



To: The Bennington College Community
The Alumnae Board of Directors

From: Jessie K. Emmet

The Board of Trustees decided in April that it might be worthwhile to distribute a resume of its meetings. They agreed that the formal minutes, being basically documents of record, are too bare to fulfill the desired purpose, and I was asked to write a more informal communication.

After a number of false starts I turned back to the format of the agenda. The considerations and decisions of each Board meeting are so diverse that a completely discursive description would run on interminably and the outline of committee reports served both as a form to follow and limits to observe.

This is frankly an experiment and the trustees want your comments and suggestions. We hope that we can develop a frame work that will make it possible in the future to write a report of this kind very quickly after the meetings.

June 5, 1969

Board of Trustees Meeting

AGENDA

April 18 - 19, 1969

1. Minutes of the meeting of January 7 - 8, 1969
2. Communications from the Chairman
3. Communications from the President
4. Reports of Standing Committees:
 - 4.1 Alumnae Relations Committee -- Mrs. Schiffer
 - 4.11 Report
 - 4.2 Budget Committee -- Mr. Lazarus
 - 4.21 Preliminary budget
 - 4.22 Fees schedule and contract
 - 4.3 Buildings and Grounds Committee -- Mr. Dollard
 - 4.31 Buildings and Grounds budget
 - 4.32 Plans
 - 4.4 Committee on Community Life -- Mrs. Nields
 - 4.41 Report
 - 4.5 Development Committee -- Mrs. Mortimer
 - 4.51 Acceptance of gifts
 - 4.52 Report and plans
 - 4.53 Budget for Visual Arts-Performing Arts Buildings
 - 4.6 Educational Policies Committee -- Mr. Ford
 - 4.61 Faculty matters
 - 4.62 Educational implications of budgetary recommendations
 - 4.7 Finance Committee -- Mr. Lord
 - 4.71 Endowment accounting
 - 4.72 Political problems of investment
 - 4.8 Nominating Committee -- Mr. Heiskell
 - 4.81 Report
5. Reports of Special Committees:
 - 5.1 Committee on Audio-Visual Teaching Aids -- Mrs. Welch
 - 5.11 Report
6. Old Business
7. New Business
8. Adjournment

SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

April 18-19, 1969

1. Minutes of the Meeting of January 7 - 8, 1969

1.1 The minutes of the January meeting of the Board were approved as circulated.

2. Communications from the Chairman

2.1 Mrs. Emmet announced that in response to a request from the Community Council she would appoint a Trustee committee to review the past and explore the future roles of the President and the Trustees in the governance of the College.

Mrs. Emmet then read the following paragraph from a letter of understanding written in July, 1965 by Mr. Ruebhausen, who was then Chairman of the Board, to President Bloustein:

"I should also confirm the understanding of the Trustees that they will consult with you, at the end of the fourth year of the term as President to which you have been elected, to ascertain both their and your intentions with respect to a new appointment for a further term upon the completion of the five-year term you are about to serve. The Board will communicate to you its intention in this regard as promptly as possible after the conclusion of your fourth year. You, in turn, will advise the Board as to your wishes as soon as reasonably possible thereafter."

Mrs. Emmet said that President Bloustein had given her this letter and she would like, with Board approval, to meet its requirements by first appointing a special Presidential Review Committee with Mr. Dollard as chairman, Mrs. Hadley, Mr. Lazarus, Mrs. Meyer, Mrs. Nields and Mr. Smith as members, and Mr. Lindsay, Mrs. Mortimer and herself as Vice-chairmen and chairman, ex-officio members. The Board approved the formation of the committee and Mr. Dollard announced it would have its first meeting immediately after the Board meeting.*

Mrs. Emmet told the Board about the conversation she and Mrs. Mortimer had had with Mrs. Foster and Mr. Lyon about the proposed atomic power plant at Easton, New York. A lively discussion followed and it was agreed that the Board as a whole would not take a stand at this time but that they wanted to be both educated and kept informed. Moreover, members of the Board who, as individuals, had special competence in this field were asked to communicate directly with Mr. Lyon.

