

# Bowdoin Student Government

BOWDOIN COLLEGE

Meeting of the **Bowdoin Student Government**

*19 Sept 2007*

- I. **Call to order** at 8:06 p.m. with a most dramatic strike of the gavel.
- II. **Roll call:** Tony Thrower, Ben LeHay, Sam Scully (all arrive late)
- III. **Approval of the Minutes:** Dustin indicates how silly this seems, as the minutes were created last year with a different governmental body. New members attempt to make it through the minutes while old members roll their eyes and tap their feet. Approval passes unanimously.
- IV. **Officer/Committee Reports**
  - a. Dustin says that things are a little bit different this year and that this meeting may not make much sense because we aren't coming from a previous meeting. Committee reports will be solely about what happened at the committee meeting as well as bills to propose. Everyone has the rules of order, the most substantial change of which is that voting on bills won't be in the meeting that they were first proposed in unless there is a movement to do so. This allows a necessary time of contemplation. Somewhere near the minutes (in the packet), there is the announcement of a commission on elections reform. This is received as unimportant to the student body and BSG has spent a lot of time talking about it in the past. He is asking a group of students to put forth suggestions that will then be discussed in February. This will get the discussions out of this table (where we want to be doing things for the community). That said, there are still concerns about elections. The committee will look at complaints and options and come forward with those things that they feel are important. Leaders from different areas of campus will be involved in these discussions. They will be talking with us in the coming semester. Dustin met with Pres. Mills, who is excited to visit us at some point this semester. They talked about advising, credit/D/fail, and the forum of last night. This meeting will be in October. Last night was the forum (35 people), at which a diverse group was represented. It was a hard topic to come at without attaching it to a particular issue. Some good stuff probably came out of it, but it was not an amazing moment of community healing. Tomorrow is dinner at 5:30 in Thorne, to try to get

BSG to be more transparent and accessible to the community. We will set up a system of shifts.

Dustin says that we should do introductions. Introductions proceed.

- b. SAFC: Nicole says that meetings have been going well. They are trying to make it more relaxed for people. They realize they aren't meeting with enough groups, so they have come up with a new format to meet with 16 groups per night. The blue and yellow books will be coming up for approval. The F word is coming out soon, Oct 11 is a Columbian Dance event. Also be looking out for Hispanic heritage month events. On Nov. 9 a rock band is playing with silent films in background. Meditation and Yoga clubs are good for the year.
- c. Student Affairs is meeting Thursday.
- d. BSG affairs: Kata says that elections and appts. are pretty much taken care of. The coming weeks will be about defining the BSG image and making us accessible to the campus.
- e. SOOC: Will says that the committee tore down posters across from the C-store. This board will now be organized and used for student organizations. It will be made into a central place for activities and events on campus.
- f. Academic Affairs: Sam says they had a productive meeting. Dean Cornish is invited to dinner along with Dean Judd to welcome him and get to know him. Student/faculty relations is one broad focus of the year. We are pushing for a professor lunch system and want to advertise that professors get vouchers to take students to lunch. We are working on advising as well, which is a huge goal for the year. Hopefully peer advising will get going.
- g. Facilities: Dooley says that they talked about improving relations with security.
  - i. Proposal #1 is the biggest, regarding the shuttle service. This is a popular service. People are asking already. If all goes well, it should be running by next Thursday. They fine-tuned the board, and it should be more student-friendly and streamlined. The request is for \$9000, which is the same as last year. They are getting more for the money, though—for example, there are two buses coming back from Old Port.
    - Will asks if Night Taxi is included. Dooley says that it is—the deal is that they pick you up from within a 2 mile radius.
    - Nicole asks about further off-campus housing. Dooley assumes it's out-of-pocket or it's out of the radius. Nicole is concerned about safety of drivers. Dooley did bring this up, and he said that they are understaffed but in the process of hiring, in which safety is a main concern.

