

REPORT OF THE MEETINGS OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF BENNINGTON COLLEGE
ON JUNE 15 - 16, 1973

AGENDA

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 - 6.1 Operating Budget and Debt Service
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REPORT OF THE MEETINGS OF THE
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Present: Mrs. Emmet, Chairman, Mrs. Brown, Miss DiMaio, Mr. Ellison, Miss Frankenthaler, Mr. Golden, Mr. Iseman, Mrs. Karp, Miss Kunstler, Mr. Lord, Mr. Malamut, Mrs. Merck, Mrs. Meyer, Dr. Morison, Mrs. Mortimer, Mrs. Murray, Mrs. Nields, Mrs. Rohdie, Mr. Smith, Mr. Thornhill, Miss Whiteley.

Absent: Mr. Carter, Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Emil, Mr. Gutman, Mrs. Hambleton, Mr. Heiskell, Mr. Hoving, Mrs. Keland, Mr. Lindsay, Mrs. Sheldon, Mrs. Usdan.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of April 12, 13, and 14, 1973 were approved as previously circulated.

2. Communications from the Chairman

Mrs. Emmet spoke of the trustees retiring from the Board; Mrs. Brown, Mr. Emil, Mrs. Meyer, Mrs. Karp and Miss Kunstler. She thanked them, on behalf of the College, for their many contributions and presented each of them with a small Norfolk pine as a token of their colleagues' gratitude and friendship. They are also symbolic of trees which will be planted on campus next fall in their honor.

Mrs. Emmet explained that though time had always been short at the June meeting and business was usually restricted to year end reports, the new schedule of commencement activities curtailed available time even further.* In order to cover the necessary ground she had scheduled most committees to meet with the Board as a whole but even so reports would have to be brief and discussion held to a minimum.

3. Communications from the President

Report of Governance Committee

Gail Parker explained that the Governance Committee's proposal had been defeated by a narrow margin in a straw vote taken to determine whether or not there was enough support among faculty members to make it worth the Committee's time to translate their outlined reforms into a full-fledged constitution. Two faculty meetings were largely devoted to a discussion of

* The commencement program which dispensed with the traditional address delivered by an invited speaker concentrated rather on senior work. Theses, were in the Crossett Library. Art was on display at the Usdan Gallery and Music, Drama and Dance performances were given in Commons and the Carriage Barn. Several student art studios were open to visitors. The program began on Thursday afternoon, continued all through Friday, and ended with the degree granting ceremony and President Parker's inaugural on Saturday morning in the Barn Quadrangle.

the proposal. There was considerable feeling on the part of faculty members that the document was based upon an essentially political (or politicized) definition of parity which had no place in an educational institution. In addition some feared that a senate system would reduce faculty meetings to emergency sessions focussed on the question of a possible veto. They believed that it was essential for the faculty to meet regularly to discuss and formulate policy as well as react to it.

At a community meeting a number of students felt that the proposed senate was not broad enough in scope, and that certain powers reserved for the faculty should have been vested in this joint body. Others suggested that the Senate should be larger. They felt that too much power was being arrogated to too few. In the end the Student Council voted informally to back the Governance Committee's proposal while the members of the SEPC decided to support the document.

Gail Parker felt that a number of substantive issues had been raised in the course of the discussion, and that she, at least, had learned a great deal about the ways in which different members of the community conceived of the College. On balance she supported the idea of a small, representative body which could be expected to weigh all sides and make decisions for the College as a whole. In addition to having the advantage of transforming a certain number of lobbyists into colleagues in administration, she felt that a senate system might be the best way to insure that the College was able to respond quickly and effectively to new ideas.

4. Admissions and Financial Aid

4.1 Admissions 1973-74

In the absence of Mr. Carter and Mrs. Hambleton, Mrs. Karp chaired this Committee and asked Mrs. Aldrich to give the end of the term report on Admissions. Although applications were down 30 per cent as predicted, the quality was more even and the yield rate rose from 43 per cent to 57 per cent indicating a more selective approach by candidates. The waiting list has been closed.

One major change was made in the routine this year. Candidates were notified as soon as decisions were reached. We continued, however, to conform to the Candidates' Reply Date of May 1 used by most private colleges. We urged accepted candidates to hold their decision until they had all their options. The response was excellent and even if Bennington was not their first choice they appreciated having early notification.

There is a marked increase in the number of entering students who list Natural Science and Math as their prime interest and an alarming drop in those most interested in the Social Sciences.

Financial aid of \$62,692 has been granted to 32 students. This is only 15 per cent of the entering class compared to 22 per cent last year but better than the 12 per cent predicted.

