

Faculty Meeting Minutes 2016-2017

Minutes of the Meeting of the Faculty of Bard College held on 31 August 2016

The meeting was called to order at 4:55 p.m. by President Botstein, who welcomed the faculty to the opening informational meeting of the fall term.

He acknowledged for the record the death, on June 25 at the age of 71, of Peter Hutton, Charles Franklin Kellogg and Grace E. Ramsey Kellogg Professor of the Arts. Professor Hutton began teaching at Bard in 1985 and chaired the Film and Electronic Arts Program for 27 years. A memorial service was held at Blithewood on June 28. President Botstein extended his appreciation to the members of the Film and Electronic Arts Program who are working both to maintain the program and move ahead. Professor Hutton was a terrific colleague who developed a fantastic program in film. President Botstein asked that he be remembered and not forgotten.

Faculty transition. Thurman Barker has been promoted to professor of music. Jacqueline Goss has been promoted to professor of film and electronic arts. James Belk has been tenured and promoted to associate professor of mathematics. Tabetta Ewing has been tenured as associate professor of history. Christopher LaFratta has been tenured and promoted to associate professor of chemistry. Richard Suchenski has been tenured and promoted to associate professor of film and electronic arts. Daniel Mendelsohn has been tenured as Charles Ranlett Flint Professor of Humanities.

New tenure-line faculty include Robert Gioffi, assistant professor of classics; Cathy Collins, assistant professor of biology; Kevin Duong, assistant professor of political studies; Michael Martell, assistant professor of economics; and Dominique Townsend, assistant professor of religion. Franco Baldasso's appointment as visiting assistant professor of Italian has been converted to tenure-line. Shai Secunda has been named the first occupant of the Jacob Neusner Chair in the History and Theology of Judaism.

In addition to many new visiting faculty appointments, William Deresiewicz will serve as NEH/ Hannah Arendt Center Distinguished Visiting Fellow (October 16 through November 14, 2016). Dinaw Mengestu has been appointed professor of written arts and director of the Written Arts Program (2016–21).

Enrollment. Fall enrollment is strong, with 501 first-year and 55 transfer students in residence.

Staff transition. In admission, Janet Stetson '81 has been promoted to associate vice president for admission, and Mackie Siebens '12 has been appointed deputy director of admission. Ariana Gonzalez Stokas '00 has returned to campus as dean of inclusive excellence. In development, Sasha Boak Kelly has been promoted to director of development, and Karen Unger has been named assistant vice president for development and alumni/ae affairs. At the Fisher Center, Bob Bursey has been named executive director, and Gideon Lester is now artistic director for theater and dance. The Reverend Mary Grace Williams has been appointed chaplain of the college and will assume a pastoral role in student life; she also will serve as rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Barrytown.

Today is the last "official" day at Bard for Charles "Chuck" Simmons, who is retiring after 45+ years of service with Buildings & Grounds. No one has been more loyal to this institution or served it better. The gratitude of the faculty was duly recorded.

President Botstein welcomed former Dean of the College Michèle Dominy, who has returned from a year-long administrative leave and resumed her role as a full-time member of the faculty. Rebecca Thomas had a good first year as dean.

Other news. At the annual meeting in May, the Board of Trustees named James C. Chambers '81 chair-elect. Mr. Chambers, who has a farm in the area, is a Bard alumnus and a parent and step-parent of Bard alumni as well as a loyal and long-standing contributor to the college. He will take over the chair from Charles P. Stevenson Jr. this fall, after a period of transition. George F. Hamel Jr., also a Bard parent, is now a vice chair of the board. A new team was needed; these are very positive steps that bode well for the college.

The Al-Quds Bard commencement was held on August 23 at Al-Quds University on the West Bank. Bard College Berlin is doing well; the Syrian refugees studying there will transition to a German university. Smolny College in St. Petersburg has stabilized. Bard High School Early College Baltimore has moved to a new building. And the Bard in Hudson Civic Academy, based on the Bard Early College in New Orleans model, opens this fall. The rest of the Bard network is doing very well.

There have been a variety of physical changes on campus. The move of the Bard Prison Initiative as well as other offices to the Montgomery Place campus will allow conversion of on-campus space to student housing, which will eventually reduce the number of students living off campus. A landscape plan that will provide a means of walking between the two campuses is being developed.

