Why Aren't Students Allowed In Faculty Meetings?

Bard College Faculty Meeting
Statement
Distributed To Faculty At March 26 Meeting
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Lorenzo Black

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Clancy
Charles Clancy

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The Management Dining Commons
Pierre Joris

J. W.
why aren't students allowed in faculty meetings?
AGENDA
BARD COLLEGE FACULTY MEETING
Wednesday, March 26, 1969
4 P.M., Sottery Hall

I. Minutes of the meeting of December 12, 1968.

II. Communications

III. Reports:
A. President
B. Dean
C. Notices from Registrar and Business Manager

IV. Reports of Committees:
- Faculty Senate: Chairman - Deswan; Fafer, Kakazakis, H. Weiss
- Executive Committee: Chairman - Pierce; Rosenthal, Sleeper, Warming

The Executive Committee recommends to the
Faculty that, based on the report of the AMDD
division presented by Professor Sleeper, the pass-
fail grading experiment in AMDD studio courses
be continued through the Spring 1969 semester.

- Research and Faculty Travel: Chairman - Skiff; Eiserman, Lambert, Wilks

- Housing and Use of College Lands: Chairman - Garcia-Remart; Green, Oja, Rosenberg

- Library and Bookstore: Chairman - Wilson; Levandowsky, Fessler, Toomey, Yarden

- Foreign Study: Dr. Rosenberg, Advisor

- Community Advisory Board: Chairman - Sourian; Mrs. Domani

The Community Advisory Board recommends change
in the composition of the Board.

V. Old or Unfinished Business

VI. New Business

Missa Weiss proposes discussion of Selective Service
status of students whose academic progress is delayed
by Moderation deferral.

VII. Adjournment

--- DISTRIBUTED TO FACULTY AT MARCH 26 MEETING ---

The following is the policy adopted by the faculty in December,
1968, for admitting students to faculty meetings.

The Community Advisory Board recommends adoption by the
Faculty of the following policy in regard to student attendance at meetings of the Faculty:

The Faculty recognizes that on certain occasions subjects
will come before the Faculty that directly affect students and
on which students do have a legitimate interest in making repre-
sentations to the Faculty. In the belief that such representations
could well contribute to wise and informed decision-making,
the Faculty wishes to establish the following procedures:

1. Prior to each Faculty meeting, copies of the agenda for
that meeting will be forwarded to the Student Senate.

2. When it determines that a particular subject to be con-
sidered directly affects students, the Faculty Executive
Committee, upon request by the Student Senate or upon
its own initiative, will issue invitations to designated
student representatives to be present at the prospective
Faculty meeting for the purpose of making representations
of student views on that particular subject.

3. Following each Faculty meeting, the Secretary of the
Faculty will provide the Chairman of the Student Senate
with a written record of the actions taken at the meeting
pertinent to educational policy. It will be the responsibility
of the Chairman of the Student Senate to arrange to
obtain this information.

4. The Student Senate may ask the Faculty Executive Committee
to place on the agenda for future Faculty consideration
any subject that directly affects students.

--- FACULTY SAYS ---

It shouldn’t happen here  by mike roddy

Interviews with five faculty members after last Wednesday’s
sit-in found little sympathy for student tactics and some concern
over the fact that a day’s work had been lost. None of those
interviewed had any strong objections to student observers at
the meetings but only one indicated any desire to have students
vote.

Asked what he thought of the sit-in itself, Mr. Tiegert said
“I think this kind of confrontation politics simply does not belong
at Bard. The faculty here are really interested in student con-
cerns. Confrontation politics suggests that the students are
responding to stereotypes.”

There was some feeling among the faculty that the majority of
students who demonstrated had been mislead by a few who
knew there had been response to student demands but did not tell
the others. Prof. Bertelsmann was particularly outspoken about the
two students who forced cancellation of the meeting. “One of
these students,” the professor said, “said no human discussion
had taken place and I would say it is not human for two students
to hold up faculty discussion. That is not the kind of spirit in
which one has human intercourse.” Dr. Skiff defended the sit-in
because he said the faculty adopts the position the Southern bigot
adopts toward the Negro. “Students who sit-in at the faculty
meeting must be shown their proper place on the plantation,” he
said, because of a “basic prejudice against students” among
faculty here.

