

Bennington College
October 30, 1941

A joint meeting of the members of the Community Council, Educational Policies Committee, General Meetings Committee and Recreation Council was held on Thursday, October 30 at 4:40 in the Carriage Barn, for the purpose of discussing a plan of reorganization for the committees of the Bennington College Community.

Absent: Mr. Jones, Mr. Tucker, Mrs. Garrett, Priscilla Sherman, Theodora Boothby, Audrey Schwenk, Thelma Black, Phyllis Carton, Annette Kolin.

The meeting was called to order by Ann Mills, Chairman of the Community Council, who expressed the problems of the present community organizations and their set-ups as follows:

1. Functions: Policy has been subordinated to details which could have been handled by sub-committees.
2. Coordination:
 - a. over-lapping activities
 - b. lack of balanced program planning
 - c. poor intercommunication
3. Lack of centralization and responsibility.
4. Need of greater continuity.
5. Not enough interplay between students and governing bodies.

A suggested plan of reorganization was explained by a diagram (see page opposite). (This plan was developed at a meeting held November 27 composed of one student member of each committee and one faculty member).

The proposed functions of the College Council were read as follows:

1. Balancing of College activities; type of activity and type of content.
2. The handling of the problem of general defense.
3. Public relations in this vicinity. Ex. relations with Bennington and North Bennington.
4. Alumnae question.
5. Registration week.
6. Evaluation of College enterprises, both within the college and inter-collegiate activities. Ex. Hockey play day.
7. Definition and interpretation of standards.
8. Faculty-student relations.

From the above it will be noted that the College Council duties fall into two main headings:

1. Policy making board, and the over-all planning board and coordinator of the four main committees (House Council, Recreation Council, General Meetings, E.P.C.)
2. General functions related to the College as a whole, independent of these four committees.

Suggested additions and revisions of this plan evolved through discussion:

1. The faculty member from the Faculty EPC and the faculty member from the Recreation Council would be teaching faculty.
2. Elasticity would be the outstanding characteristic of this body. It would meet with other committees or call in other individuals or committees to meet with it when the occasion arose.
3. The College Council would include two members of the Health Committee -- one student and one infirmary staff member.
4. The Silo Board would be a floating committee without permanent connection with the College Council. The Board of the Silo would be approved by the preceding Silo Board instead of the E.P.C.
5. The Store Board would also be a floating committee, a member meeting with the College Council when necessary.
6. The Student Treasurer would be responsible to the College Council and would be called in to the meeting when necessary.
7. The College Council might meet every two weeks, alternating with the House Council.
8. The College Council would elect its own chairman, who would act as a presiding officer over meetings of general concern, but she would frequently be able to turn the meeting over to representatives of other sub-committees.
9. College Council can be removed in the same way as Community Council.

Reports were made by the chairman of the four committees:

Community Council, which would be called the House Council under the new system: The House Council and the College Council would be two distinct bodies (a) because a House Chairman might be capable of dealing with personalities and problems in her house and not be a good policy maker, and (b) because a House Council allows for a sampling of public opinion.

The functions of the House Council would be the same as the functions of the Community Council, but it would not define standards and rules, which would be the function of the College Council. It was suggested that the houses might be able to take on a more independent status. The House Secretaries duties were defined and it was suggested that they be called Assistant House Chairmen and be prepared to take over the duties of the House Chairmen when necessary, this matter to be brought to the attention of the community when elections for House Chairmen and Assistant House Chairmen take place.

Central Committee: The functions and personnel would be the same except that the Secretary and Chairman would be chosen with the idea of interchange in mind, and the Secretary to the Committee on Student Personnel would be called in to meet the Committee when necessary.

General Meetings: No change.

EPC: This committee is being reorganized according to the new curriculum plan, thus no report could be made.

Recreation Council: To be completely reorganized as follows:

1. The Council will consist of five members, Chairman, Secretary and the Chairmen of the three sub-committees, Athletic, entertainment and Dance.
2. In March a slate will be sent from each house to the Recreation Council and from these lists the committees will be made up by the Council who will choose at least one member from each house.
3. In September the committees choose from among themselves the five members of the Council and the old council goes out.

A modification of the method by which a student would become a member of the College Council was suggested. It was pointed out that it is quite necessary that the College Council realize its responsibility to the community as a whole, and thus it was suggested that the entire community vote on the members of the College Council rather than each committee elect a chairman who would be a member of the College Council. The committees themselves would be formed in the same way as before.

Two methods of voting were suggested:

1. The community would vote for the members of the College Council from the entire Community.
2. The community would vote for the members of the College Council from the committees already formed.

The significance of the College Council feeling its responsibility to the entire community was emphasized in discussion, but it was suggested that they might feel this responsibility under the original plan of reorganization. This point, however, should be kept in mind constantly by the Council and by the committees when voting members to the Council.

In criticism of this idea it was pointed out that a committee might be unwilling to work with a chairman that it had not elected itself.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Antoinette Johnson