

BARD COLLEGE

STUDENT CONSTITUTION

non nobis, sed omnibus

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PREAMBLE

We the students of Bard College, united by a common educational cause, with the goal of protecting our individual academic and social rights, in order to encourage democratic student involvement and collective action, recognizing ourselves as a distinct and diverse community of learning, and seeking to cultivate this community for ourselves and for future students, do ordain and establish this document as the Bard College Student Constitution.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE STUDENT BODY

All registered undergraduate students at Bard College shall hereinafter be considered full members of the Student Body. This membership cannot be revoked for any reason except for the discontinuation of registered undergraduate status.

ARTICLE I. CENTRAL ASSEMBLY

SECTION 1: ROLE OF THE CENTRAL ASSEMBLY

- a) The Central Assembly shall schedule, preside over, and facilitate General Assemblies.
- b) The Central Assembly shall actively foster communication between the heads of Bard Student Government (hereinafter BSG).
- c) The Central Assembly shall meet weekly.
- d) In order for a member of the Central Assembly to take on additional BSG projects outside of their stipulated role, consent by a simple majority of the Central Assembly shall be required.
- e) Each member of the Central Assembly shall receive a semesterly stipend to be determined by the Fiscal Committee.
- f) The Central Assembly shall control the budget of the BSG.

SECTION 1.1: COMPOSITION OF THE CENTRAL ASSEMBLY

- a) The Central Assembly shall compose of the following members: *Speaker of the Student Body*, *Treasurer*, *Chair of the Fiscal Committee*, *Chair of the Peer Review Board*, *Chair of the Student Judiciary Board*, *Chair of the Student Life Committee*, and *Chair of the Educational Policies Committee*.
 - b) The Central Assembly shall be assisted in the area of public relations by the *Secretary of Press*.
 - c) Each member of the Central Assembly, as well as the *Secretary of Press*, shall have a term of one academic year.
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ARTICLE II. COMMUNICATIONS BRANCH

The Communications Branch shall be composed of the *Speaker of the Student Body* and the *Secretary of the Press*.

SECTION 1: ROLE OF SPEAKER OF THE STUDENT BODY

- a) The *Speaker* shall serve as the intermediary between the student body and the administration.
- b) The *Speaker* shall oversee the constitutionality of the workings of the BSG, and inform the student body of BSG affairs.
- c) The *Speaker* shall direct students to the appropriate Central Assembly member.
- d) The *Speaker* shall coordinate, but not dictate, the meetings and activities of the Central Assembly.
- e) The *Speaker* shall organize ad-hoc committees when appropriate.
- f) The *Speaker* shall arrange BSG-wide retreats once a semester.
- g) The *Speaker* cannot deny the right to speak of any student during General Assemblies.
- h) The *Speaker* cannot spend BSG funds without unanimous approval from the Central Assembly.
- i) The *Speaker* shall serve, alongside the *Chair of the Student Life Committee*, as a student representative to meetings of the Board of Trustees.

SECTION 2: ROLE OF *SECRETARY OF PRESS*

- a) The *Secretary* shall be responsible for informing the student body of BSG happenings, via a regularly maintained online presence.
 - b) The *Secretary* shall attend weekly meetings of the Central Assembly.
 - c) The *Secretary* shall have neither voting powers nor decision-making powers at Central Assembly meetings.
 - d) The *Secretary* shall receive a semesterly stipend, to be determined by the Fiscal Committee.
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ARTICLE III. FINANCIAL BRANCH

The Financial Branch shall be composed of the Fiscal Committee, the *Treasurer of the BSG*, and the Socially Responsible Investment Committee.

SECTION 1: ROLE OF THE FISCAL COMMITTEE (FISCCOMM)

- a) The Fiscal Committee shall allocate funds available to the Student Body amongst the student organizations that request such funds. These funds shall be distributed according to the level of interest for, the nature of past expenditures and revenues of, and the positive impact on the Bard community generated by the activities and projects of each organization.
- b) The Fiscal Committee shall present a finalized budget at the Budget Forum for review by the Student Body.

