

Bard Student Life Podcast

00:00 Josh: Welcome everybody, to the next edition of our podcast series. As always, I am Josh Tyler, one of the Assistant Directors of Admission, with a very special episode today, in which the Director of Admission, Mackie Siebens, speaks with the Dean of Students, also the Director of Residence Life, and the Director of Student Activities, regarding student life, and we really hope that you enjoy this conversation.

00:22 Mackie: Welcome to our student life panel, I'm joined by colleagues today, and we're going to talk to you about student life. So, everyone here is a really important contact in the world of student life and supporting students here on campus. My name is Mackie Siebens, I'm the Director of Admission, and I graduated from Bard in 2012. And so, we're going to introduce ourselves, Sway, do you want to introduce yourself first?

00:48 Sway: Hello my name is Sway Rosario-Caliz, I am the Director of Student Activities and the Bertelsmann Campus Center. I started back in May of last year, and I currently oversee student activities, I advise student government, as well as oversee all student spaces on campus.

01:10 Mackie: Great, and Darnell?

01:12 Darnell: Hi everyone, I'm Darnell Pearce, I use he/him/his pronouns, I'm the Director of Residence Life and Housing. Most of my role is comprised of making sure your student likes where they live. We oversee the Peer Counselor program, and we are in charge of residential life community building.

01:31 Mackie: And Jovanny?

01:33 Jovanny: Hey everybody, what's going on? I'm Jovanny Suriel, I am the Director of Career Development, and the Assistant Dean for Civic Engagement. And as Bard being a liberal arts college, "A Place to Think", I am here to help your student think, what's next? after Bard, but also keeping them conscious of what they can do while at Bard to kind of support their career development and their professional development throughout their time at Bard.

01:53 Mackie: Great! And Bethany?

01:55 Bethany: Hi, my name is Bethany Nohlgren, I'm the Dean of Students at Bard, and this is my little guy Luke who might be joining us, and I oversee the student services at the college, so we think about student life in general, and the ways in which to help people thrive, and support students in their non-academic life. So, we do some advising, we do some support, we do health, all of that kind of stuff, and health and counseling, that's my world.

02:24 Mackie: Great, well thank you all for joining the panel. We're going to start with a question that we get a lot, it's pretty open, but it's basically what are the ways that students can get involved in student activities on campus? Maybe Bethany we can start with you on that very broad question?

02:44 Bethany: Sure! I think that there are lots of ways to get involved. I'm going to let Sway talk about the clubs and organizations, because that's his world, but you can also think about getting involved in academic research. You can get involved in student leadership – so you can either be on student government or have a leadership position at the college, either at the residence halls or across campus in Peer Health, or in some of our peer-to-peer networks. You can also get involved in intramural athletics, or be involved in the community fitness program. We have a lot of wellness programming that happens at the college. So, there are really all different ways to get involved, and there's an opportunity for everybody to find their niche. But I'll let Sway talk more about clubs and organizations, because that's really his world.

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03:33 Sway: Perfect, thank you Bethany. So, we have, in student activities, we have about 180 active clubs. Now, this number changes semester to semester, to it depends on what the student needs are at that time. But we welcome new ideas to be able to create new spaces and new groups for students to be able to kind of engage with each other and with the broader campus community at Bard College. And our clubs range from affinity groups, to special interest groups, to we have – for instance we have, Bard on TV, which is BoTV, those are individuals who are really worried about, or really concerned with media, and recording and filming and so forth, to we have our wellness club, as Bethany has stated, as well as community fitness clubs, club sports, religious identity groups, so we have a lot of different clubs that we have on campus that you are able to engage with. Additionally, we have different spaces on campus, so that you are able to kind of engage with other students that are like-minded. So, we have our SMOG, which is an open concert type of venue that we have on campus. We also have Root Cellar, which is similar to SMOG, but it's in a smaller setting, so kind of like a garage band type of setting, which also houses the biggest zine library in this region, so that's something that Bard really prides itself with. So, we have different clubs and organizations involved, as well as different student leadership abilities. So, student government, we have the Student Speaker, which is the class president, or works as a class president. We also have different committee chairs, who oversee different committees under student government as well. As well as any other student workers, right, so our student workers, for instance SPARC, that work under the student activities office. So, this is an amazing opportunity for students to really get engaged and have a leadership role amongst their peers, and they work to make sure that student clubs and organizations have everything that they need as far as registering their club events, or getting food involved, and so forth. So, there's definitely a lot of different areas for student clubs and student organizations on campus to thrive, as well as student leadership opportunities.

