

Bennington College
February 26, 1941

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMITTEE,

MARCH 1940 - MARCH 1941

The Educational Policies Committee has always occupied a rather nebulous position in the minds of most students and faculty. Beyond the point of certain well-defined functions which it performs with bureaucratic regularity (such as the annual survey of courses and meetings with students to interpret and discuss our educational methods at Bennington), the committee has a vague reputation of being the channel for suggestions, plans, or activities relating to educational policies. Who supplies these ideas is not generally known, nor is what becomes of them once they have been mulled over by the committee. It is safe to say that the type of business which the EPC handles is all that business which does not seem to come into the province of any other committee. The Community Council, generally knows what is going on in all the best minds of the community, and it sends any ideas which are going begging over to the EPC for consideration. These ideas are usually disposed of in a couple of Wednesday night meetings, and go no further. If they are deemed to be of any importance or value for action, then the Council or other appropriate body is asked for its cooperation in carrying them out. This is because the EPC is an advisory committee and has no power to accomplish much directly.

The other great source of business for the EPC is the Executive Committee of the Faculty. When they want student cooperation or opinion on something, it is their habit, developed after years of careful training, to request the EPC to do something about it. A typical case of that sort is that of the latest drive to improve the quality of student writing. The EPC has tried this year to propagandize the importance of writing

and to get students to demand - and take - criticism of their written work to a greater degree than heretofore.

It must be realized, however, that fully as important as the work of the EPC as a committee is the work of the individual committee members and their sub-committees as the representatives of their Majors. The success of the EPC representatives in being the "trouble-shooters" of academic difficulties which confront students and faculty in their teaching relations depends upon many factors, and it is the most important and at the same time the most delicate responsibility of the EPC. The student who fills this position must be one who has the confidence of both her faculty and fellow-students, and she must be able to work toward the best ends of both. The success of any EPC is measurable by the degree of respectful cooperation which its members are able to attain in their relation to both faculty and students. Since this is true, it is not for this committee to evaluate its success here before you by pointing with pride to the new and improved system of surveying courses or other administrative reforms which it has undertaken. We ask you instead to evaluate us yourselves from the viewpoint of our success or failure in handling the problems which you have brought to us as individuals. We hope that you will prevent any mistakes we have made from occurring again by nominating better people for the next term of office.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Dudley, secretary