- Dennis asks what the current means of advertising this and how this can be more accessible. Dooley says that they took the sign down because it isn't running yet and the hours are changing. There will be a sign by the info. desk, and they will be putting cards in mailboxes so that people know. Nicole wants to stress tipping on the postcards.
  - Rutledge asks if they considered putting signs in dorms so that kids who are sitting around doing nothing could realize that they could be going somewhere.
  - Dan asks if the service is \$3 a ticket. Dooley responds in the affirmative.
- ii. Dooley introduces the next bill, which concerns light bulbs. Sustainable Bowdoin works with keeping the campus green, and they approach us to help with the cost of the high-efficiency light bulbs. It's good publicity and free for students.
- Dennis asks if the volunteers are getting paid. Um, no.
  - Allison asks if this is one-time or every month. Dooley says that it's one-time.
- iii. The next bill is for carbon-vouchers. To offset the shuttle service, they are purchasing carbon vouchers to offset the environmental emissions effects of the shuttles and taxis. Bottom line: this functions to purchase trees. In Brazil.
- Clark asks if this offsets all the emissions. Dooley says that it counters the effects of one car. It will be like we never had the night taxi, as far as emissions are concerned. This exercise in metaphysical possibilities is mind-boggling. Eyebrows jump and gasps echo.

V. There is no **Old Business** and no Old BSG.

VI. **Discussion:** Dustin explains that when there is time in the agenda and there are issues to discuss we use the "discussion" feature.

- a. Sam introduces the big thing for the year, which is academic advising. They have talked a lot about problems, but we want to keep that at a minimum. We want to talk about what direction advising should be heading: how to improve the system, what we want it to be.
- Rutledge says that the #1 thing is the communication factor. It should be the advisor's responsibility to set up meetings to feel as if you're being welcomed into an advising family or a supportive environment. They should be encouraged to have meals with their advisees—this is a good way to get that personal relationship to make it mean something more than a signature. Especially for first-

years, when you are figuring everything else out, that support and attention is necessary.

- Ben F. asks about having an upperclassman assigned to each advising group in addition to the advisor who may be awkward and not want to talk to the advisees.
- Sam says that the problem is that they want people to be able to talk to people in the departments that they are interested in.
- Liza says that having a family-type environment seems high-school-esque, but that it was a nice thing to have. This group setting might be nice as a first-year. Having an upperclassman who at least knows about Bowdoin would be helpful.
- Nicole asks how many advisees a faculty member has. Sam says that it varies a lot. They chose certain faculty to not have advisees. Because they're bad? More or less. The standard is about 4 per year. There are about 8 pre-major advisees in addition to whoever they take on.
- Rutledge thinks that the administration needs to consider that this is an opportunity to cash in on something that Bowdoin makes a big deal about, which is the possibility of relationships with professors. This could be a case of faculty entering freshmans' lives.
- Allison thinks that there is a responsibility on the students to take advantage of the resources that they have. Professors may also have had bad experiences.
- Houston says that his first impression of professors was in the advising group. The circumstances that they met under were less-than-welcoming. It was like "hurry up and get those classes picked, come back and let' go". It's about speed and paper. A better first meeting, something more expansive than "let's do this" would be nice.
- Will says that there were several meeting over the course of a couple days this year, so this is changing.
- Dan thinks we need to consider the expectations of the student vs. the expectations of advisees. Both sides should know how the other is thinking. This needs to be clarified as we flesh these things out.
- John asks if advisors receive training or a manual or any guidance. Sam says that they receive a lot of colored paper. It seems unorganized: things like this (he gestures with his stack of papers) but in different colors. Dean Cornish is excited about developing an advisor handbook.
- Darren thinks that building personal relationships is important, but professors are wary of this because they don't want to be like

another counselor. There is a hard line to draw between these roles, and professors feel uneasy about it. Getting a peer advisor might help on this issue.