06:05 Mackie: And can you talk a little bit about how easy it is if there isn't something that you see on campus, can you just start something? Is that pretty easy to do? And how would students go about doing that, if they wanted to start an activity or a club?

06:18 Sway: Absolutely. So, if there's – like I said, there's 180 clubs on campus, however if there is a specific interest that you may have, that you don't see mirrored in one of the clubs, we encourage you to think about it and to register a club. So, we have registration for clubs at the very beginning of the semester. For the most part, when our first-year students come in, they take the first few weeks really to get integrated with the campus community. They go to club head day, they're able to see all the different clubs and become really acclimated to what we have, but in that time, they start noticing, “well okay I like this club and I like that club, but you know what? I want to start a Hot Sauce Lovers club, which actually just started this semester, very exciting. It's a group of students who said, “we love hot sauce! And we want to come together and have events that are specific to the love of hot sauce,” right? It was never done before, so during the spring semester club registration, they came together and all it is, is really coming together, going online, and registering it as a club. You submit a mission statement, something that you believe in, and you become a club. Of course, you have to go to Club Head Day, you have to go to Budget Forum so that you can get acclimated with the club spending process, but it is very easy, and my staff is here and available to assist every step of the way.

07:52 Mackie: And you mentioned sort of earlier that students have access to lots of difference performance spaces, a lot of these spaces are also student run, so they really have access when they need it, and can you talk more specifically a little bit about the music scene on campus? We get a lot of questions from students and their families like “can I participate in a band? In an ensemble?” And music is sort of a thing at Bard, so can you talk a little bit about music?

08:20 Sway: Absolutely. So, all of our student spaces are student-run: SMOG, Root Cellar, we have the Old Gym. So, these are all performance spaces. Old Gym is more for theatrical performances, but you can use it for any other reasons. But they're all student-run with the oversight of my office. But for the music scene on campus: there are many music opportunities on campus. Whether it be small little bands that join together – for instance we have the Jazz Kittens – the Jazz Kittens is a group of students, in Bard, it is actually a club, and they are actually a band, both musicians and singers alike, they get together, they have their club meetings. So not only are they able to practice and create great music, right, but they also come together to study together, they come together to have meals together. So, it's really a community. So, every music band on campus is a community within itself which is amazing. We just had the Bard Gospel Choir, that was instituted this semester by our Dean of Inclusive Excellence, who is heading the Gospel Choir. But the Jazz Kittens and the Bard Gospel Choir both performed at the Gospel Explosion this year. So, there are opportunities for you to actually showcase – so it's not just you getting together and saying, we just built a band and we're practicing – no, there's actual platforms on campus and different events to showcase everything that you are able to do. And we have a few bands on campus, specifically for our SMOG venue, there is a SMOG event, at least two SMOG events, every weekend. And what usually happens is, bands, student bands open up the performance, and then they invite a band outside of Bard to come in and kind of headline for that evening. So, it's amazing. Root Cellar like I said is more of a garage band style venue. So, a lot of the student clubs go in there, they have jam sessions, they create wonderful music. It's fully equipped with all the audio that they're going to need, so it is absolutely amazing.

10:44 Mackie: Great, thank you! And there are also quite a few students who ask about Bard's traditions. So, I might throw this out to everyone here, what are Bard's most prominent traditions?

