

Bard Location Podcast

0:00 Mackie: Hi everyone! And welcome to our first podcast. My name is Mackie Siebens, I am the director of Admission and I graduated from Bard in 2012. I applied to the college from abroad. I grew up in the UK, in London, and applied to Bard, really excited to come to the States and figure out a little bit of my own history, given that my parents are American. So it was exciting! And I'm here with Josh Tyler.

0:24 Josh: Hi! I'm Josh, I'm one of the Assistant Director's of Admission. I actually came from this area, which is the Hudson Valley in upstate New York. We're about 90 miles north of New York City. I graduated from Bard in 2006. And Mackie, could you tell us a little bit more about the location, and the campus?

0:47 Mackie: Yeah! I'd love to. So, the campus itself is a thousand acres, which is actually really large for the size of this institution. We're a small liberal arts college, right on the Hudson River, as Josh said, but we have a huge amount of land, which means that we're actually allowed to do some cool things with it. We have a lot of running trails, and biking trails, which students can use recreationally and for training if you're an athlete. They're beautiful woodland trails, up and down the Hudson, and we also have a lot of space for farmland. So there are two farms and an orchard right on campus. They supply local restaurants and also our farm stand right on the county road nearest Bard, and they also supply our dining hall with fresh food. Students can get involved in both of those projects, so we really push for sustainability here and having a lot of land allows us to do that really well. Josh, I'll hand it over to you, you can talk a little bit about the student body and how big we are.

1:41 Josh: Sure, so we have approximately 1,900 students here at Bard. Actually, we have approximately 6,000 students worldwide, as part of the Bard Network. Here in Annandale, New York we have about 1,900 students, which provides for small class sizes. Average class size is about 15, they can be as large as 25 or so, or as small as 6. So you really get to know each other, you really get to know your professors, and it really works well for our discussion based classrooms as well.

2:17 Mackie: Yeah, and if you want to actually, you can create your own tutorial too, so it's one-on-one with a faculty member. You can really be creative and seek out the faculty support that you want and create your own class if you want to. And the student body generally is made up of a really diverse group of people, representing 50 states, and at least 60 countries. Students come from all over the world, so actually about 17 or 18% of our student body are international students, students coming from outside the United States. We have students coming from New York, California, and the northeast, as the top, sort of 3 major areas, but then of course we have students representing all over the country as well. So that's really exciting, and it allows for a great mix of students, different perspectives so you can learn from students in the classroom, not just from your professor. It's a really collaborative learning environment, with a lot of diverse students.

3:11 Josh: Yeah, Mackie could you tell us a little bit about what the students like to do while they're here on campus?

3:16 Mackie: Yeah! So we have so many clubs, we've got 200 or so clubs and you can always start a program or a club if it's not here, that's really easy to do through the Student Activities Office, which is located centrally right in the Campus Center. So students can start their own activities and involve people. We also have the Center for Civic Engagement, so students that are interested in reaching out to the local community, nationally or even internationally, can start programs that the College will give funding to, supported by the Center for Civic Engagement. Students are also politically minded here, so CCE (the Center for Civic Engagement) does a lot of work getting out the vote, making sure students are registered, if you're able to vote in the United States. So there are a lot of different things that students can get involved in whether you're interested in helping people locally, nationally, or internationally, or whether you're interested in really providing enjoyment and interesting activities for students right here on campus.

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4:06 Josh: Absolutely. Bard is definitely a very student-driven place, that's how we end up with approximately 200 clubs. If something doesn't exist, that you're really excited about doing, you can really make that happen. We also have a wide variety of sports teams that you can be involved in, intramural sports, club sports, and varsity sports. The arts are also a large part of the campus culture here, so there are multiple music venues in multiple styles. Actually a quarter of the students at Bard are musicians, so certainly if you're interested in playing music, or performing theater, dance, you certainly can do all of those things, and that really extends to the larger community in the Hudson Valley. There are multiple opportunities to go out and hike, or swim, or bike, to perform music, to go see art shows, to go into the local towns and cities, which are all a very short drive away. That said, students don't have to have a car on campus to get around. We do have a shuttle system that's really helpful in getting students to the surrounding towns. I mentioned earlier that we're about 90 miles north of New York City. Mackie, is that something that students tend to get a chance to do, and if so, how easy is that? How do they get there?

5:40 Mackie: Yeah! Students definitely have the opportunity to take advantage of things so close to New York City. We're in this beautiful rural area, but getting into one of the most vibrant cities in the world is the easiest thing to do, at least in my opinion. There's a shuttle that takes students on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays to the two local train stations. One's just about 10, 12 minutes away, and the other is about a half hour, thirty five minutes away in Poughkeepsie. So, you can catch a shuttle and jump on a train and the train will take you right into Grand Central Station or Penn Station, which are both centrally located in Manhattan. And from there, the subway is yours, the bus system is yours. Students use the city as venues for performance, but there are a lot of faculty that are active in New York City, so whether that's artists or whether that's students going in to work with faculty at BGIA, which is our Bard Globalization and International Affairs Program, or students going in for a variety of other opportunities, maybe there's a faculty member, at least this was the case last year, where a faculty had a photo show up in MoMA and students could go in for class, but also just for pleasure. And it was really easy to do. I did this too, to do some research at FIT. My senior project was on fashion and politics, so you could also go in and do research and take advantage of the museums and all of the libraries that are in New York City. So it's easy to do, that said, you don't have to go into New York City to have fun, or to be stimulated in really interesting ways. Students on campus are very creative, and there is so much on campus to do, given that students really run the place, as Josh said. The best part for me about this place being so student-run, is student government allocates clubs and activities with the funding that they're given to distribute to clubs, so it's completely student-run, and that really gives it this creative, energized feel, and empowers students to really create things that they want to see on campus for their fellow students and for the wider community. Josh, did you have a bike on campus or anything? Do students do that on campus if you're getting around a thousand acres?

7:42 Josh: Yes absolutely, I did have a bike on campus and many students have bikes on campus. That said, you don't need to have a bike, it's certainly a walkable campus. Again, I mention the shuttles, but if you'd like to have a bike, it's a beautiful place to have one, it's easy to get around, and you don't necessarily have to bring a bike on to campus. There's a bike co-op on campus, where you can rent, borrow a bike, you could even work with that group and fix up old bikes for students to use, so there's definitely a biking culture on campus, for sure.

8:19 Mackie: And students get pretty creative with the wheels they use too, I've seen unicycles, there are skateboards, longboards, so students get around, they find ways to get around, if it's a beautiful day and they don't want to jump on the shuttle, which is also convenient. Do students live off campus Josh? Can you talk a little bit about that?

8:36 Josh: They do! All first-year and second-year students at Bard are required to live on campus, that said, about 25% of the student body, when they're in their junior and senior years, decides to live off campus, mostly in the local towns of Tivoli and Red Hook, and as I mentioned the shuttle does go through both of those towns. You don't need a car if you decide to live off campus. Certainly, as students progress through their time here, the idea of having an apartment or renting a house with your friends, and that next level of independence is certainly something that students enjoy, so yeah, it absolutely happens.

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9:23 Mackie: So I think that sort of, hopefully, has given you a good picture of where we are in the world, how to move around campus, what kind of things happen here, and how students can really take advantage of the beautiful Hudson Valley, and being so close to New York City. If you have any questions for us, please feel free to send them to admission@bard.edu. Josh, do you think there's anything else that we should cover?

9:46 Josh: Well, I think that's good for this podcast, but definitely tune into our future podcasts, where we'll talk a bit more about student life, and the ways to apply to Bard.