

DRAFT OF A STATEMENT ON THE ALLOCATION AND USE OF COLLEGE SPACE

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As a consequence of a number of unresolved space problems, this Office has been directed by the FEPC to prepare a plan for the reallocation and use of some of the college's space. Reallocating space to various educational activities can be among the most mundane of activities, yet how space is allocated and to which activities it is allocated have serious curricular repercussions. Thus, in preparing this report I have requested each division to enumerate its space needs and articulate how its curricular goals affect such needs. The best of all possible worlds would be one in which each division was allocated all the space it felt necessary to fulfill its instructional needs. But, even with the new art center, we live in a world of scarce space, and the task of the administration is to allocate available space in the most efficient and equitable manner. Such an allocation may result in divisions being asked to work with less than the desired amount of space, but once the allocation is made divisions will have to use their space creatively so as to minimize any adverse impact of space limitations on curriculum.

We begin our analysis with a discussion of divisional control of space. Each of the arts divisions controls access to some space and responsibility for scheduling its use. The ability to control access, use and scheduling seems to be a consequence of both the lack of central administrative responsibility and the heavy demand for space by the arts divisions for performance, rehearsal and practice. In earlier years the Secretary of the College was responsible for scheduling the use of facilities, but with the elimination of that position scheduling, except of classes and classrooms,

fell to divisions. Furthermore, given the emphasis in the arts on individual work, it seemed to make sense to grant divisions control of space use for performance, rehearsal and practice. But this practice in combination with space scarcity has promoted possessive and imperial attitudes over space among divisions.

In attempting to deal with the space disputes generated by current practice, I have been guided by the following assumptions:

- 1) that the total space available for use will remain fixed for the foreseeable future;
- 2) that the educational and curricular needs of each division are to be met as well as possible, given the fixed space available;
- 3) that equity in the treatment of divisional space needs must consider differences in curricular structures of divisions;
- 4) that no special preferences be granted any division;
- 5) that Bennington is primarily an undergraduate institution, and the normal expectation is that campus facilities will not be available for student use during non-term time, but that faculty can expect to continue normal use of their offices and studio spaces during non-term time;
- 6) that all space is college space and the administration has the right to allocate and reallocate space across the divisions.

These principles were used to resolve the following:

- 1) The lack of a divisional space home for the Black Music Division.
- 2) The relationship between the use of space for divisional purposes and the use of space for college-wide purposes.
- 3) The underutilization of Tishman Auditorium and Greenwall Music Workshop.
- 4) The use of space during non-term time by both graduate students and undergraduates.
- 5) New space requests.

One of the foremost problems facing us is the lack of a space home for the Black Music Division. In 1972 the Faculty Educational Policies Committee recommended and the faculty voted to create an eighth division of the college, but neither body made any attempt to provide that division with space comparable to that provided other divisions. Creating a new division without assigning it space has led to a never ending series of space use disputes. The most notable of these has been between the Music and Black Music Divisions over use of the Carriage Barn and practice rooms in Jennings. This has also hampered curriculum development of the Black Music Division. Term after term that division has been forced to seek out a new set of temporary arrangements which involve it in using space in locations all over campus (the West Studio, D207 in VAPA, and the Carriage Barn) at times in which the divisions controlling use of those spaces were not using them.

If the Black Music Division is to remain a division of the college, it should be provided its own space. Furthermore, given that this cannot be done by adding new space, but must come out of existing space, and that space is already in scarce supply, the allocation of divisional space to the Black Music Division will require the other divisions of the college to sacrifice space. In recommending that some divisions relinquish space to Black Music, I have attempted to spread the loss across divisions, and allocate the loss to those divisions who have recently gained space in the VAPA.