10:59 Bethany: Well so I've been here for 17 years, so I've watched a lot of traditions grow and come and go. I think that you will see Senior Project Day, is a really huge tradition at the institution. Every spring, the senior students have to turn in their projects. And so we find that that day is a real festival on campus, and we have a picnic, and there are massage therapists, and we have the Career Development, Jovanny sits there with Dunkin Donuts and says, you know, how excited he is that they've all graduated, and we have the Alumni Office so you get some gifts from the Alumni Office, and it's outside and people come in and turn in their project, and everybody's cheering for them, and their friends all wait to make sure that someone else turns in their project. It's one of my favorite days on campus. I feel like it's the culmination of people's 4 years, and there are tears of excitement and tears of joy, and everyone just celebrates each other, and the seniors really have an opportunity to kind of come together and spread the relief and joy of what it means to turn in a project, and then there are a lot of staff around who give them high fives, and all of that. So that's one of my favorite traditions. We have a circus in May that happens every year. So, there's a really fabulous group of students called the Surrealist Training Circus, and they produce – it started 20 some-odd years ago, it was a group of people who wanted to do a performance with acrobats and fire twirlers and theater and music, and it's really phenomenal, and probably seven, eight hundred people go see it. They take over the whole lawn and it's usually the last weekend before commencement. I think those would be my top traditions about Bard. I don't know if other people have their thoughts. But those are mine.

13:04 Darnell: Yeah, I have a couple of ones that I like particularly. The first is the faculty and staff versus students basketball game, I played a couple of times. I can't play a lick of basketball but I play, and it's a good time and it's really fun and light-hearted and there's a chance for the senior students to play against faculty and staff, to see them out of their element, not in the classroom, not in academic setting or office setting. It's really fun. We heckle the students and they try and beat us. Last year we beat them I think. I think we beat them last year for the first time in a long time. There were a few tumbles and a few aches and pains for some of the faculty and staff, but it's really neat to see students come together whether you play basketball or not. The other one is the cultural show. This is one – it's a huge – talent show would be understatement – but it's a huge showcase of talent from people from across the world, because our students are from across the world, and it is our version of – when you think of a homecoming, we don't have a homecoming, but this would be our signature event in the fall, I think, and we don't sell tickets, but it sells out every year. Students go, they love it and they look forward to it each and every year.

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12:19 Mackie: Great, yeah, I think the ISO show is also one of my favorites too. It's pretty special. And the circus. Always special. So, Bethany mentioned Senior Project Day, and mentioned Jovanny's piece in that. And I wanted to draw in the importance of thinking about students not just while they're here at Bard, but also thinking about how they're using Bard as a place where they can really develop skills, develop interests and figure out how they're going to go out into the world and contribute to their communities. And a lot of that has to do with finding jobs and internships and getting into grad school. So, speaking about this big culmination of their four years, it's sort of a launch pad. So, I was wondering if you could talk about the Career Development Office and the things you sort of do to support students, even when they're graduating.

15:13 Jovanny: Yeah, for sure. I think the goal is to really get your student, when they're here and when they leave, to become this well rounded, holistic, civically engaged, developed young person, right? And so, the Career Development Office offers every single service across the country that every other career service center is offering. So, resume reviews, cover letter reviews, how to conduct yourself in an interview, and those are all great. What I like to think of when it comes to my staff, is how do we go beyond that mark? And I think collaborating with the folks on this chat like Sway, like Darnell, like Bethany, it's really important to think about the skills that they can get across the board. So, if a student is starting a club, that takes a lot of work, right. There's this idea that they need to be able to articulate a budget, they need to be able to write and communicate a budget. And so that's the kind of development work that I'd like to start doing, that we do actually with the students here at Bard. Same with Darnell, and the student engagement that happens out of his organization. It takes a lot to be a Peer Counselor. Students need a certain level of communication skills. They need to learn how to write reports and document if things happen or don't happen on campus. And so, when we think about the Career Development Office, we definitely have the placement numbers, and where do our students go afterwards, and the internship opportunities. But what I like to do with the students as they come in, is to think beyond that. When we have a resume writing workshop, instead of saying your student will be able to write a good resume, I really want them to leave with this idea of, I'm a good writer. And how do I translate that to my internship, how do I translate that into the local community? And one of the things that Bethany mentioned earlier that is important for you all to check out, is the Civic engagement conversation, because that's another thing that's very unique to Bard – getting students to play an active role in the community they're in. And so, the CDO pairs really well with our CCE, which is our Center for Civic Engagement, in that we want to make sure that they're connected to the community around them. A lot of our students, as Darnell mentioned, come from international locations, and sometimes we want them to stay in the Hudson Valley over the summer, or we want them to hang out throughout the winter breaks or spring break. And we want to make sure they're engaged. And so, some of the ways we do that is the Community Action Awards, and that's an opportunity for a student to do an internship in the local community at a nonprofit, and they get paid through the college to do that. So, if there's an organization that has an unpaid internship or a volunteer opportunity and they are a non-for-profit organization, the students can apply and collaborate through the CDO as to what will it cost the student to work and be successful over the 4- or 8-week period while they're doing this internship. And so, our Career Development Office definitely has a suite of services that are traditional across the campus, but I think what will set us apart for your student as they come to Bard, is we really want to make sure that they're getting those essential skills that are required across the board regardless of program of study, regardless of what job they decide. And those are things that employers have reported to us day in and day out, like communication skills, critical thinking skills, leadership skills. And so, while you know, a student can google how to write a resume, it's really going to be that experiential learning piece that they're going to get from our office. How are they going to engage with my career? How do I immerse myself in that? And we really want to start working with your student from day 1 at that level.

