVO, had the boxes painted by incarcerated people, and placed them filled with food around Indianapolis.⁵⁸ While these actions help the local community, they do nothing to solve the systemic problems of food insecurity. Nuckols's project could have worked toward improving the systemic problems by advocating in the political system or partnering with another organization. Overall, her project had a positive impact but did little to reduce the systemic issues, proving that this was a performative project.

The next mention of the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program in Hanover College publications is in 2018, and by that time, the program director had changed four times.⁵⁹ Tad Kaufman '21 received the "Realizing the Dream" award, highlighting his work as a Benjamin Templeton Scholar and serving in diverse clubs.⁶⁰ Kaufman's mention of the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program was just simply that. A statement that he is one shows that Hanover College ensures the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program is directly tied to diversity but does little to improve it. The same year, Sierra Nuckols '18 is mentioned as winning "the 2018 College Career Center Consortium's Paul W. Gabonay Volunteer Service Award" for her Community Food Box Project.⁶¹ This achievement is impressive. The text highlights that Nuckols expanded her project in her hometown to help more individuals with food insecurity.⁶² Once again, this project provides

⁵⁴ DeWine, "Cherishing Hanover," 2.

⁵⁵ D. J., Walch, Jace Lichtefeld, Barb Sims, Vicky Hidalgo, & David Harden, "Timeline of Directors" 2021, Hanover College, Hanover, Indiana.

⁵⁶ Walch et al. "Timeline of Directors" 2021.

⁵⁷ Hanover College, "One Can Make a Difference" *Hanoverian* 24, no. 3 (Winter 2016-17): 11-13 on 11.

⁵⁸ Hanover College, "One Can Make a Difference," 12-13.

⁵⁹ Walch et al. "Timeline of Directors" 2021.

⁶⁰ Hanover College, "Kaufman Earns 'Realizing the Dream' Award," *Hanoverian* 26, no. 2 (Winter 2018): 9.

⁶¹ Hanover College, "Nuckols Receives State-Wide Volunteer Service Award," *Hanoverian* 26, no. 1 (Summer 2018): 5.

⁶² Hanover College, "Nuckols Receives State-Wide Volunteer" 5.

temporary relief for individuals, which is necessary. However, lasting change only happens if paired with a goal of systemic change, which Nuckols' project does not have. Templeton Scholar projects that lack a sense of systematic change but appear to make a difference are a consistent part of the program. However, one project can be highlighted as pushing for systemic change.

Systemic Change

One example of a Benjamin Templeton Scholar pushing for systemic change is Samuel Pyle '20. This shows that while the Scholar projects could not push past being performative in nature, at least one could. Samuel Pyle was born in Sierra Leone and lived in a war-torn country suffering from hunger and devastation.⁶³ A family from Oldham County, Kentucky adopted him in 2013.⁶⁴ Pyle did not forget where he came from, and upon entering Hanover College, he started Looking Back Moving Forward (LBMF), which aids children in Sierra Leone.⁶⁵ Pyle, with his club, brought a best-selling author to campus, and when Hanover College wrote about Pyle, they did not mention he was a Benjamin Templeton Scholar.⁶⁶ This shows that even the College is questioning the value of Templeton Scholars on their campus. Pyle's project is an example of a Templeton-adjacent project leading to systemic change. Similarly to Nuckols' project, LBMF helps with the immediate problem of food insecurity, but Pyle goes further by hosting summer camps to push for women's equality.⁶⁷ LBMF and Pyle are working to disrupt the cycle of women not having access to sports and education. The next time Pyle's club, now a nonprofit 501©(3), is mentioned, his connection to the program is revealed but as a way to underscore that the program "supports diversity, human rights, and social justice."⁶⁸ Pyle likely got support for this club because he was a Templeton Scholar. However, nothing on his website or the articles about his nonprofit states that anyone in the program was significantly helpful. Pyle is working to create systemic change by providing summer camps and educational programs to children in Sierra Leone. He is doing that *as* a Templeton Scholar but not *because* he was a Templeton Scholar.

Templeton (Program) Drops Out

In recent years, Hanover College has started to shift its focus on diversity and inclusion away from the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program, underscoring Hanover's history of rewriting history for its benefit. The surface-level commitment to the program and diversity is waning. The College is trying to rewrite its history with diversity again by not mentioning the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program. In 2021, the *Hanoverian* published an article entitled "Climate Change:

⁶³ Samuel Pyle, "The Heart Behind the Mission," Looking Back Moving Forward, <https://www.lbmfgo.org/about>, Accessed 12 January 2024, Para. 1.

⁶⁴ Samuel Pyle, "The Heart Behind the Mission," Para. 5.

⁶⁵ Hanover College, "Looking Back and Moving Forward Hosts Best Selling Author," *Hanoverian* 26, no. 1 (Summer 2018): 10.

⁶⁶ Hanover College, "Looking Back and Moving Forward," 10.