Mrs. Emmet spoke about the very rewarding informal meetings she and Mrs. Mortimer had had with faculty and students. Aside from the general recognition of how inspiring and stimulating this kind of meeting can be for the Trustees, one aspect seemed particularly important. Unlike such meetings in the past, these were working meetings rather than social meetings and the participants very quickly became individuals rather than symbols to each other. The trustees who were able to meet with the

* A copy of the letter sent to the Faculty Personnel Committee by the Presidential Review Committee is attached.

Community Council on Thursday evening agreed that this was so and the general feeling was that such communications should be continued and encouraged.

As a final "Communication from the Chairman", Mrs. Emmet spoke for all the Trustees in her comments on the "Concert of Silence". As a way of expressing the Bennington students' participation in the prevalent concerns of their generation it was extraordinarily effective. As a reminder, and encouragement, to the trustees to "listen" it was most gratefully received. Regarding the substantive matters that are of current concern, the trustees hope to be able to follow developments closely and be of help wherever appropriate. In particular the Trustees will find it very important to thoroughly understand the development of the Black Studies program because they will surely be called upon to testify to Bennington's contribution to the larger academic effort.

3. Communications from the President

3.1 President Bloustein commented briefly about his trip to Pittsburg in January to attend a meeting of the Association of American Colleges. He described the mood of despair of most of the college presidents gathered at the meeting. He reported that his own personal mood was still very optimistic, especially in view of the joint faculty-student action on tuition and enlargement of the College.

He stated that Miss Stickney was unable to attend the meeting and that he would report on the current admissions picture. Total applications for admission was up 30% over last year. One hundred sixty-five applications had been received from men and thirty-four had been accepted. Eight hundred fifty-nine applications were received from women and 278 were accepted. There were sixteen applications which the admissions office would liked to have been able to accept but were unable to because financial aid funds had been exhausted.

4. Reports of Standing Committees

4.1 Alumnae Relations Committee

Mrs. Schiffer reported that the New York Theatre Benefit had been the most successful in history, netting \$10,500. The New York alumnae had also conducted an enjoyable and financially rewarding Art Tour which had netted \$5,000. She said she would forego further discussion of alumnae affairs at this time and would have a long and full report for the June meeting, following the Alumnae Board meeting in May.

4.2 Budget Committee

Mr. Lazarus reported that the Preliminary Budget had been examined but that this year it was still tentative and incomplete because of the uncertainties about available income.

Mrs. Emmet asked if the final budget as adopted each June was available for public examination. President Bloustein assured her that it was on open file except for the itemized individual salaries.

The proposal for the fees schedule and contract as circulated to the Trustees was adopted as modified in consultation with the Faculty and Student Educational Policies Committees. See item 4.6. *

* This information was immediately circulated to the community by President

4.3 Buildings and Grounds Committee

Mrs. Rockwell reported on the budget for the operation and maintenance of the physical plant. The largest part of this budget is, as usual, the repair of buildings and the repair and replacement of furniture and equipment. This year there are higher costs than usual for work on the grounds and road work due, in a large part, to the present building activity. We hope this year to see the beginning of a long term planting program in which the college will grow its own nursery stock of trees and shrubs. Professional plans from our landscape architect, Mr. Richard Webel, will be presented at the June meeting. Mr. Webel's assistant is Catherine Orloff Morrison '55.

On the recommendation of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, the Board authorized President Bloustein to ask Robertson Ward to proceed to working drawings of the Arts buildings. At the present level of building costs \$3,775,000 is presently estimated for these buildings. This represents a rise of some \$600,000 in the estimated cost of this building, a rise which is explainable almost entirely in terms of the inflation of construction costs since this building was originally authorized by the Board.

The Board also authorized the necessary work on the west side of Commons provided that President Bloustein and Mr. Dollard work out a satisfactory arrangement with a contractor which is approved at a special meeting of the Building and Grounds Committee early in May.

4.4 Committee on Community Life

Mrs. Niels reported on a very interesting meeting with the students at lunch on Friday. She described the general concern with the quality of campus life and specific concerns about coeducation. It was decided that the students and faculty would be interested in the Trustees' reaction to the discussion about two areas in which new policies are being developed.

As an experiment, and if both men and women students want it, it seems sensible to the Trustees to choose suites in the new dormitories as the units for housing men, rather than houses or floors, and see how it works out.