SECTION 1.1: ROLE OF *CHAIR OF THE FISCAL COMMITTEE*

- a) Unless there is no such candidate, the *Chair of the Fiscal Committee* must have served as a full-time member of the Fiscal Committee for the two consecutive semesters immediately prior to the election cycle.
- b) The *Chair of the Fiscal Committee* shall schedule and preside over meetings of the Fiscal Committee.
- c) The *Chair of the Fiscal Committee* shall provide student organization heads with notifications regarding any budgetary requests they make to the Fiscal Committee.
- d) The *Chair of the Fiscal Committee* shall initiate all Fiscal Committee voting procedures and provide context to all budgetary requests.
- e) The *Chair of the Fiscal Committee* shall ensure the balanced use of the Convocation Fund.

SECTION 1.2: COMPOSITION OF THE FISCAL COMMITTEE

- a) The Fiscal Committee shall be composed of the *Chair of the Fiscal Committee*, the Treasurer of the BSG, and five elected student members (one of whom must be a *Freshman Representative*). The *Freshman Representative* shall have no voting power in the Fall semester, but will be granted such authority for the Spring semester.
- b) Each Fiscal Committee member shall have a term of one academic year.

SECTION 2: ROLE OF TREASURER OF THE BSG

- a) Unless there is no such candidate, the *Treasurer* must have served as a full-time member of the Fiscal Committee for the two consecutive semesters immediately prior to the election cycle, or have served as *Treasurer* for the same duration of time.
- b) The *Treasurer* shall account for the assets, debits, and expenditures of the BSG.
- c) The *Treasurer* shall report fully and accurately the financial situation of the BSG at each General Assembly, if so requested.
- d) The *Treasurer* shall ensure that the funds allocated by the Fiscal Committee are spent according to the requests of a student organization.

SECTION 3: ROLE OF THE SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT COMMITTEE (SRIC)

- a) The SRIC shall maintain and facilitate an ongoing dialogue between the Bard College community and the management of public companies held within the endowment.
- b) The SRIC shall engage shareholders through voting by proxy and execute shareholder resolutions.
- c) The SRIC shall regularly host events on the subject of responsible investment.
- d) The SRIC shall support and monitor the Social Choice Fund to leverage positive social change and offer a socially responsible alternative for endowment gifts.
- e) The *Chair of the SRIC* shall be responsible for scheduling and organizing regular meetings of the SRIC, as well as maintaining an ongoing dialogue with the appropriate administrative outlets.

SECTION 3.1: COMPOSITION OF THE SRIC

- a) The SRIC shall be composed of the *Chair of the SRIC*, who must have served on the SRIC for two semesters prior to election, and four elected student members.
- b) The term for each member of the SRIC, including the *Chair*, shall be one academic year.

ARTICLE IV. STUDENT LIFE

BRANCH

The Student Life Branch of the Bard BSG shall be composed of the Student Life Committee (SLC) and the Educational Policies Committee (EPC).

SECTION 1: ROLE OF THE STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE (SLC)

- a) The SLC shall regularly collect student opinion on all issues concerning student services and residential life.
- b) The SLC shall take on various projects and initiatives to improve student life at Bard College based on the desires of the Student Body.
- c) The SLC shall formulate policy recommendations for the Student Body in all matters concerning student services and residential life, and present these to the General Assembly for a vote.
- d) All meetings of the SLC shall be open to all students.

SECTION 1.1: ROLE OF *CHAIR OF THE STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE*

- a) Unless there is no such candidate, the *Chair of the SLC* must have served as a full-time member of the SLC for the two consecutive semesters immediately prior to the election cycle.
- b) The *Chair of the SLC* shall schedule and preside over meetings of the SLC.
- c) The *Chair of the SLC* shall publicize and present the proceedings and results of SLC meetings to the Student Body.
- d) The *Chair of the SLC* shall serve, alongside the *Speaker of the Student Body*, as a student representative to meetings of the Board of Trustees.

SECTION 1.2: COMPOSITION OF THE STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE

- a) The SLC shall be composed of the *Chair of the SLC* and twelve elected student members
- b) Each SLC member shall have a term of one academic year, re-running at the beginning of every fall if they wish to do so.

