

Office of the President

June 11, 1975

Dear Miss Channing and Mr. Howe,

I am enclosing the draft that Ronald Cohen, the Dean of Studies, prepared in answer to your query. This may not be the most elegant way of responding, but it probably is the most honest.

In the past, students who have returned to complete degrees generally have had only one or two terms left. We feel so strongly that it is important for students to have a chance to work intensively with teachers, to have the experience

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of a sustained intellectual and artistic dialogue (and not just the experience of getting a degree), that we have methodically discouraged people who wanted to "finish up" at Bennington entirely in absentia.

If there is any chance that you might find time to really come back and be with us — well, obviously, we would be delighted to talk further. Certainly we are looking forward to next week!

Cordially,
Gail Thain Parker

TO: Gail Parker
Pat Kunzelmann

June 5, 1975

FROM: Ron Cohen

RE: Draft of portions of letter to
Carol Channing

Gail and Pat,

Below are paragraphs that might be included in a letter to Carol Channing with reference to her desire to return to the college to complete work for her degree.

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Your academic folder indicates that you successfully completed three terms of work at Bennington College in the academic year 1938-39 and in the fall term 1939. The normal expectation is for a student to have completed the equivalent of eight terms of work in order to qualify for the degree. In addition, it is necessary for a student to have proposed a plan for the completion of her work for the degree. This proposal, or Tentative Plan for Advanced Work, includes a list of the courses that have been completed and the list of the courses which a student proposes to take to complete her work, as well as an explanation of the reasons for undertaking such a course of study. This proposal is submitted to a division of the college, and if approved, must then be approved by the Educational Counseling Committee. If the proposal is approved by both the division and the Educational Counseling Committee, the college commits itself to the program, and the student will graduate if she successfully completes the course of study outlined in it.

Different divisions of the college have various conceptions of the amount of work and the kind of work they consider necessary in order for a student to graduate with a particular concentration. Students

have proposed plans and the college has approved plans that call for a certain amount of work to be done at other institutions or in settings other than those that are specifically academic. The amount of work done in such circumstances which would be accredited toward a degree varies in different cases, and it is necessary for a student to make a specific proposal about the way in which he or she feels such work can be accredited and the amount of credit to be awarded for it.

At the same time, however, I would think that any division in the college, as well as the Educational Counseling Committee, would ask that a student who has been away from the college for a substantial period of time, return to the college to re-establish ties with the faculty and to work for a certain period of time in residence to enable the current faculty to become acquainted with the student and her work. The length of time and the amount of work necessary for this initial period in residence would vary with the individual's circumstance, but in most cases I would suspect it to be a minimum of one year.

I would be more than happy to pursue this with you at any time in the future.

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I hope this will give some indication of the kinds of things that should be included in a letter to her about completing work for her degree. If you need more information or clarification on certain points, please be in touch with me.