Asked to voice their objections to having student observers at
the faculty meetings none of those interviewed raised any
strong points in favor of the status quo. However, Prof. Ber-
telsmann said, “Students will come to the meetings three times
and find they are not very interesting.” and Mr. Wilson said
that as a result of allowing students into the meeting “invariably
more decisions would go on in caucuses.”

Mr. Wilson rejected the demand that students be allowed to
vote at the meetings because pure faculty opinion carries special
weight with the trustees. Prof. Eiserman and Prof. Bertelsmann
thought that joint committees of students and faculty were
preferable to having students vote at the faculty meetings be-
cause, said Mr. Eiseman, “That’s where the power is.” Mr.
Tiegert favored student votes on some issues but added that
“these are not normally issues which transpire at faculty meet-
ings.”

--- MORE ---
Mr. Skiff said the students should have the vote because "there is not much meaningful dialogue that occurs in the faculty meeting itself. A student with a vote" be said, "would have a much better idea of what was going on at the meetings which otherwise are little more than voting sessions at which new ideas are rarely heard."

No newspaper can be entirely objective. So no newspaper should pretend to be, not even in an interview. Although I was an eyewitness to what went on in the Faculty meeting, I cannot give anyone the whole story, only what I remember as significant. Most of the dialogue at the meeting didn't make sense, though faculty members kept trying to tell me and George how "reasonable" they were being, and how we were being stupid. I guess a lot of the hassle was because most people saw our sitting there as "confrontation politics" — they thought I was there so that students could get permission to be there in the future, or I was there to break up the meeting. I tried to tell them that this wasn't the case, that I was there out of curiosity and because I thought what goes on in faculty meetings should be known to the students. Why I stayed after President Kline asked us to leave was partly stubbornness, I guess, but more importantly, I wanted to let the faculty understand my position instead of having them think I was "confronting" them. Problems of "concessions" and "tact" were irrelevant.

Everyone at Bard is first of all a human being, only secondarily a student or a teacher. It is unfortunate that secondary characteristics can get in the way of real human dialogue, real education. I didn't really understand that article on "The Student as Nigger" before, but, unfortunately, it means more to me now.

**NIELSON INTERVIEW**

**OBSERVER:** why did you attend the faculty meeting Wednesday?
**BRIAN:** I feel faculty and students should be getting together more and opening up communications. I didn't expect to be able to vote in the meeting, but I didn't expect the reaction we got, either.

**OBSERVER:** What reaction did you get?
**BRIAN:** Well, the meeting hadn't started yet, so I talked with a few faculty members. I sat down among the faculty with two other students, waiting for it to start. When Peter Sourian walked from the back of the room to the group of students sitting in the front. Most of the faculty were there by that time.

**OBSERVER:** What did Mr. Sourian say to the students?
**BRIAN:** He began yelling, "This is my house, You have no right to be here. Now get out!" He continued yelling very loudly for a while. He said that if the students didn't leave, he would, and he asked the other faculty members to leave with him. He said the issue hadn't yet been decided by the executive committee. I said, "So decide," and he said, "Get out!" None of the students made any signs of leaving. So he walked out. Mr. Shafer then said he agreed with Mr. Sourian, and also left.

**OBSERVER:** Did any other faculty members walk out?
**BRIAN:** I'm not sure, but most remained.

**OBSERVER:** How many students were present at that point?
**BRIAN:** About twenty-five, I guess.

**OBSERVER:** What happened next?
**BRIAN:** Dean Seldinger explained the legal procedure involved. He didn't make much difference, and seemed rather distant because I just wanted to be there at the meeting to see what happened. I said to him, "You're talking like a lawyer. Can't you talk like a person?" He said, "I'm doing the best I can."