The college received approximately 7,000 applications for an entering class that is slightly larger than last year. Bard's competitiveness for new students is very strong. But the problem of undercapitalization remains. A way must be found to convert from annual fund raising to an appropriate endowment; it is time to move to a more conventional mode of operation.

Three capital projects—renovation of Rose/Hegeman for the Physics Program, expansion of the library, and a field house—are included in the new endowment campaign, which will “go public” at some point within the next twelve months.

Bard occupies an important and successful place in the minds of high school students, thanks to the hard work, high standards, and quality of the faculty. The college maintains its commitment to the arts and to the “fabric” of this country through such programs as the Clemente Course in the Humanities, Bard Prison Initiative (BPI), Bard High School Early Colleges, and now a new “microcollege,” an off-shoot of BPI, an AA program for at-risk populations in partnership with a social service program in Holyoke, Massachusetts. The institution stands for excellence in this country and abroad. It is a moment to be proud.

The meeting adjourned to a reception at the president's house at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amie McEvoy
Recording Secretary

Minutes of the Meeting of the Faculty of Bard College held on 26 October 2016

This was a faculty-led faculty meeting chaired by Professor Michael Tibbetts in his role as chair of the Faculty Senate. Professor Tibbetts called the meeting to order at 4:50 p.m.

I. MINUTES. The minutes were approved for the 27 April, 25 May, and 31 August 2016 meetings.

II. COMMUNICATIONS

On behalf of the Dean of the College, Associate Dean d'Albertis invited faculty to the upcoming Family Weekend reception on October 29th.

Dean d'Albertis also read a statement from Dean Thomas about the impressive Hannah Arendt Center conference, “What Do We Lose When We Lose Our Privacy?” The dean noted that during a discussion about free speech in classes, the Bard students in attendance said that their own experience was always being encouraged and they were able to speak freely in their classes. The dean's statement closed with her opinion that, “We are clearly doing something right here.”

Professor Deady announced that Bard College Sustainability Manager Laurie Husted had just been named the Red Hook Rotary Club's Person of the Year, in recognition of her work on energy and sustainability in the town of Red Hook and the greater Hudson Valley. With a healthy round of applause, the faculty approved a motion saluting Laurie Husted for her tireless work at Bard College and in the community, and particularly

her successful fostering of “town and gown” cooperation on issues and projects that will have a lasting impact on making our community a better place far into the future.

III. REPORTS

Since most major administrators were attending a meeting of the Board of Trustees, there were no reports from administrators.

A. Executive Committee. There will be a vacancy in the at-large seat on the Faculty Evaluation Review Committee for spring 2017. Professor Robert McGrail had agreed to be nominated to fill this position, and he was elected by a voice vote of the faculty.

B. Faculty Senate. Professor Tibbetts turned to a report from the Academic Advising Review Committee, a group empowered by the Senate to develop recommendations for improving the advising of students in their course work. The AARC comprises Professors Christopher LaFratta, Matthew Mutter, Jonathan Rosenberg, and Yuka Suzuki, Director of Academic Advising Jennifer Triplett, and Dean of Studies David Shein.

A handout from the AARC summarized the committee’s work based on faculty and student surveys, focus groups, and their own discussions to ascertain current advising guidelines and to identify best practices across the college and at other colleges.

Professor Suzuki began the presentation with an overview, pointing out that the sections in the Faculty Handbook pertaining to academic advising had not been updated since 1983. In the survey and discussions, the AARC found many instances of students whose own advising experiences have been pivotal to their success at Bard, which calls into question why there is so little attention given to advising in faculty orientation or training nor does it seem to rank high in how faculty perceive their own roles as professors.

Professor LaFratta summarized aspects of the analysis of the data from the survey and focus groups. Faculty who have advisees average 11 students, which holds true for both newer and more veteran faculty. Students expressed a desire for more targeted advising aimed at understanding their specific needs and mapping out curricular plans. Faculty expressed a wish for more specific guidance, such as advising forms and specific training, and many chafed at their overall advising load, feeling that the currently allotted times are not enough to address student needs. Some had found group advising sessions to be useful. Many faculty expressed a desire for guidance on the proper strategies in dealing with the overlap of academic and personal issues of their students.