SECTION 2: ROLE OF THE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMITTEE (EPC)

- a) The EPC shall serve as the chief liaison between students and faculty on academic issues and curriculum changes.
- b) The EPC shall be responsible for formalizing student opinion in the faculty evaluation process for non-tenure track, tenure track, and reappointment evaluations.
- c) The EPC shall correspond with faculty search committees in order to ensure adequate student power in the hiring of new faculty members.
- d) The EPC shall evaluate academic programs at the college based on the expressed concerns of students.

SECTION 2.1: ROLE OF *CHAIR OF THE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMITTEE*

- a) Unless there is no such candidate, the *Chair of the EPC* must have served as a full-time member of the EPC for the two consecutive semesters immediately prior to the election cycle.
- b) The *Chair of the EPC* shall schedule and preside over meetings of the EPC.
- c) The *Chair of the EPC* shall archive documents received in connection with faculty evaluation, and shall indefinitely maintain copies of all written communications with College administration, faculty, and staff as they relate to the work of the EPC.

SECTION 2.2: COMPOSITION OF THE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMITTEE

- a) The EPC shall be composed of the *Chair of the EPC* and two elected student representatives from each of the four academic divisions of the College.
- b) The *Chair* and elected students must be moderated Upper College students in good academic standing.
- c) Each EPC member shall have a term of one academic year.

ARTICLE V. JUDICIAL BRANCH

The Judicial Branch of the Bard BSG shall be composed of the two Conduct Boards - the Peer Review Board (PRB) and the Student Judiciary Board (SJB) - the *Student Advocate*, and the Constitutional Court.

SECTION 1: ROLE OF THE STUDENT CONDUCT BOARDS (SJB & PRB)

- a) The PRB and the SJB derive their powers equally from the students, administration, and faculty of Bard College. The purpose of the Conduct Boards is to enforce, protect, and preserve, within the limits of its jurisdiction, the rights of all Bard students by means of peer-to-peer conduct hearings.
- b) The PRB and SJB shall have original jurisdiction in campus cases, involving alleged violations of college social and residential rules. Neither board shall have jurisdiction for those cases involving alleged violations of academic regulations, or cases involving alleged sexual misconduct.
- c) The PRB shall serve as the lower Conduct Board, hearing (but not being limited to) cases involving first-time policy violations, less severe policy violations, and cases in which a clear violation of policy has occurred. The PRB shall have the power to impose sanctions upon any student found in violation of college policy. The PRB shall not have the authority to determine that a student leave the college via suspension or expulsion.
- d) The SJB shall serve as the higher Conduct Board, hearing (but not being limited to) cases involving repeat policy violations, more severe policy violations, and cases in which the occurrence of a policy violation is unclear. The SJB shall have the power to impose sanctions upon any student found in violation of college policy, as well as the authority to determine that a student leave the college via suspension or expulsion.

SECTION 1.1: ROLES OF THE CONDUCT BOARD *CHAIRS*

- a) Unless there are no such candidates, the *Chair of the SJB* and the *Chair of the PRB* must have served as a full-time member of either the SJB or the PRB for the two consecutive semesters immediately prior to the election cycle.
- b) The *Chair of the SJB* and the *Chair of the PRB* shall be responsible for scheduling and presiding over the meetings of their respective boards.
- c) The *Chair of the SJB* and the *Chair of the PRB* shall meet weekly with the Student Advocate and a member of the Dean of Student Affairs Office to determine the caseload for the week.
- d) The *Chair of the SJB* and the *Chair of the PRB* shall be responsible for maintaining contact with and disseminating information to all parties involved in conduct hearings, prior to and after the hearings occur.
- e) The *Chair of the SJB* and the *Chair of the PRB* shall jointly organize and run a conduct retreat (attended by all members of the PRB, SJB, and the Student Advocate) at least once a semester. The retreat shall serve as a checkpoint, where collective discussion about the nature of the student conduct system shall occur.