**OBSERVER:** After that?
**BRIAN:** There was a lot of talk about procedure between faculty members, students, and the President. The President asked the students to leave. Then Francis Fleetwood spoke, saying that not all the students there agreed with him, and presented a demand that there be ten students with voting privilege at faculty meetings. I'm not sure about the exact sequence, but I think some of the students left then with Francis. It was kind of an uptight situation.

**OBSERVER:** Who was left at the meeting?
**BRIAN:** Me and George Brewster. I considered leaving because I got chicken, but it didn't make sense to leave just because of that.

**OBSERVER:** Just why did you stay?
**BRIAN:** I just wanted to see what went on in the meeting. When I came I was determined to stay. It seemed they were trying to get me to leave because of a lot of paper work. Most of what I believe was in the statement passed out to the faculty, but it sounded rather threatening and I didn't want to make any threats. I really didn't see any reason why they shouldn't let me stay and I never found one. The reason they kept giving us was that they were hung-up with the legal procedures involved. They didn't say they didn't like us, they didn't say the meeting was secret, they didn't say they were privileged. Just the fact that I was there made talk about the procedures involved meaningless. They didn't talk about me being there at all — they just talked about how I could be there in the future.

**OBSERVER:** The President said that he would call the meeting to order and ask for an adjournment at a certain time. When that time came, a faculty member asked that the meeting be started. He was ignored. The President finally called the meeting to order at 4:25, which was immediately followed by a motion for adjournment. The motion was seconded and the President asked for a voice vote. It was all 'yes' except for one load 'no'.

**OBSERVER:** Do you know who said "no"?
**BRIAN:** I later found out it was Mr. Skiff. I thanked him later for being the only teacher interested in conducting the meeting with students present.

**OBSERVER:** Did you realize at the time that you two had set a precedent for being present at a faculty meeting from beginning to end?
**BRIAN:** I realized that later, but it didn't satisfy my curiosity to find out what went on. Nothing on the agenda was discussed. I don't really care whether or not it is a precedent. My concern is whether the students can sit in a faculty meeting. That's the issue, that's what's important.
What has been overlooked about the present faculty/student confrontation is that the students were not trying to "make a point." They went to the faculty meeting with the best intentions, ready to rationally defend their presence, wanting to explain rather than force anyone's hand. They wanted to observe the faculty meeting, to hear what proposals were or weren't being raised, to know whether or not there were any meaningful innovations under consideration.

Their interest is in improving the quality of the Bard education, not in "student power" for its own sake. Unless students are accepted as responsible members of the community, their needs will continue to be neglected. The faculty meeting is a place where important proposals will live or die, where the interests of the students are directly and immediately involved. They attended the faculty meeting, acting in accordance with their beliefs, ready to discuss ideas in good faith. They were not trying to make a point. They were doing what they thought best for the college. There is a real reason for the meeting to be closed to students, or for the faculty to object to their presence.

The faculty, however, said that they understood the student's position, and expressed their willingness to consider it. In addition to not acting in accordance with existing procedures, they said the students were preventing discussion of "personal" matters by their presence. I don't believe the faculty did understand the student's position. In just their asking them to leave they showed a failure to understand that the students simply wanted to listen to the meeting, not "confront" them. In their insistence on following proper procedure, the faculty failed to come to grips with the very real situation being presented, not represented, to them.

It is unfortunate that lengthy bureaucratic procedures obstruct action on very real and pressing needs - the issues are lost behind miles of red tape. The failure of the faculty to understand there were "personal" matters that couldn't be discussed before students is rather reminiscent of when mom and dad had "grown-up business" to talk about and sent you up to bed. The faculty's grown-up business seems to be the issue of who is going to live in which house next year. In the interest of clearing the floor of these personal (read selfish and trivial) matters, the faculty might consider relegating housing problems to the proper committee and keeping them there. Perhaps then we could talk about education, if anyone is interested in discussing something that radical.

G.B.

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cat of 9 tails

I stood up, swinging the last bit of Adolf's draft as professionally as possible, letting my mind wander back to 1959. Quickly I decided that the true essence of life lay in being able to "chugalag" and that Bard really needs students who can swallow goldfish.