18:27 Mackie: And can you talk a little bit about also the BardWorks program, because you mentioned the Center for Civic Engagement and it all ties together, so maybe just giving students and any family members listening a sense of sort of that piece of your world too?

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18:44 Jovanny: Yeah, absolutely! So, as you heard Mackie introduce herself, she is a Bardian, she is an alumna of the program, she graduated in 2012. And so, what I've learned in my time here at Bard is that Bard does a really really good job at engaging our alumni and keeping them around and offering to highlight their skillset and what they do. And so BardWorks is one way we do that, as well. It is an immersive program currently being offered in two different locations, BardWorks New York and BardWorks DC. So, what that looks like, it's in essence a mini-conference, where we put together specific panels on tailored interests of the students. Our BardWorks New York one really focuses on resources, communications, and talent management and acquisition, and our DC one naturally focuses on working within the government, working within nonprofits. And what's unique about these programs, is that we don't get just anybody to talk at these panels, we really focus on getting the students alumni from Bard, parents that have students that have entered and graduated or are currently at Bard, and all of our close personal contacts to not only demonstrate to the student what the Bard network looks like and how powerful it can be, but also what networking works in and of itself. The way that BardWorks New York and DC works is that students will apply, and depending on the location – if New York happens, the students stay on campus and they can do that, and if it happens in DC the students pay a very small stipend, and if they are not available to pay, there are scholarships available for that. And they get a two and a half night stay, with food, with panels, it's an opportunity to hear from professionals that again, have either graduated from Bard, that play a role in Bard, and each even culminates with a kind of large, intentional networking evening, where Bard alumni, Bard close networks, Bard friends, Bard family members come to speak with our students. And so, the students are not only getting this very tailored and personalized set of networking opportunities, but they're getting a specific skillset built into their programming here at Bard. We're looking to expand BardWorks, so as your student joins, right now they have BardWorks New York and DC available to them, we're looking to expand those to another east coast location, and potentially somewhere on the west coast, because we have Bardians across the country as well as internationally.

20:56 Mackie: As someone who participated in BardWorks I can definitely say, it's an amazing event, I definitely benefited, so thanks for going in depth with that program, that's really helpful.

21:08 Jovanny: Absolutely.

21:09 Mackie: And I want to change gears a little bit, because we're talking about community, we're talking about being intentional and creating a community on campus as well. And I want to turn to Darnell to talk a little bit about residence hall community, and how we create that. We do get a lot of questions about how students chose their rooms, and some of those logistics. I might open it up with how we create community within residence halls on campus, and what the landscape looks like here.

21:36 Darnell: Yeah, so we do that in a variety of ways. Obviously, Residence Life that's not our big focus but we partner with our colleagues in very strategic ways. The first is our PCs, Peer Counselors, they have their own set of community building requirements. And what that means is that first PCs, we urge them and encourage them to really get to know who their people are on their floor. From there, they are really in charge of creating what that community, that floor, or that building is going to be. And that's different depending on where you live. And so, the residents are really engaged in what they want to do. It can be anything from games nights, to pizza parties, to let's go on a hike, so we want them to engage with their residents so they can decide what happens in their community. Yeah, we have parameters on how many programs they have to do and all, that's great. And then the second tier is how can we get residents connected not only in the halls but around campus. So, one of the things that we encourage the PCs to do, one, we want to make sure they're comfortable where they live. That's where you should be most comfortable, when you come back from class you should enjoy your room. And then, how do we get you plugged into the different things that are available on campus. So, whether that's the civic engagement piece, or student activities in the clubs, or academics, or whether that's athletics, how can we use the PC role to plug students into the things that they're interested in, because there is a lot, and sometimes it can be really overwhelming to choose and pick. And so that's usually in that first three or four weeks of school, the PC is really good helping lay out the menu of options that students have available to them. In the hall specifically, it's really meant to be tailored