SECTION 1.2: COMPOSITION OF THE CONDUCT BOARDS

- a) The SJB shall be composed of the *Chair of the SJB*, five elected student members (one of whom must be a *Freshman Representative*), four staff members, four faculty members, and a silent advisor from the Dean of Student Affairs Office. Representatives from each of these groups will comprise the Board on rotation as determined by the *Chair of the SJB*.
- b) The term for each member of the SJB shall be one academic year.
- c) The Peer Review Board shall be composed of the *Chair of the PRB*, seven student members, all Area Coordinators, the Director of Residence Life, and a silent advisor from the Dean of Student Affairs Office. Representatives from each of these groups will comprise the Board on rotation as determined by the *Chair of the PRB*.
- d) The student membership of the PRB shall be determined based on a completed application designed by the *Chair of the PRB*.
- e) The term for each member of the PRB shall be one semester.
- f) Students who are currently on Social or Academic Probation cannot be members of either the PRB or the SJB.
- g) One student member of the PRB and one student member of the SJB shall serve as each respective Board's *Vice Chair*. The *Vice Chair of the PRB* shall be chosen via internal election from the membership of the PRB, and the *Vice Chair of the SJB* shall be chosen via internal election from the membership of the SJB.

SECTION 2: ROLE OF STUDENT ADVOCATE

- a) The *Student Advocate* shall be chosen via internal election from the membership of the PRB, and upon election, shall relinquish all duties associated with PRB membership.
- b) The term of the *Student Advocate* shall be one academic year.
- c) The *Student Advocate's* primary duty shall be to serve as a liaison between the Conduct Boards and the students summoned before the Conduct Boards. The Student Advocate shall be available to answer any questions or concerns summoned students might have about the student conduct process.
- d) The *Student Advocate* shall attend the weekly meetings between the Conduct Chairs and a member of the Dean of Student Affairs Office.

SECTION 3: ROLE OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

- a) The Constitutional Court shall oversee all elections as outlined in this document
- b) The Constitutional Court shall address issues of constitutionality if they so arise.
- c) The Constitutional Court shall oversee impeachment and dismissal proceedings as outlined in this document.

- d) All Constitutional Court hearings shall be open to the public.

SECTION 3.1: COMPOSITION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

- a) The Constitutional Court shall compose of the *Chair of the PRB*, the *Chair of the SJB*, and seven student members. These seven students shall be chosen from the membership of the SJB and PRB by means of random selection.
 - b) The *Chair of the PRB* and the *Chair of the SJB* shall jointly oversee and organize all proceedings of the Constitutional Court.
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ARTICLE VI. GENERAL ASSEMBLIES

SECTION 1: AUTHORITY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- a) The General Assembly shall serve as the directly democratic function of the BSG, in which every member of the Student Body has one vote in all matters brought to the floor.
- b) All motions and resolutions passed at the General Assembly shall be considered policy of the BSG.

SECTION 1.1: CONDUCTION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- a) The agenda of the General Assembly shall be determined by the Central Assembly 48 hours prior to each meeting of the General Assembly. Any member of the Student Body may add an agenda item by contacting the Central Assembly 24 hours prior to the meeting.
- b) All elected members of the BSG must attend all General Assemblies.
- c) At least twenty members of the Student Body must be present in order to open a General Assembly.
- d) No member of the Student Body may be denied entrance to a General Assembly.
- e) All motions and resolutions must be brought to a vote by a two-thirds majority.
- f) All motions and resolutions must be passed by a two-thirds majority.
- g) The Budget Forum shall occur in the first month of the Fall and Spring Semester, in the form of a General Assembly.

ARTICLE VII. ELECTIONS

SECTION 1: GENERAL ELECTORAL PROCESS

- a) The candidate with the most votes at the end of the electoral process shall be declared the victor.
- b) All candidates shall agree to maintain decorum throughout the electoral process.
- c) Non-partisan polling stations shall be set up daily in two public common spaces throughout the electoral process. The polling stations shall be overseen by the Constitutional Court.
- d) Candidates and their campaigns shall be expressly prohibited from providing internet-enabled devices to any student for the purpose of voting.
- e) All candidates must make all campaign expenditures available to the Student Body, via the Constitutional Court.
- f) All questions of constitutionality in regards to the electoral process shall be presented to the Constitutional Court.

