

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



Bard

At Bard, we show up. We build, paint, dig, teach, play, sing, sweat. We show up in the middle of the night, work in the rain, crawl under the car, whatever it takes. This does not mean erasing the self. It means struggling with the tension between self and collective interests, and then acting compassionately.

—Paul Marienthal, Dean for Social Action; Director, Trustee Leader Scholar Program

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic engagement is at the core of Bard College's institutional mission, reflecting the fundamental belief that higher education institutions can and should operate in the public interest. Bard uses its campus and resources to develop and support robust and sustainable partnerships to address local, national, and global problems, reach underserved populations, and tackle critical issues of education and public policy.

The Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) at Bard supports, coordinates, and promotes a wide array of institutional and student initiatives that reinforce the links between education, democracy, and citizenship. CCE strives to inspire undergraduates to take action, develop a sense of agency, and encourage creative application of language, arts, and sciences in public life. Students have the opportunity to become involved in Bard's extensive network, where they make lasting connections and become active global citizens. While the academic endeavors and community projects differ greatly in scale and scope, each exemplifies the mission of Bard and its students to reach out into the world and effect change.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Engaged Liberal Arts and Sciences (ELAS) courses enhance learning and promote active citizenship by linking course work with civic practices that connect the classroom with the community. CCE supports faculty efforts to design and enrich courses that engage in community-based learning and/or research to benefit communities in the Hudson Valley and beyond. ELAS courses have been developed in each of Bard's four academic divisions, encouraging students to apply theory to practice and to play an active role in identifying creative approaches to community issues.

INTERNSHIPS AND COMMUNITY ACTION AWARDS

The Center for Civic Engagement coordinates with partners on and off campus, across the nation, and around the globe to help students secure meaningful internships in their area of study. Community Action Awards provide funding for student engagement through internships that address issues affecting people around the world. Approximately 50 Bard undergraduates each year receive the awards. Students have held internships at diverse organizations, ranging from the American Civil Liberties Union and Hudson River Heritage to World Policy Institute and Zabriskie Gallery.

INTERNATIONAL

Bard believes that institutional change must be global in its orientation and reach, and that the task of creating open societies is deeply connected to education and the involvement of citizens at home and abroad. The College has a long history of global outreach and innovative international partnerships. The Center for Civic Engagement collaborates extensively with partner institutions, and with Bard centers and institutes, to implement civic and educational initiatives rooted in the values of liberal education.

Our long-term collaborative ventures reflect Bard's commitment to engage in places that are undergoing significant social change. The Bard international network includes partnerships with the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences, St. Petersburg State University (Smolny), in St. Petersburg, Russia; American University of Central Asia in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; Al-Quds Bard College of Arts and Sciences in East Jerusalem; Bard College Berlin: A Liberal Arts University; and Central European University in Budapest, Hungary and Vienna, Austria. Undergraduates have opportunities for study abroad at these and other institutions.

CCE's annual conference, "Get Engaged: Student Action and Youth Leadership," brings together student leaders from across the Bard international network. The conference exposes students to a wide range of ideas, skills, and experiences to help them more effectively lead community-based projects and become agents of change. Students share experiences and exchange best practices, hone leadership styles, and network with international partners.

INITIATIVES

The Center for Civic Engagement sustains, coordinates, and promotes diverse student and institutional initiatives. With an entrepreneurial spirit and a sense of civic duty, CCE creates and maintains programs that improve democracy and civic life by engaging citizens and communities in addressing shared social problems.

The Trustee Leader Scholar (TLS) Program supports students who design and implement social action projects based on their own compelling interests. Several collaborations have grown into full-time, College-sponsored, nationally recognized initiatives that welcome undergraduate volunteers, including Spanish-language magazine *La Voz*, Bard Early College in New Orleans, Bard Prison Initiative, and most recently, Brothers At Bard. Current TLS projects include the Bard Palestinian Youth Initiative, Nicaragua Education Initiative, and Cuerdas Para Cali in Colombia.

CCE local engagement programs are developing strong collaborations with school districts, town and city governments, and social service organizations in nearby communities. Local initiatives include:

Bard Debate Union sponsors public debates for Bard and the local community and competes in policy debates around the globe. The Debate Union conducts outreach to develop debate in area schools; hosts collegiate, middle-, and high school tournaments on the Bard campus; and holds intercollegiate debates with students from the Bard Prison Initiative Debate Team.

