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MINUTES
of the
Board of Trustees of Bennington College

January 7, 1941

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of Bennington College was held at 111 East 73rd Street, New York City, at 8:30 p.m., on Tuesday, January 7th.

Present: Mr. Arthur W. Page, Chairman, Mrs. Joseph R. Swan, Mr. Victor Schoepperle, Mr. Frederick Lewis Allen, Dr. Samuel P. Capen, Mrs. Oliver Stonington, Mrs. George S. Franklin, Mrs. Walter B. Howe, Mrs. Henry Goddard Leach, Mrs. Samuel A. Lewisohn, and Mr. Hall Park McCullough. Mr. Leigh and Miss Bowie met with the Board.

Absent: Dr. Vincent Ravi Booth, Mrs. J. Gardner Bradley, Mr. Nicholas Kelley, Mrs. Clarence M. Woolley.

The Chairman of the Board reported that he had received Trustee approval by mail for the proposal that the President accept the invitation of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton to carry on investigations into the teaching of the social studies in secondary schools and colleges during the next seven months. He will retain charge of appointments, control of the current budget and recommendations for the budget for next year, and deal with emergencies if they arise at the College. The Institute for Advanced Study is paying the equivalent of the President's money salary for the period of his study, so that the College will not pay his regular salary from February 1st through July 1st. The contribution to the annuity will be paid during this period as well as any allowance for travel, entertainment and use of the President's house necessary for the carrying on of College business.

VOTED, on recommendation of the Educational Policies Committee, that Patricia Hickox be awarded the Bachelor of Arts degree in literature as of January 7, 1941.

VOTED, on recommendation of the Educational Policies Committee, to reappoint the following members of the faculty for the five-year period beginning July 1, 1941:

✓ Margaret Patterson
✓ William Troy
James L. McCamy

VOTED, on recommendation of the Educational Policies Committee, to reappoint the following members of the faculty for the five-year period beginning January 1, 1942:

Arch Lauterer
Robert McBride
Myra H. Jones

VOTED, on recommendation of the Educational Policies Committee,
✓ to reappoint as a member of the faculty Mr. Paul Feeley for the three-year period beginning July 1, 1941.

VOTED, on recommendation of the Educational Policies Committee,
✓ to reappoint as a member of the faculty Dr. Elizabeth H. McCullough (part time) for the two and one-half year period beginning January 1, 1941. Mr. McCullough did not vote on this motion.

VOTED, on recommendation of the Educational Policies Committee,
✓ to reappoint as a member of the faculty Mr. Carlos Buhler for the one and one-half year period beginning July 1, 1941.

VOTED, on recommendation of the Educational Policies Committee,
✓ to reappoint the following members of the faculty for the one-year period beginning July 1, 1941:

- ✓ John Kouwenhoven (part time)
- ✓ Bradford Smith
- ✓ Leonore Deutsch
- ✓ Joseph M. Dixon
- ✓ William Bales

VOTED, on recommendation of the Educational Policies Committee,
✓ to reappoint Herta Moselsio for the two and one-half year period beginning July 1, 1941, with change of status from assistant to faculty member.

VOTED, on recommendation of the Educational Policies Committee,
✓ to reappoint Doris Foresman, Director of Dining Rooms and Student Houses, for the two-year period beginning July 1, 1941.

VOTED, on recommendation of the Educational Policies Committee
✓ and the Health Committee, to reappoint Dr. Joseph O. Chassell for the two and one-half year period beginning January 1, 1941.

VOTED, on recommendation of the Ways and Means Committee, that the reappointment of Mrs. Frances Fenton Park be deferred until the March or June meeting of the Board of Trustees. It was agreed that Mrs. Park has made an excellent beginning in her work and that every possible aid and encouragement should be given her. It was also agreed that Mrs. Park should be asked to come to New York some time this spring to talk with Mrs. Leach, Mrs. Swan and Mr. Allen about money-raising and publicity matters. Assistance in these efforts may be asked from other members of the Board as needed.

The Educational Policies Committee reported the resignation
✓ of Thomas Perry, in Science, to take effect June 30, 1941. Mr. Perry will enter industrial work.

VOTED, on recommendation of the Educational Policies Committee, that the following members of the faculty be granted leaves of absence for the first semester of the fiscal year 1941-42 on full pay under the Salary and Tenure System:

✓ Margaret Patterson
✓ William Troy

VOTED, on recommendation of the Educational Policies Committee, to confirm the appointment of Dr. Carl Polanyi as resident lecturer for the academic year 1940-41, and his appointment as resident lecturer and fellow for the year 1941-42, with the understanding that this reappointment be contingent on the receipt of funds from a foundation to meet Dr. Polanyi's salary.