In discussing the present method of check-up and sign-out the Trustees were of the general opinion that the college should no longer attempt to function in loco parentis. However, a simple and efficient system for registering any students whereabouts at all times should be set up so that it would be available, on an optional basis, for any student who wanted to use it. Moreover, this policy should be clearly stated in the Bulletin so that there could be no misunderstanding of the shift in responsibility in this matter from the college to the students and their parents.

These responses by the Trustees were positive reactions to the student proposal that their concerned and informed opinion must provide the basis for developing the rules and regulations of campus social life. Implicit in this response is not only the acceptance of primary student responsibility in this area, but the recognition that the veto power of the other constituencies should only be invoked under the most unusual circumstances.

4.5 Development Committee

The Development Committee met on Friday with the full Board. Before asking Mrs. Mortimer to report for the Committee, Mrs. Emmet reminded the Trustees of the letter she had written about the probable necessity of postponing construction of the Arts buildings because of the freeze on government loans and insufficient pledges to the Capital Fund Campaign. Mrs. Emmet then read a response she had received from one Trustee making what can only be described as a truly sacrificial gift toward the Arts buildings with a string attached to it that Mrs. Emmet go to each Trustee personally and ask them to match this gift in terms of comparative sacrifice. One other string attached to the gift was that its circumstances remain confidential to the Board.

4.51 Acceptance of Gifts

4.52 Report and Plans

Mrs. Mortimer reported on the gifts received since the last meeting of the Board. These amounted to \$44,109.05 in unrestricted annual gifts of which \$26,054.18 came from the Alumnae Fund, \$15,220.05 in restricted gifts, largely for scholarships, and \$41,147.77 contributed to the Capital Funds program.

The totals for three quarters are as follows: Unrestricted Annual Giving \$130,544.69, Restricted Annual Funds \$40,961.58 and Capital Funds \$456,563.78 for a total of \$628,070.05.

Mrs. Mortimer pointed out that these gifts came from 1,044 givers and that at this time last year the count was 1,043. Also both annual giving and scholarship funds were up over last year, but the over all total was down more than half a million dollars because of the slow-down in the Capital Funds program. She emphasized that we must face the fact that although we are half way to our goal of eleven million dollars in gifts and pledges, the first half represents gifts from people who know Bennington and have always supported it. The next five and a half million will have to come in a large part from those who are interested more in education in general than in Bennington in particular. We will find many more negative than positive responses to our requests from now on and we must understand that this is to be expected and not be discouraged by them.

Mrs. Hambleton outlined the plans now underway to raise money to name the Dance Workshop for Martha Hill. A very distinguished committee has been formed and there are high hopes that the proposed tribute will become a reality.

Mrs. Mortimer spoke for all the Trustees in her appreciation for Mrs. Michelfelder's work on the Capital Funds Campaign. Her untiring efforts, her gentle but very firm and constant pressure on us all, her sense of humor and her understanding of Bennington, made fund-raising not only effective but very often a pleasure.

Mrs. Michelfelder's departure, which will be at the end of June, has necessitated a restructuring of personnel and Mrs. Mortimer was happy to introduce Mr. Kendall Landis who became Director of Development on February 15.

Mr. Landis reviewed the fund raising and possibilities of the Development office.

He mentioned that all annual funds had been placed under Mrs. Cumpston's direct supervision and that a graduating senior had been hired to join her as an assistant in July. The heartening increase in the flow of gifts in the alumnae fund during the third quarter of the fiscal year was mentioned as a demonstration of Mrs. Cumpston's particular abilities in this area. He expressed the belief that there is a particular untapped potential in the parent's fund. Plans for a telethon on May 5 through the 8th were announced. Mr. Landis referred to the annual funds as one of Bennington's most "dependable endowments" and expressed a hope that all together they would reach \$200,000 by June 30.

In reference to Government grants and loans it was reported that Mr. Heiskell was approaching Mr. Moynahan and Mr. Bloustein was going to Washington in a few days. The opinion was expressed that we cannot count on any Government funds soon.

Mr. Landis agreed that to reanimate the capital funds program we must be able to show a massive renewal of support starting to come into the College - the same psychological effect achieved by the advance gifts announced when the capital funds program first began.

