

G A L L E Y

BENNINGTON COLLEGE
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A Proposal on Mealtimes

One of the great impediments to efficient work at Bennington is the rigidity of mealtimes, and I would like to ask if something can't be done about making them more flexible.

If one has worked late at night, and feels like sleeping past 8:30, one has to face the prospect of going through to 12:30 without breakfast. Understandably there are problems involved in keeping the kitchen open all the time (as would be desirable, from the point of view of maximizing one's freedom), but I do think it should be possible to go further towards that objective, and that a first step toward going further should be to stay open for breakfast (with a reduced staff--one or two people to serve) until 9:00 or 9:30 or 10:00 A.M.

The second great mealtime restraint on freedom to work is that imposed by the rigid evening mealtime. No matter what one is up to at 6:30 P.M., one must stop and eat, if one is to get any food. Could not the evening meal also be cafeteria-style, with service available from 6:30 to 7:30?

This rigidity of breakfast and evening meals is all the more restrictive because of the difficulty of getting any food outside of regular mealtimes. If there were a snack bar on campus that served, in addition to coffee and crackers, toast, hamburgers, and eggs, it would not be important to do anything about meals. However, setting up such a snack bar would be a bigger enterprise than extending hours during which meals were served, and in the meantime I have two specific proposals: that breakfast be served for an hour or an hour-and-a-half, and that the evening meal be served for an hour. And since this is hard to do with waitresses, that this be shifted to a cafeteria basis.

Bennington is a small place, and the highest possible efficiency anywhere will interfere with the greatest possible degree of self-direction. Last year the library hours were extended, permitting students a greater range of opportunities at certain hours than they could otherwise have. Maximum freedom would involve the library as well as the kitchen being open 24 hours a day. But even short of this utopian goal, certain improvements are possible.

N.G.

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