

Bennington Introduces New Application Option

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Bennington College has introduced a new application option for students applying for a place in the College's 2015 entering class. Like the Common Application, which the College will continue to accept, Bennington's Dimensional Application requires students to demonstrate a record of academic achievement, a capacity for growth, contributions to their classrooms and communities, and the ability to articulate original ideas or insights—but the way a student does this is entirely of the applicant's choosing. The body of work a student assembles will be reviewed by a committee of faculty and alumni doing groundbreaking work in their fields.

"The Common Application is the right choice for many applicants," said Hung Bui, vice president and dean of admissions and financial aid, who recently arrived to Bennington from Colby College. "Bennington's Dimensional Application is for students who want to individually curate an application for Bennington, to create a compelling portrait of their academic achievement, and to demonstrate, in their own way, their potential to enrich, and be enriched by, the Bennington community."

"One of the most challenging aspects of a Bennington education is making smart, deliberate choices about how to use the resources available to you—your own included—in worlds where there are no givens," said President Mariko Silver. "We wanted an application that would reflect the world our students will engage while they are here and enter when they graduate. At Bennington, students are evaluated both on the quality of thinking they bring to their choices and on the caliber of work they produce. These are rich conditions for an education and we believe they can be powerfully embedded in the college application."

In addition to members of Bennington's distinguished faculty, the review committee includes author and MacArthur Genius **Jonathan Lethem '86**, president of the Los Angeles Philharmonic **Deborah Borda '71**, and neuroscientist **Amar Sahay '97**, principal faculty at the Harvard Stem Cell Institute, among others. Candidates being considered for admission using the Dimensional Application will be invited to interview as a final step in the admissions process.

"An important facet of a Bennington education is how rigorously a student's work is considered—in the classroom, as well as outside of the classroom," President Silver explained. "For Bennington, that is a distinctive mission. We are the only institution in the country that, since its founding, requires every student, every winter to complete an internship or work experience as part of its requirements for graduation. By putting a student's work in front of faculty and alumni making work in the world we are, from the moment of application, asking students to reflect on how their work can be relevant in broader contexts."

Applications will be assessed against a set of competencies central to a Bennington education: the ability to create and revise work, dexterity with words and numbers, inventiveness, intrinsic motivation, and the capacity to apply your understanding to new situations, among several others. In its invitation to students considering this application, the College states: "We invite you to share with us a collection of your work that speaks to these capacities and creates a portrait of what you bring to the Bennington community. We invite you to be deeply thoughtful. We invite you to be bold. We invite you to bring your own dimension to the college application."

"Much of what has driven college admissions over the last decade has been about bringing

efficiencies to the process,” said President Silver. “Higher education institutions should constantly be working to ensure that their practices align with their missions and purposes, and we see the college application as an important place to make a statement about our values.”

Students who wish to apply using this option should contact Bennington College’s admissions office at 800-833-6845 or admissions@bennington.edu or their guidance counselor for instructions and materials.