To meet these stipulations I recommend the following:

- 1) That the Black Music Division be allocated faculty office and practice/performance space on the third floor of Commons. Faculty office space shall consist of the offices currently used by the psychiatric counselors, and the practice space shall consist of the two dance studios on either side of Commons Theatre.
- 2) That the Dance Division be compensated for its losses by returning use of the West Studio above the Brick Garage and granting it use of Greenwall Music Workshop.
- 3) That the psychiatric counselors be moved to four offices in the north suites of Commons. These spaces are currently painting studios. To alleviate these losses to the Visual Arts Division the college should attempt to negotiate with its insurance company to reopen painting spaces in student houses.

In addition to the above problem, there is a continuing problem surrounding divisional control of access to space. Currently, there are no spaces designated for college-wide use (except perhaps Tishman Auditorium, about which more will be said later) and both the Literature and Languages Division and the Social Science Division have requested that they be provided with either occasional access to the space of other divisions for community lectures, or with space of their own for such purposes. Two crucial aspects of this problem include: 1) providing a mechanism by which to ensure reasonable access to spaces by divisions within the college without unduly disrupting the activities of primary divisions. (Primary divisions are defined as those divisions which use spaces for practice or rehearsal); and 2) a delineation of spaces within the college as common spaces.

The rational way to ensure reasonable access to such spaces is to revert back to something like a Secretary of the College who is responsible for scheduling both time and space. (Incidentally, the use of someone to schedule activities would reduce the number of conflicts between events that currently exist as a consequence of divisions scheduling events without knowledge of

what other divisions are doing). To protect primary divisions the college secretary might operate under the following principle. First use of common space for practice or rehearsal activities will be granted primary divisions, except when a reasonable request for use of common space is received by the college secretary one month in advance of the date of use, and when such requests do not infringe upon a planned performance activity of the primary division. For example, if the Visual Arts Division needs three weeks to hang a show in Usdan Gallery which will last for two weeks no common activity would be scheduled during this time span. Similarly, the weekly Wednesday evening Music Division Concert in the Carriage Barn would not be interrupted. In addition to delineating a set of principles for sharing common spaces, I have reviewed the space available for common activities and believe that the following spaces should be made common space: 1) The Carriage Barn, 2) Commons Theatre, 3) Tishman Auditorium, 4) Newman Court, 5) Usdan Gallery, 6) Dickinson Lounge, 7) Greenwall Music Workshop, 8) Dickinson 117, 9) The Galleria, and 10) Barn 1.

A third space problem is the serious underutilization of Greenwall Music Workshop and Tishman Auditorium. Tishman Auditorium was built to house the entire community. Unfortunately, it cannot accomodate the current community of approximately 700 people. Furthermore, Tishman is notoriously uncomfortable as well as acoustically poor. Two years ago a public address system was installed, but the sound speakers were stolen and have not been replaced. Additionally, the capacity is such that Tishman only works for a public lecture that gathers approximately 250 to 300 people. Given that most events draw under 100 people, the lack

of comfort and acoustical defects make it an extremely undesirable space for almost any activity. As a consequence of these problems, Tishman is probably the most unused facility on campus. Virtually its only use is to show weekend movies to the community. It stands idle for at least 90% of the time. The second underutilized space is Greenwall Music Workshop. That facility was designed as a music performance space with a seating capacity of 400. Unfortunately, the Music Division's primary need is for additional practice rooms, as the Carriage Barn more than satisfies the Division's performance needs. The Carriage Barn is both more acoustically desirable, and its seating capacity is much closer to the average size audience the Division attracts. The Music Division considers Greenwall too large and unusable as a consequence of its acoustic characteristics. All members of the Music Division refuse to use Greenwall except for Gunnar Schonbeck. Thus, that space is currently being used by only one faculty member of the college.

Increases in the rate of utilization of these spaces may depend upon the investment of funds to improve acoustical qualities and comfort. As far as Greenwall goes, it is highly unlikely that that space will ever be utilized by the Music Division for performance, and given the heavy emphasis in the Division on practice, what the Division needs is additional practice rooms. Thus, we might begin to think about converting the large performance space into practice rooms or some combination of practice rooms with a smaller performance space. Obviously, given the college's current financial status, such plans must be long range. In the interim, rather than leave that space

solely to the use of one faculty member, I suggest allocating it to the Dance Division. Greenwall does have a sprung dance floor, and since we have taken space away from Dance to satisfy the space needs of the Black Music Division, this seems appropriate.