According to the schedule of the capital funds program as originally laid down, the program must be taken out "to our public" by Fall. The planners of the C.F.P. anticipated a total of 3,764 donors. So far the attack has only been on major gifts, and donors number only 328 so far.

Mr. Landis mentioned that taking the capital funds program to every alumnae parent and friend will depend very much on volunteer effort and a great deal of organization and planning to be effected by the Development office over the summer. Carol Feuer, Sara Jane Schiffer, Hudas Liff, Cappy Cumpston and others had already expressed their eagerness to participate in organizing this major effort.

In closing Mr. Landis mentioned that the performing arts center as a whole would require one million dollars to complete even if the three separate performance workshops were financed at the amounts to be quoted in the Brochure. The entire performing arts center needs a name and, preferably, a nationally known one. A million dollar gift would revive the capital funds program and permit us to start groundbreaking on schedule.

Mrs. Nields had been asked by President Bloustein to explore the possible formation of a group of resource people made up of former trustees, former faculty, alumnae, and alumnae husbands to whom he could turn with more ease if they had an already established relationship with Bennington. Mrs. Nields had consulted with several trustees and had circulated a tentative proposal for a "Bennington Council". The response of the Board was very favorable and Mrs. Nields was asked to consult with the faculty and if they agreed present a final proposal at the June meeting for formal adoption.

4.53 Budget for Visual Arts-Performing Arts Building

This item reported under 4.3.

4.6 Educational Policies Committee

The Committee, with the full Board attending, met on Friday afternoon with the Faculty and Student Educational Policies Committee. Mrs. Emmet presided in the absence of the Chairman, Dr. Morison and Vice-Chairman, Franklin Ford. The first order of business was to send our expression of sympathy and affection to Mr. Ford, who was in the hospital.

The Friday afternoon session was devoted entirely to discussion of tuition and the size of the student body. The joint recommendation that finally evolved on tuition was a graduated scale of \$4,325.00 for Freshmen, \$4,250.00 for Sophomores, \$4,200.00 for Juniors and \$4,050.00 for Seniors. It was clearly the sense of the meeting that this tuition scale should be adopted for one year only on an experimental basis and that fees should be carefully reviewed annually. It was also recommended that any student whose class standing is indeterminate should be expected to pay the lowest fee applicable. It was also recommended that the student body be increased to 550, exclusive of students in absentia. All these recommendations were adopted by the Board at this session. This business occupied all of the scheduled hour but fortunately the same groups met again at dinner.

The dinner meeting brought forth a very free wheeling discussion of educational policy in general. The Trustees hoped that they made it clear that while they do not consider educational policy decisions in their province they do need to be cognizant of developing directions and variations so they can consider and explain financial implications that may be involved. Moreover, the Trustees' effectiveness in interpreting the college, whether in fund raising or in general discussions, depends very largely on their understanding and commitment to Bennington's educational goals.

4.61 Faculty Matters

The following new appointments were approved as recommended by the President:

Alvin Fernman	Literature
Walter D. Lehrman	Literature
Stephen Sandy	Literature
Edward Flaccus	Science
Kendall Landis	Director of Development

The following one year presidential appointment was approved as recommended:

George Finckel	Music
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The following temporary appointment was approved as recommended:

John Griefen	Visual Arts
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Mr. Bloustein commented that the College was receiving some thirty applications a week from people wishing to join the faculty. He felt this reflected the esteem in which the College is held and, in part, as well, the fact that many faculty members are anxious to get away from urban universities.

4.62 Educational Implications of Budgetary Recommendations

The dinner meeting on Friday night provided a helpful background for President Bloustein's communications to the Board on Saturday morning about the educational implications of budgetary recommendations. He reported that the experience of finally coming face to face with the possibility of ultimate bankruptcy had, in spite of the pain, been stimulating and probably beneficial. He felt that the whole college community was ready to try changes in a renewed spirit of experimentalism which recognized that changes must not be regarded as irreversible. He expected to be able to report significant curriculum changes made by the faculty, in this experimental spirit, at the June meeting of the Board.

4.7 Finance Committee

4.71 Endowment Accounting

On the recommendation of Mr. Lord, the Board reappointed Haskins and Sells as auditors.