VOTED, on recommendation of the Ways and Means Committee, to accept the following gifts to the College received since the October meeting of the Board, and that the donors be thanked in the name of the Trustees by the President:

Payment on pledges to the Building Fund

Mrs. J. Gardner Bradley	\$ 50.00	
Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb	<u>500.00</u>	\$ 550.00

✓ VOTED, on recommendation of the Ways and Means Committee, to accept the following gifts to the College received since the October meeting of the Board:

Student Loan Fund

Mr. Benjamin F. Goldstein	\$ 675.00
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<u>Wilmoth Osborne Fund</u>	\$ 1,199.50
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✓ The following gifts to the Reduced Tuition Fund received since the October meeting of the Board were announced:

Class of 1936	\$ 511.25	
Class of 1937	50.00	
Class of 1938	261.00	
Class of 1939	15.00	
Class of 1940	<u>256.00</u>	\$1,093.25

✓ The Building Committee reported that in accordance with its discussions last spring, sketches for a mural for the Dewey House living room had been submitted by Anne Eaton. Although the Committee members felt that these sketches had great merit for student work, it was

believed that they did not represent the kind of permanent mural for the decoration of the rooms which was appropriate. The Committee decided further that they would discourage the use of student house living rooms with permanent wall-surfaces, for student mural projects. The Committee feels that the less permanent surfaces already designated for such use in the Barn should be used for student projects under the supervision of the art division and with the consent of the President for the particular space desired.

VOTED, on recommendation of the Building Committee, to authorize the expenditure of \$600 for general improvement of lighting throughout the Library.

The Building Committee reported that the parking space, for which \$1,200 had been authorized, had been completed for a cost of \$1,175.

The Finance Committee reported that it had voted to recommend the Student Reimbursement Plan to students and their parents. Miss Jones will write to all the families and the plan will become effective if more than 50% of the student body subscribes.

The Health Committee reported as follows:

The Committee has not been able to complete its investigations for a report at this time. At a previous meeting it was agreed that the psychoanalysis of students under the present regulations should be suspended until more investigations had been made by the Trustee Committee. The Committee proposes to continue its investigations during the winter and spring and especially will hope to have a complete study made of the actual operation of both short-time psychiatric interviews and the very few cases of analysis of students; this study to be ready by June when the Trustees meet in Bennington. In the meantime there are two students who want and who would probably profit by analysis. Dr. Chassell may propose them to the Student Personnel Committee and seek the consent of the students' parents. The Committee recommends to the Board of Trustees that this be done without commitment as to the future until the final report is made in June.

VOTED to accept this report of the Health Committee.

VOTED, on recommendation of the Nominating Committee, that ✓ Mr. James S. Dennis be elected a member of the Board of Trustees to succeed Dr. Vincent Ravi Booth whose term expires August 19, 1941.

VOTED, on recommendation of the Nominating Committee, that ✓ Mr. Lindsay Bradford be elected a member of the Board of Trustees to succeed Mr. Arthur W. Page whose term expires August 19, 1941.

VOTED, on recommendation of the Nominating Committee, that Mrs. Catharine Davis Stonington be elected to succeed herself for one year at the expiration of her present term, with the understanding that no precedent is here established, and that her successor may not be chosen for three successive terms.

VOTED, on recommendation of the School of the Arts Committee, that Mary J. Shelly be reappointed Administrative Director of the School of the Arts for the year beginning January 1, 1941.

VOTED, on recommendation of the School of the Arts Committee, that the following be reappointed as Chairmen of the four divisions of the School for the year beginning January 1, 1941:

Martha Hill, Dance
Francis Fergusson, Drama
Otto Luening, Music
Arch Lauterer, Theatre Design

VOTED, on recommendation of the School of the Arts Committee, to approve the granting of the Master of Arts degree by the Bennington School of the Arts, under the terms outlined in the School's report. (See Appendix I.)

VOTED, on recommendation of the School of the Arts Committee, to approve the tentative budget for the session of 1941, with the proviso that contracts are subject to cancellation if in the judgment of the Bennington College Corporation, the national emergency becomes of such a nature that the summer session would be impracticable.

VOTED, that each member of the Board of Trustees give to the President his proxy directing the President to vote at the June meeting of the Board in the event of the member's absence, or if present, that each member should vote to apply to the Vermont Secretary of State for an amendment to the College Charter, omitting the word "the" before "higher education" and omitting the words "of women" after "higher education"; the first paragraph of the Charter as amended to read:

We, the subscribers, hereby associate ourselves as a corporation under the laws of the State of Vermont, under the name BENNINGTON COLLEGE CORPORATION for the purpose of establishing and maintaining at Bennington in the County of Bennington and State of Vermont an institution of learning for higher education, with power and authority to acquire by gift, grant, bequest or otherwise, and hold property, real and personal, and convey the same; receive, hold, manage and administer gifts and bequests in trust for the purposes of the Corporation; prescribe requirements for admission, graduation and courses of study; confer degrees, diplomas and honors; employ such persons as in the judgment of the trustees may be necessary or requisite for carrying on the

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purposes of the Corporation; fix student fees for all purposes and do and perform any and all other acts and functions for the proper conduct and administration of an institution for the advancement of science and learning.