Motivating seductively with my eyes to my impressive young and delectable companion, I maneuvered past the double doors skillfully and out into the late Wednesday afternoon sun. There I paused momentarily to adjust my regulation wire rim, Hell's Angel's, dark tinted sunglassess. With these sitting prominently on my ruggedly handsome aquiline nose, I moved slowly toward our racy little sportscar.

In a matter of seconds I was double-clutching ferociously to get up the hill to campus, and in a flash we were bounding past Stonetree. There, to my amazement, were a veritable bevy of faculty and students, carrying on in a manner not altogether familiar to the Bard experience. In a flash I realized just what was actually taking place was "confrontation and a meaningful dialogue." "Aha, Newreel would be proud of us," I thought, and stopped the car. I called to the nearest student who was talking to about three others, wildly waving his hands, and grinning demisemblacally. He appeared to be in the process of strangling himself. "Hey, whatshappeninnin?" He turned and grunted deceptively, mumbly some quote from the Communist Manifesto. I motoned him over closer, and, chocking with passion, he explained what was going on. It seemed that some students, in demand of representation at faculty meetings, had sat, uninvited, in on the proceedings. What had followed was quick tempers, and some students walking out, in accordance with plan, and some faculty walking out in anger. What had been accomplished was not altogether clear, but everyone seemed extremely excited. Trying desperately to retain my much developed sense of decorum, I proceeded to abandon my car and the chair in the parking lot, and searched out a friendly member of that ever-cheerful admissions office. As usual he was prepared to talk, and he explained the affair at great length, standing in front of dining commons. There was a distinct smell of London Broll in the air, but even that could not distract the issues. But the problem now seemed to have transcended the original one, simply the act of representation, and the question was now whether or not too many faculty had been alienated by the students' actions. The happy admissions man felt that the faculty would have agreed to the question before the student demonstration, but now he doubted it. One to himself he disappeared into Londlow.

It all seemed very foolish to me, but my primary objection wasn't with the students who acted on behalf of the body. Rather, it was with the reactionary actions of certain faculty members. That any proposal such as this should be doomed simply due to the breakdown in communication between the opposing parties, seems absurd in one light and almost criminal in another.

At first it would seem that the fault lies in the relative maturity of the various parties. On the one hand, the students were attempting to cut through the red tape that entangles any real progress. They connotes a certain innocence on the part of the students, but the importance lies in the fact that this innocence should be respected, rather than denied. However, the faculty rejected the students' intentions. They chose, instead, of breaking through the red tape to perform in a manner demeaning to their intelligence and their profession. What the faculty failed to realize is that the act of walking out is a demonstration of immaturity and incompatibility in the college environment. The appropriate course would have been to meet in good faith with the students and to proceed in a sensible manner. It is the faculty that is guilty of negligence in failing to meet the students and failing to come to grips with the questions at hand. However, the whole thing gets vicious when one starts to think upon what this relatively ingrown problem says about the inadequacies of Bard College. Any failure to communicate demonstrates certain faults, and this incident is a good example. I was, and still am, under the impression that the faculty and students of Bard have always gotten along. Yet this altercation shows the whole relationship in a completely new light. It would seem to me that the faculty had treated the students with a type of benign interest. What is interesting to note is the defensive reaction of the faculty when it demurs a position approaching equality, I, for one do not consider myself simply a memory bank, in which to store knowledge, or a 'yes man', to laugh at a teacher's jokes is a approach to a position of authority. The incident shows definitely that the part of the faculty to respect the individuality of the students, and their inability to treat a motivating factor of the college experience.

London Broll. My sunglasses fogged as I walked into dining commons, and as Iumbled around, trying to disengage the eyes from my nose, a pretty blonde flashed me in the groin with her tray. All in a day's work, I thought.
To the Editor:

I would like to clarify a few points related to last Wednesdays student demonstration, as it has been so titled.

First of all, I have the feeling that most of the faculty misunderstood why the students were there. Some of the faculty didn’t even bother to read the statement prepared by some of us, before judging us. The rest of the faculty and administration gave us three minutes of their unofficial time, after a barrage.