- Jess says that advisors didn't feel comfortable talking to students about classes in other departments. Maybe advisors can introduce students to people in other departments to help them understand classes outside their areas.
- Sam K feels no sympathy for professors who are hesitant to establish relationships with students. It should be made clear to advisors that these relations are essential.
- Liza thinks it would be worth setting up a meeting with current advisors who are known to be solid to talk about what advising means to them. Sam says that this is in the works.
- Ben F wonders about expanding the pool of who can advise. Other people who are involved in academic issues and know how departments work could be great advisors. He responds to Sam K that he understands his point, but that it is a reality for some faculty.
- Rutledge doesn't think that he is hearing this right—if we're arguing about if professors want to have relationships with students. It is in all the literature that faculty are involved with students. There are other resources here for crisis situations. This can be the button-response for professors if situations come up.
- Ben L comes from a positive experience with advisors. He says that you are always with profs. and their families in the language departments. He also knows how the government department works, though, and it is very different. He knows that the women's studies department also works hard to do things outside of class. In some departments there isn't much of anything as far as casual, outside-the-classroom experiences. We can learn from the good.
- Christian heard mention of getting professional advising. This way there would be people devoted entirely to this. These people would know what's going on in all departments. They could keep an eye on their students academically.
- Clark says that while he agrees that personal stuff needs improvement, there are also issues in the procedural stuff going from pre-major to choosing a major. There is no information provided regarding what this process is like. All of a sudden students need to pick a major and an advisor to sign the sheet.
- Nicole wonders if there is a way to make student events necessary with department funds. These are the occasions when students get to know profs. She hates the idea of having professional advising.

- Dan says that this system would at least make sure that there are people who *want* to be advising and do it well. There should be incentive or reward. Houston says that the issue of people not doing it well is related to people not knowing what they are doing. If advisors got together and talked about what they do, it may be beneficial.
  - Justin says that there was nothing on the advising sheet that specified what kind of relationship they were expecting with their advisors. This could help pair students with advisors who want similar relationships. Justin thinks that it could be cool to involve the alumni network—this would provide interesting perspectives.
  - Dennis wonders if the policy enacted will be regarding first-years, or if it would be throughout the classes. It may make sense to start reform at the first-year level. Sam says that the focus of this is pre-major advising. Students mostly choose advisors past the major level.
  - Kristen says that one thing she likes in theory about the existing pre-major system is having students paired with people outside the department that they think they are interested in. This can push students outside the disciplines that they feel safe in. It would be interesting to emphasize talking to students about branching out.
  - Rutledge thinks we should poll students about what they want in an advising system. Sam says that it will be a question on the first-year survey (about orientation, etc.)
  - Jess thinks that it is good for advisors to recommend classes in their depts., but that she has experienced force, which made her uncomfortable. There needs to be a balance.
- b. Dustin points to the last page on the packet. This letter was from a student to Tom Foster. Please look it over for the next meeting.
  - c. Ben makes a motion to vote on Dooley’s first two proposals. Shuttle Service Proposal—those in favor: unanimous; Lightbulbs—those in favor: unanimous.

## **VII. Reports**

- a. Bryce says that they just had an unsuccessful beach day. They are looking into buying sweatpants and key-rings for parents of the class members. They are looking at a couple pub nights and maybe a Super Snacks event.
- b. Christian says that they are looking at a budget lower than they thought they had. They are showing Family Guy and Entourage at Super Snacks.