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to what that group of students, it can be 10 or 15 or 20 on a floor, what do they want to see happen, so we want them involved in that process, versus “oh here’s this thing that I like and I want to do it and I hope you come.” That usually doesn’t work, and sometimes it’s small quick surveys or going door to door, having candid and organic conversations with their residents, to figure out what’s going to make their living experience really good and valuable.

23:55 Mackie: Great, and on that note I wonder too, opening this up a little bit, but you mentioned sort of getting people connected with others, and I wonder, we have questions sort of about wellness, and health and wellness on campus, I’m wondering if you or maybe Bethany could maybe speak to how the residential nature of campus allows for students to really think carefully about how they’re staying healthy, both physically and mentally while there at Bard.

24:28 Darnell: Yeah, in one of our first-year residence halls, in Tewksbury, we just opened at the ground level, not the basement level, the ground level, a health and wellness suite. So that has a bunch of different clubs that focus on different things around wellness. Our community fitness coordinator is down there, our Dime store is down there, thinking about ways to keep safe sexually and other health practices, and then our director of health and wellness oversees and works really closely with that group of students. There’s also the food pantry that just opened up in that suite. Then there’s a host of programming that the health and wellness club does around campus. So, they work with our PCs, so a PC might say “hey my residents are really interested in doing yoga, and meditation and so they will work with that club to put on an event in the residence halls, that’s much smaller than a big group fitness, but something that’s a little bit more tailored. And so those are some of the things that they do. But it’s really, whatever you think about wellness, it’s a big broad scope, it can be exercise, it can be meditation, it can be self-therapy. We have a really popular program called, it’s a pet therapy program I forget the exact name of it, but people love pets so how can we bring pets around campus to help missing your own animal at home? So, we have that a couple times a semester, or a few times a semester. I think they’re trained as therapy dogs, so any faculty member or staff member can get their pet trained to be one of these therapy dogs, so we offer that service around campus through the health and wellness club. Bethany, anything you want to add to that?

26:09 Bethany: Actually, I think you did a really incredible job. I think, no. the only thing I would add is that we have a fully staffed health center, with nurse practitioners and a doctor on staff, and we have a fully staffed counseling center with psychologists, licensed mental health social workers, and a psychiatrist, so there is a lot of peer to peer work on campus. We are proud of and really encourage the peer to peer support. I think that that blends in a lot around our ideas about what young people can do and the way that young people can be leaders and have really good ideas and the way we want to encourage it, but I also, for the anxious folks out there, there are adults on campus who are checking in on people, and supporting people, and making sure that if there are some real needs, we’re meeting them.

27:17 Jovanny: Just to add on to that, yeah for sure, and kind of going off what Bethany mentioned, there are the adult levels, and that there is also peer support available. Those peers are not just kind of sat in a room and trained like “hey you’re going to be a Peer Counselor, here’s what you do”, the director of wellness, Annia Reyes, actually sits with them not only with her clinical vantage point, but also she has them participate in a paid – it’s paid by the institution, by supporting offices that believe in this kind of professional development – they get structured paid, peer counseling help that will allow them to not only know how to do the work that we’re asking them to do, but also know when it’s important to refer. I think Bethany makes a really great point that we see tremendous potential in the young folks coming into Bard, but we also want to set them up for success, so that if they wanted to pursue this kind of work beyond Bard, they can leave not only with the credential in terms of being a certified peer trainer depending on what office they’re in, but also it kind of shows them that it’s never too early or too late to contribute to your community or contribute to your professional development. So, if you’re thinking, oh goodness, I’m going to have all these other kids working with my kid, or my student, yes, **and**, it’s that idea that we see potential and we see maturity in your student. We also provide them the support to be trained professionally and making sure that that’s something that we take very seriously.