Speaking for myself and possibly a few others, I think we came to the meeting not to confront the faculty with confrontation, but to confront them with a new idea of joint meetings. We also came to join in on the discussions of proposals which affect our lives as well as the faculty. The idea that the faculty here at Bard would not allow us to attend this meeting, or even be heard officially didn’t enter our idealistic heads. Why shouldn’t the faculty want to hear what we think?

This question was never answered or even discussed, it seems, because we were too much of a threat to the faculty.

In order to have this question answered, myself and a few others are working on a proposal which will be given to President Kline. It would propose open faculty meetings for all students and at least ten voting student members.

Perhaps the faculty will simply vote this proposal down without stating one reason or perhaps there are no reasons why students shouldn’t attend and be heard at these meetings.

Francis Fleetwood

To the Editor:

The editorial in the Bard Observer of March 27, 1969 is a piece of irresponsible journalism. Assuming that there is a factual basis for the statement, "The faculty is making plans to wage a full-scale nuclear war on students", the writer then has the obligation, known as intellec-
tual honesty, to document his argument. Instead, the editorial makes inflammatory, sinister innuendoes, designed, I suspect, to incite support for a largely non-existent "issue". After all, why should any faculty "fear" a student body such as Bard’s? Frustrated revolutionaries? - again. I sympathize with Bard radicals. To organize a revolution from a campus where 90 girls in Tewksbury monopolize one telephone line must be difficult and frustrating, indeed.

The editorialists' cheap journalism and the methods he advocates, ("party-crashing would be our best defense"), belie his very objectives. The right to attend a faculty meeting assumes a certain professional competence, intellectual integrity and maturity, which certainly are not displayed in his editorial. If the writer wants the privilege of sitting at a faculty meeting, let him earn it: by taking the courses, writing the thesis, and earning the degree.

Please do not misunderstand, I am not against reform. In fact, I think reform on the Bard campus should begin with the Observer. May I respectfully suggest that the Bard Observer be printed on toilet paper? For, to coin a familiar phrase, the medium is the message.

Elaine Marcotte

To the Editor:

A basic distinction needs to be made between Bard College as such and the professional theatre.

Whereas Bard College is a theatre of sophistry, wit and only indirectly the American Way – i.e. Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness; in contrast, the American Professional Theatre is a focal point of vividness and something more than local color. It is artificial and hypocritical, yes. But it’s exponents enjoy being this. Or else why hassle? Acting is a craft and it is about time that people stopped selling it short. It’s a damned hard field and its time that Bard College stopped heckling its disciples. They have a right to feel what they please regardless of whether or not it’s cool. We are not very ‘cool’ people. In fact, we’re damn hot... So much so that basically, really, we can’t stand each other. But that’s not our fault. We have an unquenchable thirst to survive in any adverse, perverse, absurd or even hypocritical situation which we have the courage to propel ourselves into; and let me tell you, we need a lot of those situations to even find sufficient tension to stay alive.

Otherwise, how can we avoid setting ourselves up as images for public attention? We don’t know why we crave the stage. If we knew, we probably wouldn’t find any sense in remaining disciples of euphoria.

That’s why we don’t want or need drugs. Our lives are exciting enough if we make them so; and, if we want to relax, we simply turn off the tension because of its basic irrelevancy to our essence.

Of course, then, we propel ourselves into fields of the non-verbal, the egocentric and the hard core reality each of us is afraid of.

Mindful of the death of which I speak, can you blame us for refusing to adjust our lives to fit any specific harness, framework society or what have you?

Each one of us is seeking, but not for acceptance or security. We know we’ll never have that. Nor do we want it. It would be a dreadful bore. Nor could we handle our lives without variety.

For us it’s not necessary what food we eat or the type of clothes we wear except indirectly.
STUDENT SENATE

To all of you who care, there is an entertainment committee and Steve Miller is the chairman. Go to him with ideas, or offers of work. He needs it, and so does Bard.