Mr. Lord expressed the concern of the Finance Committee over the complicated bookkeeping that has developed over the years by the Board's designation of legally unrestricted funds to specific purposes. The Finance Committee recommended that the records of all gifts and bequests be reviewed by a lawyer to determine if and how they were restricted and that when this examination is concluded all legally unrestricted funds become one consolidated fund and all funds restricted to the use of income become another. These will be open-ended funds which can take in new funds at specific accounting dates and each share will always retain the identity of the donor and the directions as to its use. As a first step in this plan the Trustees rescinded all previous Board actions restricting gifts and bequests.

The Finance Committee also recommended that rather than borrow money at the present high rates of interest the Board, in effect, borrow from itself by authorizing the use of \$700,000 of the College's funds to proceed with the remodeling of Commons, to make up the deficit of costs beyond gifts received on the new student houses and to complete the science building. This recommendation was adopted.

4.72 Political Problems of Investment

There was a short discussion of the political problems of investment, but it was decided that the question must be tabled because its complexities demanded thoughtful and careful and not hasty considerations.

4.8 Nominating Committee

Mr. Heiskell, on behalf of the Nominating Committee, proposed the election of Joseph H. Iseman to the Board for a seven year term beginning in August, 1969. Mr. Iseman was unanimously elected and he and the three other members of the Class of 1967. Arthur Thornhill.

Ralph Ellison and Lisle Carter will all come to Bennington with their wives for Commencement.*

The Board next year will probably require three new trustees and the committee suggests that they should be women if a general parity is to be maintained. There was considerable discussion of ways to structure the Board so there would be direct representation of younger points of view. This discussion will continue in the Nominating Committee.

5. Reports of Special Committees

5.1 Committee on Audio-Visual Teaching Aids

Mrs. Welch reported that her Faculty-Trustee Committee had finished their assignment and that it was her impression that a great deal had been learned which will be of value to the College. The Committee has sent a memorandum to President Bloustein recommending a policy of gradual and ordered development in the acquisition and use of both visual-aid and computer instrumentation and material. The Board thanked Mrs. Welch for chairing this committee and through her all the members who served on it.

6.7.8 Old Business - New Business - Adjournment

There being no more old business or new business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessie K. Emmet
Chairman of the Board

* A curriculum vitae of each of these Trustees has been circulated to the Community.

April 28, 1969

Members of the Faculty Personnel Committee:

When Ed was appointed President of Bennington, Oscar Ruebhausen, the Chairman of the Board wrote him a letter in lieu of a formal contract confirming the terms of his appointment. The next to the last paragraph is as follows:

"I should also confirm the understanding of the Trustees that they will consult with you, at the end of the fourth year of the term as president to which you have been elected, to ascertain both their and your intentions with respect to a new appointment for a further term upon the completion of the five year term you are about to serve. The Board will communicate to you its intention in this regard as promptly as possible after the conclusion of your fourth year. You, in turn, will advise the Board as to your wishes as soon as reasonably possible thereafter."

Ed brought this to my attention before the last Trustees Meeting, and I have appointed a Presidential Review Committee the members of which are:

Mr. Dollard, Chairman
Mrs. Hadley
Mr. Lazarus
Mrs. Meyer
Mrs. Nields
Mr. Smith

Also, Franklin Lindsay, Kathleen Mortimer and I are ex-officio on this Committee, as we are on all committees of the Board, and we will, therefore, be regular and active members of it.

In carrying out the intention expressed in Oscar Ruebhausen's letter, both Ed and the Trustees will need assurance that they are acting for the community as a whole, and for this I would like to ask the help of the Faculty Personnel Committee. Would the three of you be responsible for asking a representative number of faculty for their comment and opinion, and also be available to all who may want to be heard? We would like you to meet with us to evaluate and interpret your information and share in our deliberations.

The Committee will also need to hear student opinion and they would be most appreciative if you could arrange for the members of the Student Educational Policies Committee to meet individually with Chuck Dollard or other members of the Committee.

The Presidential Review Committee expects to make its report to the Board at the June meeting, and they will be deeply grateful for your essential help and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Jessie K. Emmet
Chairman of the Board of Trustees