Professor Mutter continued with the consensus views of the AARC based on the information they had gathered. Advisers would like more training in how to deal with student issues, including better knowledge of what resources exist for matters that range outside of academics. They would like a more systematic procedure for distributing advising loads and preventing newer faculty from being over-burdened and some recognition in evaluations for the role of advising.

The AARC specifically recommends:

- Advising forms to provide a ‘cheat sheet’ for advising sessions
- A more formal advising calendar
- More time to meet with first- and second-year students
- More information being available on BIP, such as moderation reports and academic status
- A firm limit of 15 advisees per adviser and more equitable distribution in general
- Clearer information about resources from the dean’s offices for non-academic issues

Professor Rosenberg then called for questions from the floor.

Professors Laki and Libbon asked about student perspectives on advising. The AARC reported that response has been quite variable, with a few explicit complaints but mostly an awareness that some advisers are

considered much better than others, often leading to more students wanting those faculty as advisers. Dean Shein confirmed that students are told to reach out to their advisers regularly, not to expect to be called in.

Professor Rosenberg reported that a common theme among advisers was uncertainty about how stringently they should vet drop/add requests.

Following up on a general concern of Professor van Zuylen about students expecting too much from an adviser, Professors Tibbetts and Rosenberg discussed the fine balance between developing a close enough relationship with an advisee to be of best support without stepping outside of one's proper role. Dean Shein added that national surveys consistently show that "developing a connection with an adult is an important factor in achieving success in college." Professor Bloch noted that personal issues often have a major effect on a student's work, leading many to wonder how best to raise questions about non-academic matters with our advisees or students.

EPC Chair Mark Williams offered his perspective, saying that students do not expect or want an adviser to be "Mom or Dad"; they just want faculty to care about them as individuals. He pointed out that Peer Counselors are trained in dealing with non-academic issues, and perhaps faculty would like similar training as well.

Professor Wagner lamented the difficulty of carving time out of a busy semester for frequent advising meetings. Could structures for facilitating such meetings be put in place? Professors Kunreuther and Churchill suggested in particular time to meet with students right after midterms, which is a time of maximal need for struggling students. Professor Jain suggested scheduling other official advising days during the semester.

Professors Jude and Dooling expressed a desire for a message system that would alert advisers and appropriate deans when a student's midterm grades suggest intervention is needed.

Professor Rosenberg mentioned the difficulty of adequately advising students from another academic program, but Professor Laki maintained that he has in fact had long-running advising relationships with students from other programs.

Professor Rosenberg asked about how advising should be factored into faculty evaluation. Professor Felton-Dansky asked about recognizing the full advising load of faculty, even when those students had moved on to another adviser; the AARC responded that those records are now kept in BIP. Professors Churchill and Bloch warned against a formal system of tallying advisees as part of evaluation, as it would not take into account the wide variability in what that advising entailed. Professor Bruce Chilton pointed out that advising is already one of the criteria mentioned in the faculty evaluation document.

Professor Chilton added that it would be very useful to provide opportunities for veteran advisers to meet and share their expertise and experiences with interested faculty.

Dean Shein brought the discussion to a close, thanking the AARC for their efforts and the useful outcome of their work. The Dean of Studies Office has been modifying its website in response to these suggestions, in an effort to provide more and better information to faculty and students.

Dean Shein also drew the faculty's attention to the Faculty Fellows Program, which provides resources for faculty to develop activities for students outside of the classroom, such as dorm events and events with advisees. Director Triplett added that student feedback shows that spending time with faculty in a social context is something that students enjoy a great deal.

C. Curriculum Committee. Professor Susan Merriam, chair, reported that there will be three cross-divisional "Big Ideas" courses offered in the coming year. Topics include *Games at Work: Participation, Procedure, and Play* (Professors Ben Coonley and Keith O'Hara); *Uncle Tom's Cabin in Literature and Performing* (Professors Donna Grover and Jean Wagner); and *Chernobyl: The Meaning of Man-made Disaster* (Professors Jonathan Becker and Matthew Deady).

