
Housing Update

Communications <communications@bennington.edu>

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BENNINGTON COLLEGE

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff,

The residential experience at Bennington is core to its identity, and we are committed to preserving the residential nature of the Bennington campus for students, staff, and faculty. We know that ideas spark and collaboration happens everywhere on campus. Supporting positive living spaces is important for fostering these connections.

As many of you know, over the past year we have been studying our enrollment trends and how they map to our housing capacity. A cross-departmental effort is ongoing to first understand the anticipated impacts to our housing availability, and then move swiftly to make adjustments that accommodate the needs, and also support the residential life of our campus, for students and faculty and staff alike. This effort has been considering short term arrangements as well as longer term solutions.

Over the past many years our student population has grown. This past fall, we reached 727 undergraduate students, which surpassed our prior highest level of 717 undergraduate students in 2017. Yet in addition to our overall growth, there are several extenuating pressures that our team has been studying, including:

- The comparatively large number of students we anticipate becoming eligible for singles under current housing practice this coming fall, which is created by both the large rising senior class of 2025 (which is anticipated to be approximately 190, compared to 122 expected to graduate this year), as well as the increasing number of students eligible for and requesting ADA singles, which this year was 72, compared to approximately 42 in 2019.
- The ongoing priority to support faculty housing needs, which is also key for the College's ability to recruit and attract exceptional faculty-practitioners to the College
- The ongoing need to increase the number of live-in professional staff to support our students

These pressures, coupled with a competitive housing market in North Bennington, have created a circumstance in which the College has needed to reassess and make changes to our housing plans.

Over this summer and building upon the work that was begun as a part of the College's Adaptive Framework Plan, a group of staff known as the Housing Work Group studied our enrollment projections and housing inventory. With updated data and projections, additional conversations were held with the Faculty Housing Committee, student House Chairs, Student Council, Senior Staff, and various administrative teams this past fall. Several scenarios were discussed, and several potential strategies were explored as options to reduce pressures. Working with the data assembled by the staff team and informed by our conversations with the Faculty Housing Committee, our student House Chairs, and our Student Council, the College has developed a working plan.

For the fall of 2024, the College plans to continue to support on-campus housing for all students, some live-in professional staff, and some faculty members. However, to meet the increased demand on student housing, the College will reallocate some but not all buildings currently being used as faculty residences to support student housing. In total, seven current faculty will be impacted and will be supported by the college through off-campus housing arrangements in the North Bennington area that we have secured and will offer at comparable rates. We are in conversation with all. The Provost's Office is also currently assessing the impact for new faculty and considering additional strategies.

Specifically, those spaces identified to be converted to student housing include Faculty Row 2 (Newcomb), Faculty Row 1 (Gray), and Faculty Row 4 (Moselsio); Orchard B, and C; Jennings Cottage; and the apartments attached to Canfield, Stokes, Swan, Franklin, and Welling.

Spaces currently designated for shared faculty housing for 2024-25 include Orchard D, E, and F; #10 Prospect Street; and the Farmhouse. Orchard A will remain unassigned for the time being until final student enrollment numbers are determined for fall. Merck and Perkins pod apartments, recently used by faculty, will be designated for live-in professional staff. The Winslow Building apartments located in Downtown Bennington will remain options for faculty and staff housing, and the Davis House will remain alumni and guest housing.

Our Residential Life, Buildings & Grounds, and Provost's Office teams are working hard to integrate these additions and changes into our housing systems and practices. It has not yet been fully determined how these new student houses will operate, and results from the recent student housing [survey](#) will be used to identify interest as it relates to theme/affinity housing as well as house culture and environment.

In closing, we would like to thank all of those students, staff, and faculty who have contributed to this effort. More updates will be forthcoming.

Sincerely,

Li-Chen Chin
Vice President and Dean of Student Life

Maurice Hall
Provost

Shelton Walker
Chief of Staff & Vice President for Strategic Initiatives

Lorraine Atwood
Vice President for Finance and Administration