⁶⁷ Pyle, "The Heart Behind the Mission" Para. 7.

⁶⁸ Pam Platt. "Let's Make a Difference" *Hanoverian* 27 (Winter 2019): 11-13, on 13.

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Hanover Strives to Create a More Just Campus;” the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program was not mentioned in the article.⁶⁹ Sam Piacente ’22 was interviewed in the *Hanoverian* article, but his introduction mentions him as the president of Hanover Kings and Queen, now Hanover Royalty, and not a Templeton Scholar.⁷⁰ D. J. Walch, the Director of the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program since December 2019, confirmed that Piacente was a scholar.⁷¹ The “Climate Change” article is not the first time the Benjamin Templeton Program has not been mentioned, but it is the largest. The exclusion of a program that was used as a critical highlight of diversity and inclusion on campus since 2011 speaks volumes about the impact the program has had on the College in the ten years. The impact is not noticeable, emphasizing the performative nature of the program and the scholar projects.

Aside from those in the program, students know nothing about it, and even scholars cannot name projects completed by the program. Lana Wooley ’26 was asked about their experiences with the program, and they could not “tell you what the projects were about last [2022/2023] year.”⁷² No historical records log the projects from the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program. Wooley suggests that the program would benefit from focusing on one or two projects with the hopes of systemic change, but the projects from 2011-2015 show that a group focus does not inherently lead to systemic change.⁷³ The lack of mention of even performative projects from the scholars demonstrates that this program is seen as a failure or at least something to no longer celebrate.

There is one project on the Hanover Campus that can be tied to the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program, but the project’s goal has evolved, and one looks in vain for any mention of the program or the scholars who started it.⁷⁴ This is the rainbow closet for the Hanover College Queer community, which provides clothing and undergarments for transgender individuals. It was started before Ashley Gordon’s ’25 time by a Templeton Scholar, and that is the extent of what she knows about the project despite her being a scholar and serving as the LGBTQIA+ center coordinator.⁷⁵ The lack of records again highlights that Hanover College is trying to hide or at least avoid connections to the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program. Their performative connection to the program has been lost.

Information about the scholar projects can no longer be found in the *Hanoverian*, which is designed for a wider audience than Hanover Students. Instead, it is featured exclusively in the

⁶⁹ Hanover College, “Climate Change: Hanover Stives to Create a More Just Campus,” *Hanoverian* 28, no. 3 (2021): 6-7.

⁷⁰ Hanover College, “Climate Change,” 6.

⁷¹ D. J. Walch, Conversation with the Author, 2023.

⁷² Lana Wooley, Conversation with the Author, 2024.

⁷³ Lana Wooley, Conversation with the Author, 2024.

⁷⁴ Ashley Gordon, Conversation with the Author, 2024.

⁷⁵ Ashley Gordon, Conversation with the Author, 2024.

Hanover College Student Newspaper, *The Triangle*. In 2018, Hanover College students were abruptly faced with ‘Hurting Words’ hung in the Withrow Activities Center, a common hangout space on Hanover College’s Campus, and asked, “How do these words make you feel?”⁷⁶ While it appears no one in relation to this project was aware, this display was very similar to the ‘Wall of Hate’ project. This project did lead to systemic change despite commenters reservations since it led to the Bias Incidents Report Team (BRIT), now known as the Community Alliance and Resource Team (CART), returning.⁷⁷ Another Templeton Scholar Project highlighted in *The Triangle* is a Neurodiversity Gallery as an upcoming event highlight, which hosted artwork focused on Neurodiversity.⁷⁸ Jessica Rieskamp described her event as a way to highlight that “having autism or Down syndrome or other variances should not be seen as a ‘dis’ability.”⁷⁹ This view is very able-bodied focused since the word disability is not a negative. Instead of Rieskamp’s project highlighting neurodiverse individuals, it once again puts them in a neurotypical world by saying they are not disabled, just special. These two projects only highlighted in *The Triangle* reveal a hidden strength of the Benjamin Templeton Program and a hidden weakness, but their lack of mention in College materials reveals that Hanover College is trying to distance itself from the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program.

This is mirrored by the mention of Benjamin Templeton Scholars in the *Hanoverian* but excluding their connections to the program, showing again that Hanover history is being rewritten to paint Hanover College in a better light. The first was Samuel Pyle, during the first time his club was discussed.⁸⁰ The next was a sports award given to Andrew Littlefield ’22 in 2019, so not mentioning a social justice program might make more sense, but it is still of note.⁸¹ The next Templeton Scholar, Jace Lichtefeld ’24, referenced in the 2021 *Hanoverian*, mentions the program only as a name drop and builds no connection to diversity or inclusion by not explaining the “Benjamin Templeton Scholarship.”⁸² A young author, Gabriel Ratcliffe ’22, wrote and published a book in 2021 about his complex relationship and understanding of “the tumultuous events of

⁷⁶ Daniel Johnson, “Confronting Hate on Campus and Beyond ... A Word on the ‘Hurting Words’ Campaign,” *The Triangle*, March 2018, Hanover College, Hanover, Indiana, 18.