Registrar Peter Gadsby spoke to the faculty about a severe room availability crunch for spring 2017 classes, largely due to the concentration of classes on Monday through Thursday and in the midday time slots. The overall percentage of class meetings on Fridays has declined from 48% in 2006 to 33% in 2016, with the largest decreases being in *First Year Seminar*, the Division of Languages and Literature, and the Division of Social Studies. This not only puts an excessive demand on classroom space, it also is a likely contributor to reduced student engagement with their studies throughout the week. He beseeched programs and divisions to coordinate offerings to spread them out more for the students' benefit.

D. Planning & Appointments Committee. Professor James Romm, chair, reported that the committee had met with Vice President Jim Brudvig about the recent downgrading of Bard's bond rating. Vice President Brudvig reported that the college was surprised by the downgrade and that he did not feel that the action was warranted. This has had a small impact on the college's lines of credit. He reiterated the college's strategy of relying on a "living endowment" of ongoing gifts from donors, chiefly trustees, to meet much of the college's yearly operating expenses. As part of current fund raising, a few large gifts are expected in the next few years that could help build up the more traditional endowment of the college.

E. Other Faculty Committee Reports

There were no reports from the **Faculty Evaluation Review, College Evaluation, Grievance, Diversity, Campus Facilities, Faculty Resources, or Student Affairs** committees.

AAUP Executive Committee. Professor Swapan Jain, chair, reported that the committee would begin preliminary conversations with the administration in December regarding the new contract on matters of salary, health care, and other issues. This initiative is welcomed by Vice President Brudvig. Professor Jain invited all faculty members to the chapter meeting on November 9th, noting that there has been a 30% increase in chapter membership in this semester.

Center for Faculty and Curricular Development. CFCD Fellows Professors Adhaar Desai and Emily McLaughlin made reports on the various CFCD activities this fall, encouraging faculty to attend CFCD programs they find interesting. They drew special attention to a November 14th event titled "**Is This What We Asked For? Transforming Campus Climates,**" by Swarthmore College Professor of Sociology Sarah Willie-LeBreton, editor of *Transforming the Academy: Faculty Perspectives on Diversity and Pedagogy*.

There being no further business to come before the faculty, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Matthew Deady
Substitute Recording Secretary

Minutes of the Meeting of the Faculty of Bard College held on 2 November 2016

President Botstein called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

I. MINUTES. Action on the minutes of the 26 October 2016 meeting will appear on the agenda for the December meeting.

II. There were no general COMMUNICATIONS.

III. REPORTS

A. Report of the President. Noting that there has been some discussion regarding an article in *Inside Higher Ed* that expressed concern about the financial status of the college as a result of the recent downgrading of Bard's credit rating by Moody's Investors Service, President Botstein reviewed the situation the college is in and the context within which it operates. He stated first that James C. Chambers '81, a wealthy and committed alumnus, is now chair elect of the Board of Trustees. George Hamel, one of two vice chairs of the

board, is the father of two Bard graduates and a retired investment banker. Mr. Chambers and Mr. Hamel will work together as a team. The college will embark on a new capital campaign, currently in the planning stages, at the end of the current fiscal year.

In the meantime, the articles in *Inside Higher Ed* and elsewhere require some clarification. President Botstein gave a detailed power point presentation that included several graphic representations of national trends as well as Bard's own position and circumstance. What is set forth below is merely an outline of the content of the presentation.

- Falling net tuition at private schools nationally, 1994–95 through 2014–15 and the gap between published tuition and fees and net tuition and fees, with the widest gap occurring since approximately 2008–09. In 1975, Bard had approximately 600 students, more than 90 percent of whom paid in full.
- The search for high achieving, high ability to pay students, as of 2014, broken down from total 18-year-olds (4,350,990), high school graduates (3,567,812), any college enrollment (2,247,721), attendance at four-year institutions (1,371,110), SAT scores of 1100+ (507,311), family income of \$160,000 and above (71,024), attendance at a private college or university (31,250), entering freshmen class less than 700 (20,938), and located in the northeast or mid-Atlantic region (5,528)
- First-year enrollment on Bard's main campus since 1999, by number of applicants, number admitted, and number of matriculations. The "great recession" of 2008 changed college admissions, with full-paying parents negotiating financial aid packaging. Bard has protected its enrollment by expanding its applicant pool, in part through its academic stature and outreach programming.
- Many colleges are "buying" students through merit aid; 44 percent of private universities discount tuition by more than half,
- Bard's absence of an endowment is in stark contrast to peer institutions such as Williams, Amherst, Grinnell, Smith, Vassar, Wesleyan, and Macalester.
- Bard's 2016 fiscal year audit: undergraduate tuition and fees, \$96,951,259; undergraduate financial aid, \$46,645,576—the college admits students on a need-blind basis and financial aid awards are primarily need-based; net tuition, \$50,305,683; other earned income (graduate tuition, auxiliary enterprises, etc.), \$31,474,860; gifts and grants, \$31,233,714; total income, \$113,014,256; total expenses, \$106,221,173; net operating income (unrestricted), \$6,793,083
- Bard's public investment in its early colleges has created a diverse "feeder" for students of all races and socioeconomic backgrounds, a breakdown of Hispanic, black, Asian/other, and white at the early colleges in Manhattan, Queens, Newark, Cleveland, Harlem Children's Zone, New Orleans, and Baltimore. Overall, enrollment in the early colleges is 11.5 percent Hispanic; 52.5 percent black; 9.0 percent Asian/other; and 27.0 percent white.