SECTION 2: SPRING ELECTORAL PROCESS

- a) Elections for Central Assembly members and the *Secretary of Press* shall be held in the Spring Semester, beginning on the third Thursday in April and ending on the third Saturday in April, via online elections.
- b) All Central Assembly and *Secretary of Press* candidates shall announce their electoral intentions to the Constitutional Court by the first Friday in April.
- c) All Central Assembly and *Secretary of Press* candidates shall, upon announcing their electoral intentions, privately meet to agree on campaign policy. This meeting shall be organized and moderated by members of the Constitutional Court.
- d) In order to run for *Speaker* or *Secretary of Press*, each candidate must gather at least fifty signatures from Student Body members and submit the signatures to the Constitutional Court by the first Friday in April.
- e) Elections for all other elected BSG positions, with the exception of the membership of the Student Life Committee, shall be held in the week after the last General Assembly in the Spring, via online elections. All candidates shall publically announce their electoral intentions at this General Assembly.

SECTION 3: FALL ELECTORAL PROCESS

- a) Elections for all Student Life Committee positions shall be held in the Fall Semester, in the week after Budget Forum, via online elections.
- b) All Student Life Committee candidates shall publicly announce their electoral intentions at the Fall Semester Budget Forum.

ARTICLE VIII. IMPEACHMENT OF BSG OFFICIALS

Any member of the Central Assembly may immediately be removed from office via the impeachment process outlined in this Article if that member does not follow, or actively acts against, the provisions of this Constitution.

SECTION 1: IMPEACHMENT PROCESS

- a) Any member of the Student Body may bring a charge of egregious unconstitutionality against any Central Assembly member at the General Assembly.
- b) The accused Central Assembly member shall be impeached by a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly.
- c) Once impeached, the accused Central Assembly member's case shall come before the Constitutional Court, whose decision regarding whether or not to remove the member from office shall be considered final.
- d) If the impeached official is a member of the Constitutional Court, the *Speaker* shall appoint another Central Assembly member to temporarily serve on the Court throughout the duration of the impeachment proceedings.
- e) In the instance that a Central Assembly member is removed from office, that member's committee shall internally determine who among them shall be the removed official's successor.
- f) The chosen successor must be unanimously approved by the Central Assembly.
- g) The chosen successor shall be considered an interim member of the Central Assembly, and will hold office only for the remainder of the term.
- h) In the instance that the *Speaker* is removed from office, an emergency election shall be held under the supervision of the Constitutional Court.

ARTICLE IX. DISMISSAL AND RESIGNATION OF BSG MEMBERS

Any BSG member may immediately be removed from office via the dismissal process outlined in this Article if that member does not follow, or actively acts against, the provisions of this Constitution. Any BSG member may resign from office at any time for any reason, via the resignation process outlined in this Article.

SECTION 1: DISMISSAL PROCESS

- a) The members of the Central Assembly shall have the power to dismiss members of their respective committees for egregious unconstitutional actions.
- b) Any dismissed BSG member may appeal the decision to dismiss to the Constitutional Court, whose decision shall be considered final.
- c) If the dismissed BSG member is a member of the Constitutional Court, or if a member of the Constitutional Court made the initial decision to dismiss the BSG member, the *Speaker* shall appoint another BSG member to temporarily serve on the Court throughout the duration of the appeal proceedings.

SECTION 2: RESIGNATION PROCESS

- a) In the instance that a Central Assembly member resigns from office, that member's committee shall internally determine who among them shall be the resigned official's successor.
- b) The chosen successor must be unanimously approved by the Central Assembly.
- c) The chosen successor shall be considered an interim member of the Central Assembly, and will hold office only for the remainder of the term.
- d) In the instance that the *Speaker* resigns from office, an emergency election shall be held under the supervision of the Constitutional Court.

ARTICLE X. AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1: AMENDMENT PROCEDURE

- a) Amendments to this Constitution must be brought to a vote at a General Assembly by a two-thirds majority.
- b) Amendments to this Constitution must be passed at a General Assembly by a two-thirds majority.