- 4.2 Recruitment of minority students continues to be disappointing and the yield rate of those we accept is very poor. Mr. Ellison observed that Bennington should make more effort to attain a good mix of black students and should try to interest more applicants from middle and upper income levels.
- 4.3 There was a discussion of the scholastic aptitude scores. Mrs. Aldrich reported that questions were being raised at the Educational Testing Service. Overall scores have gone down across the country and no one is sure of the reason. One possible explanation is that with the easing of college admission pressures many students no longer take these tests for practice in the tenth and eleventh grades and therefore do not score as high on their final tests. This explanation is rejected by those who believe the tests only measure aptitude and that results are not influenced by special preparation or practice. This will be discussed more fully at the October meeting.
- 4.4 Tim Dorman reported on Financial Aid. In the budget \$290,000 is allocated and \$10,340 is now assured from the Federal Government. Also the trustees raised a special fund of \$10,000 for minority students and the students on campus raised \$1,500 which is being matched by the Alumni Council. This last effort is particularly significant because it shows how committed the students themselves are to a student body with diversified financial background.

Tim Dorman also presented figures, both factual and projected, which illustrate not only the necessity for raising more scholarship funds, but for having a well-formulated policy on how the pie is to be divided in the future.

5. Alumni Relations

- 5.1 Mrs. Rohdie reported on the Alumni Council meeting held on campus in May. The proposed regional structure, replacing the class structure, for fund raising was approved. A handbook of procedures for regional chairmen will be ready in the fall. It is hoped that regional chairmen and members of the Annual Fund Committee can meet on campus in October at the same time as the trustees.
- 5.2 Visits to divisions by the Council will not be scheduled next year. Other ways of involving alumni on campus are being sought and suggestions would be welcome.
- 5.3 The alumni summer program has been cancelled.

6. Budget Committee

- 6.1 Mr. Smith reported that the budget, including expected gifts, shows deficits of \$27,865 for operating expenses and \$21,000 for debt service. He said that the figures speak more forcefully than words about the urgency

of raising the final funds for the Arts Building. He also said that the Committee agreed that the operating budget was not going to stand still, faculty salaries must be raised, tuition will probably have to go higher, and better plant use will become a necessity.

- 6.2 Mrs. Parker proposed that she appoint a Committee of faculty, students and trustees in the fall to study alternative plans for using the campus twelve months of the year.
- 6.3 Mrs. Parker also asked the trustees to carefully study the report of the Faculty Salary Committee so that it could be discussed in depth at the October meeting.

7. Buildings and Grounds

Mr. Thornhill reported that the construction of the Arts Building was on schedule. Painting of campus buildings is continuing and students are part of the crew. The trustees spoke appreciatively of the improved appearance of the grounds under Mr. Streeter's supervision.

8. Development

- 8.1 Mrs. Meyer reported that cash gifts of \$183,583.45 had been received as of June 11, compared to \$238,073.13 as of June 30, 1972. The number of donors so far this year is 1,417 compared to 1,484 last year. Although the number of donors is about the same the average donation is going down. She also noted that gifts from foundations are seriously down.

Mr. Golden called attention to the decline in the number of trustees giving to the Annual Fund. He was aware that many trustees were completing pledges to the Capital Fund and some had given this year to special projects, but he felt it was essential that the trustees give first priority to the Annual Fund because it is the keystone to everything else. Mrs. Emmet promised to write to all trustees who had not contributed this year.

Mr. Golden also suggested that more effort spent on soliciting corporations should be rewarding. Mr. Lord added that many corporations will now match wives' gifts to her alma mater, but unfortunately this information doesn't filter back to their wives. He suggested the Alumni Association make this information known to alumni.

Mrs. McGregor said that more gifts could be expected before June 30 which would boost the total somewhat.

- 8.2 Mr. Parker reported that lists and schedules were being prepared for the Associates Program. This is a special effort to increase the number of donors who will commit themselves to a minimum annual gift of \$1,000.

The Board thanked Mrs. Meyer for her work as Chairman of the Development Committee for the past year.

9. Educational Policies Committee

- 9.1-9.2 Dr. Morison presented the list of candidates for the Bachelor of Arts Degrees and the trustees voted the awards (Appendix I).

They also approved all the recommended faculty appointments and reappointments (Appendix II).