This Office has also received, over the past three months, a series of new space requests by various divisions of the college. The Social Science Division has requested that the Chicken Coop, currently painting studio space, be turned into an individualized learning center for the early childhood program. Additionally, both the Social Science Division and the Literature and Languages Division have requested that the Barn Studio Theatre, currently drama space, be turned into an all purpose faculty lounge/lecture room for small audiences. Given the loss of painting studio space that has been forced upon the Visual Arts Division as a consequence of both fire insurance regulations and the shifting of the psychiatric counselors from the third floor in Commons to the North Suites, I recommend that the Chicken Coop remain painting space. As regards Barn Studio Theatre, the retention by the Drama Division of Commons Theatre, and the addition of performance and practice space in the performing arts complex leads me to suggest that we renovate the Barn Studio Theatre and turn it into a faculty lounge/small scale evening lecture room.

The final space problem centers on the use of space during non-term time by students. Currently the Visual Arts Division guarantees its graduate students continuous access to campus facilities throughout the year. Although such practices may be educationally sound, I question the financial wisdom

of keeping our facilities open in non-term time for graduate student use. Furthermore, if we begin to use the facilities during non-term time for other activities, it may be impossible to grant graduate students continuous use of space.

Similar considerations arise with undergraduate use of campus facilities, particularly during the Non-Resident Term. Partly as a consequence of the college's failure to provide enough job opportunities over NRT, an increasing number of students have been using the college's facilities for further work during NRT. The Non-Resident Term has historically been a period of time in which students were required to get away from their campus studies and involve themselves in some sort of work experience in the "real world". Current arrangements violate at least the spirit of the Non-Resident Term and if the Non-Resident Term is to retain its meaning this trend should be reversed. In light of the above points as well as financial pressures, I recommend that we deny non-term use of facilities to all students, particularly during the winter months.

In summary, I recommend:

- 1) That the Black Music Division be moved to the third floor of Commons. That the offices which are currently used by the psychiatric counselors be converted into faculty offices for the Black Music Division, and that the two dance studios on either side of Commons Theatre be designated Black Music Division practice/performance space.
- 2) That the psychiatric counselors be moved to the North Suites in Commons. This will require the conversion of painting studios into office space for the counselors, and as a consequence of the further erosion in the number of painting studios available to the Visual Arts Division, I recommend that the Chicken Coop remain painting space, and that we deny the Social Science Division's request to turn that space into an individualized learning center.*

- 3) That some individual within the college be given the responsibility for scheduling common events within the college and that the following set of spaces be designated common spaces. The Carriage Barn, Commons Theatre, Tishman Auditorium, Newman Court, Usdan Gallery, Dickinson Lounge, Greenwall Music Workshop, Dickinson 117, The Galleria, and Barn 1.
- 4) That to compensate the Dance Division for its loss of space we return them use of the West Studio above the Brick Garage, and grant them use of Greenwall Music Workshop. The loss to the Music Division of Greenwall seems quite minimal, particularly since under the arrangements made for Black Music the Carriage Barn will now become primarily Music Division space.
- 5) That we convert the Barn Studio Theatre into an all purpose faculty lounge/lecture room for the Literature and Languages, Social Science, and Science Divisions.
- 6) That we not grant use of college facilities to our own undergraduates or to graduate students during non-term time, particularly during the NRT.

*Since this report has been drafted Sally Sugarman has withdrawn her request for the Chicken Coop. Sally now proposes to add a room onto the current nursery school building to house the individualized learning center. She expects to be able to raise \$10,000 to finance this project. From what I know little has been done to determine construction and maintenance costs for such an addition. Before approving this plan the administration must decide what financial principles should be applied to the nursery school. Are we willing to subsidize those activities or should that program be run so as to break even or make money?