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28:35 Mackie: Yeah, and also going off of the topic of wellness, and these supports too, I wonder if any of you could talk about the opportunities for students to explore the local area. I know Darnell you mentioned hiking, we're definitely near the Catskills, we're in a beautiful part of the world, and so I think there are lots of resources for students who want to get outdoors and be in the fresh air, and we have the space to do that, but also getting to New York City, and just getting into going to the grocery store, and what kind of ways can students get around and get off campus, even in the event that they don't have a car on campus, too.

29:18 Bethany: For the utilitarian things, getting to the grocery store, getting to a CVS, needing to get to a bank, we have a shuttle that takes people between Tivoli, which is a small town just to the north of us, where many students live off campus, to Bard, our campus, in and around our campus, and then to Red Hook, which is a town about 4 miles away, which has a grocery store and a CVS and the bank, and things like that. So, you can get in and out of the area very easily to do your things, right. We do twice weekly trips to Kingston, which is a town of about 40,000 across the river from us, and that's got the Target, and the Barnes & Noble, and the Verizon store and the Walmart and the restaurants and the Chinese food, that kind of stuff. So, you can head over there, we do shuttles twice a week to that area. And then we run shuttles to the train stations. We have two relatively close train stations, one is Metro North, which is the commuter rail for New York City, and one is the Amtrak station. So, we run shuttles Friday, Saturday, Sunday, we don't do it daily, but it's Friday, Saturday, Sunday, to get to the city if you need to. And then I see there are often questions about, "how do I get to airports at the end of the semester or at breaks?" We do run shuttles to the NYC and Albany airports and that's for a \$30 or \$40 fee, we'll drive you straight from campus to the airport. So, that's the real utilitarian travel. The ways to get involved in the community include, as Mackie said, hiking, we're 30 minutes from the Catskills. It's totally gorgeous here, you can do ice climbing, you can do rock climbing, you can do skiing, snowboarding, I would suggest that those take either a car, or you become a certified Bard driver and you are with your club, and you rent a vehicle on campus, we have that opportunity. We do have Zipcar on campus, some students do use Zipcar. But there are other ways, particularly the Center for Civic Engagement gets people involved. We have a lot of groups on campus that do civic engagement volunteer work. So, some of it is at the local nursing home, some of it's with the library, with the schools. We have a huge presence in Kingston at their high school, we have a very big presence at a local children's home called Astor, we do after school tutoring, we do mentor, there are some theater projects that we do with local kids. So those are all through our Center for Civic Engagement, and they're weekly or several times a week, getting off campus into our local community, where you sort of dig in and do your volunteer work. And so, there are ways to become really engaged with the people who are not connected necessarily to Bard. And what we've heard over the years is people, students make really strong connections with local families. We host a – some colleagues of mine and I, we host a Thanksgiving meal every year, because I live on campus, there are several faculty who live on campus, and so we do a big Thanksgiving meal, and this year we had three students – international students – who have really close connections with families in the area, and they brought those families to our Thanksgiving meal, which was just delightful, it was just lovely to have these local families join all these Bard students who didn't really have a place to go for Thanksgiving or want to go anywhere for Thanksgiving. And so, we do work really hard to get the local families connected to the school, and connect Bard students to local community members. It's really important to us as a bigger member of this Hudson Valley community.

33:20 Sway: Going back to the trails, our community fitness coordinator, Tyrin Stevenson, he actually gathers students for these hikes or walking the trails. So, when the weather actually is nice, when the sun is out, he actually does this, mainly during the weekends. You don't have to go alone if you don't want to, if the fear is, "can I do hiking by myself?", yes you can, but if you want to have someone who is well versed with the area, and to do it in a group setting, we do have our community fitness coordinator who does do these groups that have outings for these purposes.

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34:04 Mackie: So just before we wrap up, I have one final question, that I'm hoping to pose to each of you, which is what advice do you have for students who are coming in to their first year in college, we've talked a lot about student life, student supports, both here, connecting with community and connecting with community outside, but are there other sort of very quick pieces of advice that you'd give to students? Sway, we'll put you on the spot and start with you.

