

50

Sent to all freshmen  
by Educational Policies Committee

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September 6, 1934

BENNINGTON COLLEGE

STANDARDS AND RULES

Bennington College is more than a collection of individuals; it is a community in which students and faculty are engaged in the common enterprise of education. The quality of the community life built up will not only determine the success of the whole educational venture; it will also affect for good or ill the social habits and ways of thinking of its individual members. To learn to live as a member of a cooperative community, without sacrificing individuality, is an important part of the educational experience offered by the College. We have therefore thought it wise to define our responsibilities, and our mutual obligations.

Our purposes require that we govern ourselves by reliance mainly on constructive cooperation. A series of "thou shalt nots", while they might protect us from unsympathetic outside criticism, would probably be evaded, leading perhaps to hypocrisy or childish rebellion against imposed authority. Specific prohibitions would therefore defeat our fundamental purpose, which is to govern ourselves as mature, responsible human beings. It is, moreover, impossible to guard against every form of human misbehavior by defining and forbidding it.

We propose to state in general terms the standards of good taste and civilized conduct we mean to uphold. A more exact understanding of these standards will be built up in a series of judgments or decisions on concrete cases, a growing body of common law, integrating the results of our experience in community living. In this way we may chart our course as we go, unhampered by a mistaken direction at the start.

Inevitably the standards will be violated. We do not wish to set up penalties in advance. Every case of violation will be dealt with individually. The circumstances and interests of the offender will be considered, as well as the protection of the community. In extreme cases it may be necessary to expel a member whose continued presence will seriously jeopardize our essential purposes.

In addition to the general standards of conduct, we think it desirable to adopt certain campus laws which will facilitate orderly living, and will remind us to respect certain specific rights of others. Except where different circumstances indicate different arrangements, the same obligations bind all the members of the community. The ultimate authority behind both rules and standards is the weight of public opinion.

We therefore recommend that the Community adopt the rules and standards listed below.

The Standards shall be a guide to conduct for all the members of the community, a general statement of the recognized responsibilities of the individual citizen. Any failure to live up to these standards shall be dealt with by the House Council, subject to the right of the Community Council to intervene at its own discretion. The offender shall have the right of appeal from the decision of the House Council to the Community Council. It shall be left to the discretion of the Community Council to make public or withhold its decision.

The rules shall be specific campus laws, the enforcement of which shall rest with the House Councils. Repeated disregard of rules shall be considered as failure to live up to the standards of civilized behavior, and shall therefore be dealt with in the way indicated above.

### STANDARDS

1. Members of the Bennington College Community shall always conduct themselves in an orderly and considerate manner, respecting the regulations of any community in which they may be.
2. Every member of the Community shall conduct himself as a responsible citizen in constructive cooperation with the College and its aims.

### RULES

1. Each student must make out and sign her own out-of-town slip and if she is to be detained or forgets to sign out, she must notify a College official. As well as signing off campus, students are requested to report on returning to the operator in charge. When a student goes out at night, intending to stay out after 11:30, she shall sign out in her house.
2. Boys will be allowed in student rooms only between 12 o'clock noon and 6 o'clock in the evening. This does not apply to students' families. All students will be held strictly responsible for the conduct of a friend or friends who are visiting on the campus.
3. Quiet shall always be maintained in the library. After 10 o'clock at night there shall be quiet in the houses and on the campus.
4. For hygienic reasons, trays may not be taken to the dwellings without Dr. Osborne's permission. All cases of illness, no matter how slight, should be reported to Miss Baer, the College Nurse, or to Dr. Osborne.