VOTED that the next two meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held March 24th and 25th, 1941, in New York, and June 13th and 14th in Bennington.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elisabeth H. Bowie
Secretary pro tem

Proposal for Master of Arts Degree to be Granted

by the Bennington School of the Arts

Beginning with the session of 1941, it is proposed that the Bennington School of the Arts operating under the Bennington College Corporation be definitely organized as a graduate as well as a professional school with study leading to the Master of Arts degree in the performing arts of dance, drama, music, and theatre design. A small number of well qualified and carefully selected students (men and women) would be accepted by the faculty of the School of the Arts as candidates for the M.A. degree. Students pursuing graduate studies in other institutions would also be granted credit for work done at the School. The School would continue to offer instruction for those desiring it for professional purposes only without any credit or enrolment for work for the degree. The Master of Arts program is designed primarily for a small proportion of the total enrolment who are preparing themselves for the profession of teaching in these fields.

From the standpoint of the School and of the College Corporation the proposal has several practical advantages. It will give the School of the Arts a clear definition as a graduate and professional institution quite distinct in purpose from the College. It will relate the work of the School to the professional purposes of a large part of its potential and actual student body. It will enable the College to define more exactly the status of the small number of teaching fellows and members of the Theatre Studio who remain in residence during the winter. More broadly, it will establish a small, highly qualitative center for graduate training in the field of the arts in line with the best modern thought of what an artist-teacher needs in order to acquire the background and skills of the craft. The proposal, in effect, is a development of current practices rather than a radical change in present operations.

Specific Plan for the M.A. Degree from the School of the Arts

The Master of Arts degree will be awarded by the Trustees of the Bennington College Corporation upon recommendation of the members of the Executive Committee of the School of the Arts as a result of the successful completion of the work prescribed. The Executive Committee, which includes the teaching heads of each of the four parts of the School's curriculum, the Administrative Director, and the President of the College, will as they desire, associate with themselves other faculty members of the School in organizing the program of Master of Arts students and in making decisions regarding the completion of the work.

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The number of candidates for the degree admitted in any one year is to be strictly limited to those for whom the resources and time of the School of the Arts faculty can provide thoroughly supervised program of study. It is intended that for the present a maximum of twelve would be admitted to candidacy for the M.A. degree. This will mean that not more than four or five might qualify for the degree in any year. The actual awarding of the degree is to be made at the end of the summer sessions and will be quite distinct from the degrees given in June at the end of the undergraduate year.

Admission

Candidates for the M.A. degree will be admitted only by personal interview, after special examination by the faculty members in the student's field of major interest and upon vote of the Executive Committee. An initial request for admissions examination is made to the Administrative Director of the School. In most cases the minimum prerequisite for admission is the baccalaureate degree from a college or university in good standing; in exceptional cases, students holding no baccalaureate degree will be admitted as candidates for the M.A. only (as, for example, men now in the Theatre Studio who would be eligible for the M.A. but not the A.B.). In no case will the student proceed to graduate work until the equivalent of A.B. work has been completed.

Definition of the Master of Arts Degree

Of the eight hundred students passing through the School of the Arts since 1934, two-thirds have been teachers and the remaining third were either planning to teach or, if engaged in professional performance, more frequently than not did in addition some teaching. This may be considered typical. Teacher education, therefore, whether for work in an educational institution or in a community theatre or studio, must be considered the primary function of the graduate program at the Bennington School of the Arts.

In undertaking to educate teachers, the program of graduate study seeks to avoid the common error of emphasizing method at the expense of content. The first consideration is that the student himself be educated. A secure command of his own field and a broad view of the arts in a contemporary world rather than a narrow consideration of methodology in teaching, is therefore the criterion. Methods courses as such are not offered. Instead, the plan of continuous apprenticeship is followed: the student learns in actual practice from those more experienced than himself, and as a matter of daily activity, teaches those less experienced. This presents a sharp break from the present method for the professional training of teachers. It is, however, directly in line with the best critical thought regarding the actual training of people qualified to give instruction in the arts. It is especially provided that in the School the prospective teacher and the mature artist be associated in a common enterprise of work, performance, and study.