34:37 Sway: Thank you, I'll gladly be put on the spot.

34:41 Jovanny: It's good to go first!

34:42 Sway: It is, it is. It's like I set the precedent. I want to say to just be your authentic self. Come in with all your hopes and dreams and come in with an open mind to explore the unimaginable and the imaginable, to really think about who you are. This is the perfect opportunity to really explore the intersection of all your identities, right. Going back to what I said about clubs and starting a club if you don't find one, we have a great example, we have the Black Student Association, or the Black Student Union on campus, but then you have this group of Black students who say "well you know I'm Black, but I'm Caribbean, I come from the Caribbean, so they explored being Black and Caribbean and started the Caribbean Student Association right. The same thing with Queer People of Color, that is a club on campus. They said you know, there is a Queer Student Association, but there's more to who we are as just queer individuals. We're also people of color. So, they started that. So, I say be your authentic self, enjoy who you are, explore who you are, and connect with individuals around you, both staff, faculty, and students who really mirror who you are who you want to be, and have fun with it.

36:00 Mackie: Nice. Thank you, Jovanny, we'll go to you next.

36:05 Jovanny: Oh fantastic. So, I have kind of a duality, really quickly, of advice. One is for students to be involved, really early, and as often as you can. It's really great to have a 4.0 and be amazing in your academics, but it's that cliché of "all work and no play makes [blank] a dull [blank], but be involved. Take advantage of all the clubs, take advantage of the Hudson Valley area, because not only does that kind of expand your development as a person, which will then influence your work and things that you end up doing, but it also becomes really cool resume builders, really cool interview question answers, you know, in my time at Bard, I got a 4.0 but I also became an activist in the community, I also was able to start clubs, I also was able to be a student leader. So be involved, and be involved often, is what I would say to students. But to parents who may be a little anxious, let your student be the student. They're entering a new phase or chapter in their life, where high school was I get up at 7, I go to school from 8-3 and I'm back home to do homework. It's going to look a lot different at the Bard campus, right, studying looks different, engagement looks different. So, while you may be used to calling them and speaking to them and having them all to yourself from 3pm to 8, they may be growing and developing as a person. So be there, and support them, and listen to them and give them all that love and encouragement.

27:28 Mackie: Darnell we'll turn to you.

37:31 Darnell: What Jovanny and Sway said, and I would say be open, be open to the possibilities that are available to you here at Bard and in the Hudson Valley. Don't be afraid to fail, and it's inevitable. We're human. College is fun, it is rewarding, and it is also hard and if it were easy, everybody would be doing it. So be open to meeting new people, learning about your new roommate that you'll get, it is a great time. But we also have a wonderful, wonderful support system for both students and parents when you call. But enjoy, get engaged and get connected.

38:14 Mackie: Thanks Darnell. And Bethany?

38:18 Bethany: I agree with everything that my colleagues just said. From a bigger picture, I would say that, expect great things of yourself, and expect great things of the institution, and hold us to a high standard, and ask us to attend to you, and ask us to answer your questions, and don't undersell yourself, right. I think that often I heard students say, "oh I haven't known who to ask this question of for three weeks." And I think well, we could've helped your anxiety for three weeks there! So, when you have a question, ask it. When you have a need, ask for it. If you need us to think about something differently because of your needs, tell us that. We're really interested in helping people flourish, and we really understand that everybody has different needs. We can't meet everybody's needs, we know that, but if it's an easy tweak, if it's an easy thing for us to do, or even if it's hard, but it's the right thing to do, we're going to figure out the right way to do it, right. So, there's a great quote on campus, which is "say yes unless there's a compelling reason to say no", and I think you'll find that the staff and faculty are really interested in that. We think that the best ideas come from individuals who have a different way of thinking about things. So, push yourself to be that person, and push us to help you be that person. That's what we're here for. And none of us grow if we're not being asked to stretch a little bit. So, help us stretch and we'll help you stretch.

40:08 Josh: Thank you for listening to our latest edition of our podcast series on student life. As always, if you have additional questions, please reach out to admission@bard.edu and until next time, take care!