- 9.3 Mrs. Parker, Dr. Morison, Mr. Nowak, Mr. Smith and Mrs. Emmet each reaffirmed the idea that the health of the College was dependent in significant degree upon the trustees' willingness to delegate the power to make specific appointments and reappointments to the faculty through the President. It was further agreed that in evaluating faculty the knowledge and expertise of individual trustees should be called upon and that fuller continuing documentation should be kept on all faculty.

Dr. Morison requested that the President and the Dean of Faculty review the tenure procedure for the Board in October when there would be time for a more vigorous discussion.

10. Finance Committee

- 10.1 Mr. Lord reported that the Committee was working on modification of the College's banking program and a full report will be made at the October meeting.

- 10.2 Mr. Jules Olitski's gift of his house in South Shaftsbury to the College was accepted with grateful thanks.

11. Nominating Committee

The following slate, presented by Mrs. Nields, was elected for the year 1973-74:

Mrs. Emmet - Chairman of the Board
Mr. Lord - Vice Chairman
Mrs. Mortimer - Vice Chairman
Mr. Heiskell - Secretary
Mr. Dickinson - Treasurer
Mr. Kolkebeck - Assistant Treasurer

12. Ad Hoc Committee on Black Students and Faculty Recruitment

Mrs. Merck's full report is attached as Appendix III.

13. The calendar for 1973-74 attached as appendix III was approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessie K. Emmet
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON
BLACK STUDENT AND FACULTY RECRUITMENT

Minutes of the meeting on June 15, 1973, at 8:00 a.m., Room 117 Dickinson.

Committee members present: Trustees - Kate Merck (Chairman), Kay Murray
Faculty/Administration - Ron Cohen, Bill Dixon, Lionel
Nowak, Gail Parker
Students - Jimmy Means

Trustee non-members present: Ralph Ellison, Jessie Emmet, Barbara Rhodie, Sally
Whiteley

The trustee non-members, Gail, and Lionel left the meeting at 9:30 to attend sessions of the Trustee Board; Gail later returned.

1. The agenda was distributed. Minutes of the meeting of May 20 were corrected. Kate briefly reported on a meeting she had had with Tim Dorman on financial aid and graduate school scholarship information referred to in the minutes. Gail agreed to have the corrected minutes retyped at the college.
2. Bill, Lionel, Gail, Ron, and Henry Carnes met on campus in May to discuss decisions reached at the May 20 meeting. They reviewed the decision that each faculty division secretary should complete a questionnaire on the history of the division with respect to black faculty. Because all the necessary information was available in the Dean of Faculty's office, information was gathered from that source rather than from each division. Ron distributed a memorandum to the ad hoc committee which summarized the information compiled by Lionel. The memo was corrected to include one-half black part-time faculty position currently in the Dance Division.
3. Gail made the following general comments concerning the ad hoc committee.
 - A. The committee will report to the trustees, who will make recommendations to the administration, who, in turn, will act on the recommendations.
 - B. Now that Ron has become the new Dean of Studies, the only faculty member on the committee is Bill.
 - C. There is a question of legality in mandating a certain number of positions for black faculty. In preparation for the development of an Affirmative Action Plan for Bennington, Gail has begun requesting from various colleges information about their procedures regarding minority faculty. The plan, targeted for completion by fall, will contain a statement of policy and intent regarding equal opportunity and affirmative action, a survey or statistical summary similar to that compiled by Lionel and Ron, and a statement of goals including projections of future performance.
4. Bill indicated that from mid-August until the reopening of school he will be investigating sources and compiling a list of available black faculty. Suggested sources of black faculty are lecture agency lists, listings in black scholarly publications, a country-wide roster of available black faculty, black organizations within the professional associations, and, especially for artists, the "pipeline."