Plan of Work

The plan of work for the M.A. is individually arranged in each case to take account of the student's capabilities, previous experience and future plans. The basis for all plans of work is, however, the same; the student becomes a member of a working ensemble and thus engages continuously in the active practice of his art. To this core of active work, he adds those theoretical and technical studies best suited to his needs and best designed to provide him with as much and as broad competence as his capabilities permit. No two students are expected to arrive at the same final point or by the same means; all are expected to demonstrate conclusively, and over a period of time rather than by a climaxing performance, the particular mastery in view when the student set out on his chosen plan of work.

The plan of study and work divides itself into five main parts, all of them requisites for the degree. First is the selection and carrying out of a project or series of projects comparable to a Master's thesis but not confined to a written study. The Master's project may be one or a series of such undertakings as the composition, performance or conducting of music, the acting, directing or writing of a play, the performance, composition or direction of a dance work; it may be some combination of these; and it may as well be, together or separately from an active project, a piece of research in written form. Success in carrying out the Master's project will not alone guarantee the award of the degree, although failure in this undertaking would bar its award.

Second, is the participation in one or more definitely collaborative projects. A stipulation governing both the program of work in general and the Master's project in particular is that narrow specialization in one of the four fields of the curriculum is unacceptable for the degree. The curriculum both in the arts divisions of the College and in the School of the Arts is organized on the principle of collaboration. This conception of cultivating side by side the closely related mediums which make up the modern theatre, and the habit of using easily and appropriately any of the means of theatrical expression required by the purpose in hand, must be a definite aspect of the accomplishment of students qualifying for the degree.

Third is the carrying on of a program of intensive and extensive study of the historical, philosophical and literary materials which form the background in the field of special interest, and fourth, a less intensive but extensive familiarity with the background materials of the other fields making up the performing arts.

Finally, the plan of continuous apprentice teaching will be followed. In a small, compact group such as the music, dance or drama ensembles within which the student works at Bennington, this

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realistic way of learning to teach is consistently possible. Playing one's part as actor, regisseur, choreographer, musician, directing a scene or a dance, leading a chorus or an orchestra, training a group to perform a composition of one's own making, are all ways of learning to teach in the most practical and readily transposed form. Mastering the craftsmanship of the performing arts by performing, in the wide variety of roles which craftsmanship entails, is therefore the process by which the teacher is educated. For focusing this aspect of the student's work, a seminar will bring together the experiences and techniques connected with teaching. Further, it will be the responsibility of the Executive Committee in awarding any Master of Arts degree to have assurance through observing the student at the School or where he or she is carrying on regular teaching activities that the candidate is qualified intellectually and personally to teach.

Fellowships

A certain number of the group admitted to the School as graduate students can possibly be appointed to the College as teaching fellows. The College now uses a number of graduates for this purpose. These teaching fellows receive small salaries for two-thirds time instruction and assistance to the regular members of the faculty. The period for which these fellowships have been granted is ordinarily two years. Under the plan for graduate students the appointment would cover both the winter session of the College and the summer session of the School of the Arts. In addition to the teaching fellows, one or two other graduate students may be in residence during the winter while working for the Master of Arts degree. They will pay a regular tuition. Candidates may be enrolled at other institutions under the guidance of the Arts School faculty and working under the general organization of a consistent plan, during the winter session. It will be possible to have a large proportion of the theoretical work in background materials done in the winter at other places and thoroughly examined at the School in writing and orally.

Residence and Credit

No specific value is placed upon graduate work done before entrance to the Bennington School of the Arts. The student's whole accomplishment, however acquired, is considered in his qualification for admission and is accepted as the point from which he starts in his pursuit of the degree. The length of time within which the degree may be earned and the contribution of previous training or experience to the earning of that degree will vary with the individual student. Experience other than formal graduate study gained before admission may contribute directly to the earning of the degree. No premium is placed upon advance credits as such. No time limit is placed on the period within which the degree may be awarded, and no guarantee made of its award at a given time.

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Study on the Graduate Level in the School of the Arts for Students
who are Candidates for Degrees or Credits Elsewhere

In addition to the small number of students in the summer school carrying on their work with a view to earning the Master of Arts degree from the Bennington College Corporation, any members of the School holding an undergraduate degree from a recognized college or university may have work done at the Summer School recorded and registered for graduate credit. This will be regularly transcribed and sent to other institutions. The maximum number of credits to be earned in any one session of the School is six semester hours.

Proposal for Charter Amendment

In order to make possible the occasional granting of the M.A. degree to a man graduate in the summer school, it is proposed that the Board of Trustees of the Corporation ask for an amendment of the College Charter, inserting the phrase "men and" before the word "women" in the definition of students so as to remove any possible difficulty regarding the granting of degrees in the performing arts, to either sex.