Brothers At Bard (BAB) is an academic enrichment and mentoring program for young men of color in nearby Kingston High School. BAB seeks to empower young men by building a positive peer culture and fostering a safe and supportive brotherhood with Bard students.

Election@Bard, a student-led initiative that informs Bard students about elections and registers them to vote, hosts forums for candidates and students, encourages students to participate in local political action, and strives to protect students' right to vote.

STEAM Explorers helps young students bridge the gap between studying traditional math and science and exploring the world around them. Bard science and math fellows create experiences and experiments that inspire wonder, spark curiosity, and challenge old ideas.

HARRY JOHNSON '17

Harry Johnson '17 played basketball at a high level in high school. But as a senior in high school, he wasn't being recruited by schools that excited him. "Then a coach from a small liberal arts school reached out to me," says Johnson. "That sparked something." It sparked him to action. Johnson launched a letter-writing campaign, reaching out to all of that school's opponents, then to every team those schools played against. "I wrote to about 150 coaches," Johnson recalls. One of the coaches who responded was from Bard. Johnson did some research and liked what he saw. He applied, was accepted, and, thanks to a Bard Opportunity Program Scholarship, was able to enroll. Taking action got him to Bard, and soon it would have him circling the globe. But first he had some work to do.

"I'd never been exposed to student-centered, discussion-based classes before," Johnson recalls. "It was an awakening." He discussed with one of his mentors back home the challenges of adjusting to new ways of thinking and interacting. "My mentor said I should try to 'make Bard the place you want it to be.'" Johnson embraced that message and, once again, took action. He created, with his friend Dariel Vásquez '17, Brothers At Bard (BAB), which began as an effort to provide a support network for men of color on campus and quickly became an academic enrichment and mentoring program for young men from underserved backgrounds. BAB started with support from the Trustee Leader Scholar Program and is now independent, with Vásquez as program coordinator. Johnson is also involved with the group again, after returning from a year traveling the world on a Watson Fellowship. The Watson, a \$30,000 grant for "a year of independent, purposeful exploration and travel outside of the United States," provided Johnson with yet another opportunity to apply the life lessons he learned in college. "I lived in India for four months," he says. "The experiences I had at Bard gave me the tools to navigate an unfamiliar culture, learn about ways they are using sport for development, and support them in those efforts."



300 Bard undergraduates annually enroll in Engaged Liberal Arts and Sciences (ELAS) courses
50 students a year receive Community Action Awards that fund internships in engagement
500 students interned at more than 500 organizations around the globe during the past two years
50 students spearhead Trustee Leader Scholar (TLS) projects and 320 more students volunteer
TLS students contribute 750 volunteer hours a week



Students explore the Tivoli Bays Wildlife Management Area and Research Reserve, adjacent to Bard's main campus, as part of a nationwide March for Science.
Photo by Chris Bowser

EMMA KREYCHE '02
DIANA SAGUILAN '06
JULIETH NUÑEZ '14

Cover (left to right): These three remarkable women, Emma Kreyche '02, Diana Saguilan '06, and Julieth Nuñez '14, share at least two special places: Bard College and Worker Justice Center (WJC) of New York. As amazing as they are, they are also typical of the committed students who get involved with Bard's Center for Civic Engagement and its Trustee Leader Scholar program (TLS).

Kreyche, WJC's organizing and advocacy coordinator, was instrumental in the founding of one of TLS's most important and long-lived organizations, the student-led Migrant Labor Project. "Bard cultivates social awareness, not just in course work," she says. "The rich culture of student activism allowed me a lot of freedom and encouragement to pursue different avenues of social justice work. I think I developed a lot of skills outside the classroom through activism that I have since applied in my professional work."

During her sophomore year, Saguilan taught English to adult farmworkers in Tivoli as part of one of her classes. In high school, she had been a member of the Rural and Migrant Ministry's Youth Arts Group, so activism was already important to her. "Teaching the farmworkers was a reminder of where I came from, how I grew up, and some of the challenges that the farmworker community was facing," she says. "It was a way to reconnect with my community and to understand the background and history of the struggle of immigrants and low-wage workers in this country."

Nuñez, victim services case manager at WJC, worked at the TLS-supported publication *La Voz*. "Bard gave me the freedom to express myself and take action through volunteering," says Nuñez. "And I had the opportunity to work at *La Voz* from my very first year until my very last day as a student, which helped me learn about communities outside of Bard."



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