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5. Bill described in some detail the black music curriculum planned for next year, for which Gail said there would be a formal press release within the next few weeks. Sally suggested that a list of items, such as records, be compiled and given to Barbara who, as President of the Alumni Association, could request donations from alumni. Bill gave a short history of black music at Bennington for the benefit of some of the trustees who had missed previous discussions. Ralph expressed the view that pressure must be brought on the music faculty to look at music within the total cultural context.
6. After non-members of the committee had to leave the meeting, black student recruitment was discussed. It was agreed that the college needs an "affirmative action plan" for admitting black students. In order to make it financially possible for black students to attend Bennington, the entire financial aid structure will have to be revised. Jimmy suggested that one possible roadblock to black student recruitment was the lack of money available for Bennington students to use to recruit prospective applicants from their high schools.
7. Kate opened the discussion of the advisability of on-campus interviews as a follow-up to the survey on the status of black faculty. Kay explained the rationale for interviewing: that the survey produced facts and that in order to explore fully the dimensions of the problem, it would be necessary to obtain opinions and attitudes, which interviews could provide. In addition, there is a need to document--especially for the benefit of the trustees--information which the on-campus constituencies may believe is well known.
8. Bill suggested that there be a questionnaire for students. One item might ask whether black students really want and feel a need for more black students at Bennington College. The impact of a preponderance of negative responses was considered. Jimmy commented on the subtle racism displayed by white students, though he did not believe that such was the case with white faculty.
9. A list of activities and a timetable for the committee were agreed upon.
 - A. The survey on the status of black faculty has been completed.
 - B. A questionnaire on the status of recruitment and admission of black students will be completed by Ron and Jimmy by July 15. With minor revisions, the questionnaire will be the one submitted by the trustee members of the committee.
 - C. In order to obtain samples of types of existing black studies programs which could serve as guides for Bennington, Ron has written to universities for descriptions of their black studies programs and has begun receiving replies.
 - D. An Affirmative Action Plan (concerning recruitment and hiring of minority faculty) will be prepared by Gail by the opening of school. By that time she should also have obtained information on such plans from colleges similar to Bennington.
 - E. Bill's list of prospective black professionals, artists, lecturers, and academicians should be compiled by September.
 - F. The next meeting of the committee will be held on campus in mid-September.

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10. Gail returned to the meeting and made two suggestions which were enthusiastically received.

- A. On the assumption that many minority students in New York City do not know what they are looking for in a college education before entering college, Bennington should explore the possibility of recruiting transfer students from public institutions such as CUNY and SUNY.
- B. In addition, Bennington might affiliate with a college, particularly a predominantly black southern college, and exchange students for mutual educational benefit. Bennington, with its strong emphasis on the visual and performing arts, could provide for the minority student from a college which did not have, for example, an extensive dance or visual arts curriculum a year at Bennington pursuing studies in these areas. A Bennington student might be interested in studying courses in education, engineering, or some other field offered at the affiliate college. Bennington College would pay the difference between the tuition at the student's home college and that at Bennington. Kay and Ron agreed to make inquiries about such exchange student and college affiliation programs elsewhere.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Murray
Kay Murray

AD HOC COMMITTEE INTERIM REPORT

Bennington College

As you will remember from the April board meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee on black student and black faculty recruitment was born as a result of much labor by black students and the responsive assent of the Board.

The charge to the Ad Hoc Committee was to "define some targets for the College about minorities. Define roadblocks and possible roadblocks."

In more detail, our purpose as we see it is to gather information on the current status of black faculty and black students on campus, to develop some procedures which will remedy the situation and result in recommendations by the Board of Trustees to the President regarding policy changes.

The composition of our Committee is:

Faculty:	Ron Cohen Lionel Nowak Bill Dixon
Administration:	Gail Parker
Students:	Henry Carnes Philemona Williamson <i>/d</i> Jimmy Means Judy Wilson
Trustees:	Kay Murray David Malamut Kate Merck

At our first meeting on May 20, 1973 we discussed at length the need for more black faculty, black students and courses related to black interests. From this meeting a questionnaire was developed regarding the faculty in the last few years and at the present. It has been completed.

Another meeting was held at the end of May, just for the campus contingency.

Today we met all morning and got a lot done. One specific problem came to light which we decided to put in the minutes which is that there is apparently a lack of funds to enable a black student to travel from Bennington to recruit new students from his Alma Mater.

Gail made two specific suggestions this morning. One was that the College recruit transfer students from Community Colleges and State Schools on the theory that some of these students, having been exposed to college, might have a much better idea of what they wanted and would be well served by Bennington.

Her other idea was to set up a program in which Bennington would be affiliated with a predominately black college or university which does not offer courses which are available at Bennington. It would not be "snitching" the best academic students from such colleges which is so reprehensible, but would be offering a real and needed educational dimension. We would also be sending students to them. We would have to pay the difference in tuition.

Our timetable is as follows:

Certain courses of action have been decided on and are under way. One has been completed (the information on black faculty). Others are:

1. Gail working on Affirmative Action program.
2. Ron collecting material from other colleges on how they have worked in this area.
3. Bill Dixon making a list of possibly available faculty through his pipe lines.
4. An information gathering questionnaire has been developed for pertinent statistics from the Admissions Office.
5. Another for determining student attitudes will be developed this summer.

All this information and idea development will be collected and drafted by the opening of College in the fall.

About a week later the Ad Hoc Committee will meet in full at the College, and pull it all together to present to the trustees at the October meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Merck

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