⁷⁷ Johnson, “Confronting Hate on Campus,” 19.; Hanover College, “Consumer Info,” <https://www.hanover.edu/about/consumerinfo/> (accessed 8, March 2024) Para. 11.

⁷⁸ Geneva Dischinger-Smedes, “Upcoming Event Spotlight Neurodiversity Gallery,” *The Triangle*, 13 February 2019, Hanover College, Hanover, Indiana, 2.

⁷⁹ Dischinger-Smedes, “Upcoming Event Spotlight Neurodiversity Gallery,” 2.

⁸⁰ Hanover College, “Looking Back and Moving Forward,” 10.

⁸¹ Hanover College, “Littlefield selected HCAC baseball freshman of the year,” *Hanoverian* 27, no. 1 (Summer 2019): 30.

⁸² Hanover College, “Jace Lichtefeld ‘24,” *Hanoverian* 28, no. 3 (2021): 11.

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2020, especially the COVID-19 pandemic and the death of George Floyd.”⁸³ This book could have been highlighted as a way Templeton Scholars can lead to change by sharing their stories and expertise, but that connection was not made. Manny Otchere-Danso ’25 was focused on during the College’s “The College Tour” show in 2022, but his connection to the program was not mentioned.⁸⁴ If Hanover College had concrete projects from the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program to highlight, “The College Tour” would have been a time to show how the projects lead to lasting change on campus or in the surrounding community. This was not possible since that progress does not exist. Two Scholars, Andi Spring ’23 and Wyatt Warner ’23, were promoted during the 190th commencement and the 86th-annual Honors Convocation in 2023, but their connection to the program was not mentioned, even with Warner winning an award connected to community service.⁸⁵ D. J. Walch, the current director, confirmed that all people mentioned above are Benjamin Templeton Scholars.⁸⁶ This lack of mention or surface-level mention of the program reveals that Hanover College and the Benjamin Templeton Program are trying to distance themselves from it. The performative action of diversity connected to this program is no longer warranted. The restructuring and renaming of the program illustrates this distance.

In 2023, Hanover College launched the Templeton Social Justice Leadership Program.⁸⁷ The program has changed its name, and it is more institutionalized with the appointment of Sara Patterson as “the inaugural Linda ’73 and Mark Baron Professor of Social Justice Education.”⁸⁸ This directly ties another college official to the program’s success, hopefully leading to more systemic changes on Hanover College’s campus. It also helps connect the program to Hanover since it ties directly to new courses coming to the College. Current scholar Lana Wooley ’26 has been excited about the speakers the program has started to bring to meetings and is hopeful this can lead to the program developing systemic change.⁸⁹ While Benjamin Templeton is still honored in this new program name, Templeton is not always included in the title, as shown through the application page for future scholars.⁹⁰ When the program was fundraising for its new social justice leadership internship with a concert from Ben Sollee, it was called “Hanover’s Social Justice

⁸³ Hanover College, “Ratcliffe, Kummer, Continue Line of Hanoverian Authors,” *Hanoverian* 29, no. 1 (2021): 7; Gabriel Ratcliffe, *Roaring 20: A Walk with Black Sun*. Independently Published, 2021.

⁸⁴ Hanover College, “Prime Time!” *Hanoverian* 29, no. 2 (2022): 12-13.

⁸⁵ Hanover College, “190th Commencement,” *Hanoverian* 30, no. 1 (2023): 4-5. on 4; Hanover College, “86th Annual Honors Convocation,” *Hanoverian* 30 (Summer 2023): 6.

⁸⁶ D.J. Walch, Conversation with the Author, 2023.

⁸⁷ Hanover College, “Patterson Named First Baron Professor of Social Justice Education,” 2023. <https://www.hanover.edu/about/news/2023/patterson-named-first-baron-professor-of-social-justice-education/>. para 4.

⁸⁸ Hanover College, “Patterson Named First Baron,” para. 1.

⁸⁹ Lana Wooley, Conversation with Author, 2024.

⁹⁰ Hanover College, “Social Justice Leadership Program Application.”

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Leadership Program” instead of the Templeton Social Justice Leadership program.⁹¹ The shift reveals that Hanover College might be turning away from the performative nature of the original program.

This new program is just beginning, and only time will tell whether or not it will flounder like the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program did, or if it will rise above its predecessor. Overall, the Benjamin Templeton Scholars Program, despite high aspirations, failed to lead to systemic change or progress on Hanover College’s campus. Instead, the program generated multiple performative projects with this performative nature slowly being hidden to reduce the connection to the College before the new launch.

⁹¹ Hanover College, “Concert Supports Social Justice Leadership Internships,” *Hanoverian* 30, no. 2 (Winter 2024): 5.

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