At the Senate meeting this week there were also numerous requests for money. The Cinematography Club asked for $70 and got $10. A new literary publication, to publish poetry and to be distributed mainly to NYC bookstores, and not to the Bard community, asked for $50 and got $0.

There was another discussion of the "theatre of the deaf" and Senate again voted to award no money to the Drama Department for that fine performance. The reasons have been stated and re-stated too many times to do so again here. The "Bard Papers" asked for $665 and got $9, mainly because it was felt that in the past the Languages and Lit Department had paid for it.

There was also new discussion of the Red Balloon, and the new and old proprietors got a loan of $25 and an investigation of their current monetary status. Bruce Lieberman made a very brief Community Advisory Committee report and reiterated the statements which that august body distributed earlier this week.

There was also a motion passed which requested that there be put on the agenda of the next Faculty meeting a proposal to have student attendance at those meetings. Senate did not decide who would make this proposal, and if you would like to, or have any ideas about it, come to the next meeting.

R. M.

photos by Lorenzo Black

As a result of a scheduling of a visit by army recruiters, freedom of speech is becoming a substantive issue on campus. In response to requests that the recruiters not be permitted to come onto campus, the Dean held a meeting last Tuesday. As this column was written prior to the meeting, one can only wonder what purpose could such a gathering have, other than to modify Bard's traditional policy of freedom of speech on campus? And why might anyone want to change that policy anyway?

It is always disturbing to hear even the slightest hint that freedom of speech, press or assembly might be abridged. Such talk stokes the fires of repression and repression in any form is a direct threat to one's freedom to criticize authority. It is a threat, also, to the unpopular cause. What better way to avoid contact with something one does not like than to refuse to permit it to communicate? And what more totalitarian a way is there to avoid outside influence?

Admittedly, army recruiters must look like a rare treat to the more fascist of radicals, but before you skin them alive, folks, there is a fairly sound principle involved. Viewed in perspective, freedom of speech is not merely the right to say whatever one wants. It is much more. When one is granted "freedom of speech" he is given a guarantee that he will not be harmed, arrested, shouted down or otherwise persecuted no matter what he says. Under this guarantee one can praise, criticize or issue forth an occasional heebie-jeebie word—scream at will. But for this freedom to apply to anyone, it must apply equally to all. When one advocates the curtailment of freedom for others, he encourages the possibility of curtailing of his own freedom also. This means army recruiters, too.

Armsmen perform an assortment of "immoral" tasks, but if one is willing to grant the slightest necessity for any of these tasks, then one admits the need for at least some army. Men are thus required, and men are certainly better raised by means of enlistment campaigns than by mass conscription. For this quite practical reason, plus the safe-guarding of our own right to speak, the army must be permitted to appear and the campus policy of freedom of speech must be reaffirmed. The alternative is to resort to the tactics of Mayor Daley and Gov. Reagan.

Charles Clancy

G. B.
Letter to the editor (from page 5)

If people can be influenced by our rank imitation of what they are, and if we can get away with it and still manage to rake in a few 'that was wonderful!' from the public who has not understood the scene they are involved in; but rather, takes a sometimes sadistic and sometimes masochist delight in being seen at the theatre - well that's cool. I think we're at least starting...

No doubt, the theatre has come a long way since what the somewhat cliche above says... But the new theatre of audience involvement is a subject I'm not quite equipped to deal with since I have devoted the past three years of my life to a personal search for the gripping and the absolute, the dissolution of ego and unification with the void (which practice I don't necessarily advocate for I now can only conserve my heretofore naive by a painful self-knowledge which is not at all fair to myself or to people who haven't reached my experience since I, in this process, am denying the the privilege of finding for themselves and negating my ability to find with them.

Rather, I smile as I witness what I once experienced and which now means void. I am somewhat outside of the two walls I had set for this treatise; but, it is only right for me to say that I hope the naive never reach the point which I have.

I suppose that it is somewhat unfair that while everyone else is using Bard as a sacrificial 'experience' that we actors (or perhaps I should speak of myself) are using Bard to increase our experience by playing idealistic, euphoric and self-demanding games; yet, what else is there to do with our worthless lives?

Raymond Statte