Funding status:

- A USDA program* has the potential to refinance long-term debt and build key projects on campus.
- Since 2007, Bard has repaid \$26.7 million in principal on its long-term debt.
- Since 2007, Bard has solicited and received \$130 million in deferred gifts.
- Applications for admission to Bard are at an all-time high; more than 7,000 applications were received for the 2016–17 academic year.
- This year alone, the college has raised \$23 million in funding from the Board of Trustees.

Giving to Bard:

- Historic giving, 1974 to the present: total gifts, \$1,134,582,495; total pledges outstanding, \$155,129,253; total giving, \$1,289,711,748. Soft pledges not included in these numbers total \$56,000,000.
- Gifts and pledges outstanding by donor type, 1974 to the present (trustees; alumni/ae, parents, friends and estates; foundations, organizations, and corporations; government
- Unique donor by type, July 2001 to June 2015 (alumni/ae, parents, grandparents, bequests; friends and faculty; foundations, corporations, matching, organizations

*In the past five years, the USDA has resurrected a former program for which Bard is eligible that will assist the college in restructuring its debt. Construction projects and farming must be included. Three construction projects should qualify: renovation of Rose/Hegeman for additional classroom and study space; a revamping of the food service and Kline Commons, taking advantage of "farm to table" with Bard's two farms; and a field house, with an indoor track and practice field.

Open discussion ensued. It is anticipated that the capital campaign will begin in June, following restructuring of the college's debt. Questions should be directed to President Botstein, Debra Pemstein, James Brudvig, and/or Taun Toay.

B. Faculty Senate and Executive Committee Reports.

Executive Committee. Professor Gregory Moynahan, chair, reported that the committee continues its review of the language and procedures for the faculty evaluation process outlined in the Faculty Handbook.

The position of faculty representative to the NCAA, formerly filled by Professor Mark Halsey, needs to be filled.

There were no reports from the **Curriculum** or **Planning & Appointments Committees**.

C. Other Faculty Committee Reports

Faculty Evaluation Review Committee. Professor Matthew Deady reported that the committee has begun its work.

College Evaluation Committee. Professor Peter Laki, chair, reported that the committee has two cases and will submit its recommendations to the administration.

There was no report from the **Grievance Committee**.

Diversity Committee. Professor Hal Haggard, chair, introduced the committee, which also comprises Professors Adhaar Noor Desai, Gideon Lester, and Allison McKim; Brian Mateo, assistant dean of civic engagement, and Professor Myra Armstead serve ex officio. The committee has met twice and will report on the diversity questionnaire and best practices for hiring committees at a future meeting.

There was no report from the **Campus Facilities Committee**.

Faculty Resources Committee. Dean Rebecca Thomas noted that the committee has met.

There was no report from the **Student Affairs** committee.

AAUP Executive Committee. Professor Swapan Jain, chair, announced that a full chapter meeting would be held the following week. A notice will be circulated.

IV. Old Business. President Botstein reported that the college is in the midst of the Middle States ten-year accreditation review process. Catharine "Cappy" Hill, former president of Vassar College, chairs the review committee. This process is a prerequisite for eligibility for Federal funds. He thanked all members of the faculty and staff who are involved in the process.

There being no further business to come before the faculty, the meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amie McEvoy
Recording Secretary