

Bard

March 19, 1940

Dean C. Harold Gray
Bard College
Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

Dear Harold,

I find myself almost winking at you as I write these formal letters of reply to your formal letters. In any case I will present your letter of resignation to the Trustees at their meeting.

Have the Bard Trustees really accomplished the task of pledging \$80,000? If so it seems to me quite a remarkable accomplishment and ought to give you quite a bit of confidence in their ability to give the College the necessary support from time to time.

Some day we must talk seriously about the promotion of Bard and Bennington relations. I rather have the feeling now that maybe we both need to get further acquainted with our institutions before making any positive suggestions in this direction. We had a five-day visit from Helen Lynd of Sarah Lawrence recently and I was convinced all over again of the value of interchange of information between our institutions following a generally similar program.

I have been thinking about the question of my serving on the Bard Trustees. I am certainly willing to do it and would try to be as helpful as possible. On the other hand, if now that I am away, it would seem to you and to others wiser to go ahead without such an appointment, I shall certainly not feel badly about it. It may very well be that it would be sounder for the Trustees to learn to look to you alone during these next few years and that you could really function more effectively and happily that way. In other words, let my Trustee appointment drop if there is no real demand for it and you do not yourself see any actual immediate help that it would be to you.

Mildred and I think and speak of you almost every day. All the word that we hear is favorable. We do miss you a lot.

Sincerely yours,

Robert D. Leigh
RL

Bard College
Annandale-on-Hudson
New York

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

WBL ✓
Columbia University

March 20th
1940

Mr. Robert D. Leigh, President,
Bennington College,
Bennington, Vermont

Dear Robert:

I too have felt the strangeness of these formal letters. I have so many things of an informal nature to talk to you about that the only compromise seems to be to get the business off quickly and leave the informal things for a time when there is more leisure. I have sent your report to the Board of Trustees. Because of your taunts about haste, I did not even take time to read the revised report myself. I will get in touch with the Trustees when I am in New York this week and make arrangements for the mimeographing.

The Bard Trustees have not accomplished the full task of raising the \$80,000, but they have persuaded the Columbia Board to give an unconditional grant of that \$80,000 so that we can go ahead. In other words, the Columbia people have accepted the Bard underwriting. It is a remarkable accomplishment and since the last Trustees meeting, I have felt confidence that I never had before. My tentative budget was also passed, reappointments were made and I am busy rounding up candidates for new appointments. In fact I have been busy at that for sometime.

Thank you for the advice about the use of the business organization as field material for the Economics students. There is so much suspicion around here that one has to do a lot of smoothing down on very simple matters.

I hope we can promote closer relations between Bard and Bennington. Just now, the most specific means would be meetings between representatives of the Bennington divisions and the divisions here. We are discussing the trial major conferences and the breakdown of the departmental lines in the content of the work. In every meeting questions come up which make the teachers here wish they might talk things over with the Bennington people. Perhaps my best bet is to invite such people as Bob Woodworth, Lewis or Tom and Billy Park to come down and give us advice. The students seem to me to be making more and more contacts with Bennington girls. Some of them recently went up to the Goddard conference and came back full of enthusiasm and ideas. The Student Council is also getting very conscious of its responsibilities and is working very smoothly with me. The Student Committee on Studies is getting ready to take its functions more seriously. In fact, after a month of a good deal of worry about just how to get things started,

they have suddenly begun to start of their own accord and are moving ahead rapidly.

I do not know what to say just now about the question of your serving on the Board of Trustees. I told Mr. Freeborn quite flatly a month ago that I wished to have you on the Board of Trustees. Since then, I have heard nothing about the matter. I think the Trustees are looking to me at the moment, with some degree at least, of confidence. At the same time, there is no question about the value of having you associated with the College. I have had little chance for an informal talk with members of the Board and when I do see them privately, I shall bring the question up again.

I expect to start the barn-storming this week and devote about half a week to it for the rest of the term. Admissions have begun, but not until they get up into the twenties will I have any glimmer of certainty again.

Will you please have Dorrie tell me when the series of evening meetings on education are to be held? I would like to get up for one or two of the meetings, but my jaunts will probably have to have other objectives just now.

If spring would only break and break in earnest, I am sure we should begin to be very happy indeed. Also, perhaps the spring will bring you and Mildred down for a visit. Please feel free to pick up and drive down whenever you find the time. I have so many meetings of one sort and another that it is almost impossible to pick out a few hours ahead of time which can be kept free for guests - but you would not be guests, and would understand the confusion you might run into.

Our best to you both.

Sincerely yours,

Harold

P.S. Robert Haberman has just told me that his father would be willing to come to Bennington to give a lecture at the time that he comes here on April 9th. In case you do not know about him, he has been the representative of the Mexican Federation of Labor in the United States and is familiar with Mexican labor problems and politics. Robert says he is interested in the place and would come free if you could fit him in; his name and address is Roberto Haberman, 70 Pine Street, New York City. This is just a tip.

C. H. G.