- c. Sam says that they had a CEP meeting. Credit/D/Fail got pushed back to the next meeting, which is in four weeks. Dean Cornish talked about advising. They are looking at data regarding student reactions, the formation of a guidebook, etc. They are testing 7 systems for an online database.
- d. Allison says that the CCRC is now in Banister. They are moving to switch the resource center to the Center for the Common Good. It will be a structural change as well. The transition is projected for Fall 2008. The Common Good Grant Committee is taking applications now. Common Good Day is the 29<sup>th</sup>, and registration is full. There are other Community Service Events on board as well.
- e. Kata says that she is setting to work with the multicultural advising committee. This is a committee working with engaging students of multicultural backgrounds.
- f. Dan says that Quinby had the most successful non-alcoholic events in a long time (a coffee house). People came, performed, read poetry. They have the 80's party coming up. Burnett house is hosting September Fest as well as sponsoring a socially responsible beer-drinking event with Women's Resource Center and others.
- g. Will says that it has been a long couple weeks, but that they have been working on reorganization within the process. The clubs now have binders in the office, which is also cleaned up. They are working with new ways for clubs to advertise as well as the email-system (to weed out emails about meetings, etc.) They are diverting events to a calendar, with which he needs help promoting. The Student Events Calendar is on the Gateway. He introduces Seth, the webmaster. People should contact him for anything about the website. He is trying to keep up with the minutes on the website and promote transparency (putting docs online, etc.).
- h. Sam K says they finished a successful Orientation with the increased number of freshman buildings. They are talking about Sober-Fun-Drinks at campus parties. This is so people don't feel uncomfortable walking around without red cups.
- i. John says that the next meeting is in Morrell Lounge.
- j. Justin says that he is still learning about how all this works. The class is working on social integration programming.
- k. Sam says that Helmriech and Burnett are working together because Burnett's floor can't hold a large number of drunkards. Howell is working on bringing in a DJ.
- l. Kristen says that Orientation went well from the college-house side. The Inter-House Olympics went smoothly, which is monumental. They are trying to emphasize inter-house programming. We see this already with

- Helmreich and Burnett. They talked about programming diversity—Quinby’s coffee house is an example of that. Homecoming is coming up (2<sup>nd</sup> weekend of October). They want to build the bonfire into something significant. Angus King may be speaking (governor, professor, former quarterback, inspirational speaker (some of us may remember)). They are looking toward parent’s weekend as well. She has been talking with Presidents about goals for the year, and they all have interesting takes.
- m. Jess says that she is in a library committee. They have been talking about setting up a café, which won’t happen until they figure out where offices will go. It won’t happen soon, but maybe we can find other places instead of trying to set it up inside the library.
  - n. Dooley says that he had a great meeting with the dining directors. A few problems were solved (for example, they will have a tab system so that staff can see when coffee or milk are empty). Oh, yeah. Advising committees are getting together. Each member of the committee will be organizing an advisory committee, which will help spread work out. He has meetings with Mitch and Randy coming up. He had a good meeting with Chelsea Reed, who is the director of the OneCard system. OneCard information can be checking online, which is very convenient. They are hoping that by next semester, students will be able to add money via credit or debit online.
  - o. Darren: Super Snacks on Friday!
  - p. Rutledge says that in the greatest underdog victory of all time, Helmreich swept the Inter-House Olympics, winning everything except best hair, which went to Dennis. Unfortunately, they have recently been put on social probation. Crazy kids won’t stop throwing ping-pong balls. They pray the Burnett House Event still goes down. They are working on a program to have really super good brunches at the houses. It would be cool to have a brunch at one house where kids could go the morning after a wild party night.
  - q. James says that they have had a foam dance party as well as acrobats on the quad, both of which were well-attended. The Fall Concert is coming up. For parent’s weekend, Racer-X will be at the pub. They are selling t-shirts at this event. Revision: Homecoming is Racer-X. Parent’s is Hawaiian dancers. There will also be a singer-songwriter event and winter carnival.
  - r. Tony mentions the multicultural groups. Feb 15 is the winter carnival.
  - s. Dennis says that Reed is doing well. They had a great first campus-wide. Baxter has a graffiti party this weekend, and Ladd is doing pretty excellent. Yeah. On the budget side, Reed and Burnett were given the same amount of money as other houses, which Reed thought was unfair, because they have to start out and buy a DJ system, a TV a grill

(necessities, Rutledge points out). They want to come up with a budget-thing to give new houses more money to start out.

- Dan asks how big the Reed house TV is. Dennis responds that it is pretty big.
- Sam K says that other houses were not given additional money when they started, but the new houses are in a different situation because they are expected to perform and provide for affiliates and their freshman dorms.

Dennis is planning a senior/21-and-older event with the pub. He wants to talk to '08 president.

- t. Ben L says that they are gearing up for parent's weekend event. They are also looking toward Homecoming, something for Halloween, something with alumni and something with the CPC. They have a lovely budget, new members, energy, and subcommittees.
- u. Nicole says that there is a language requirement being discussed. She would love everyone's input. She was told that they aren't ready to talk about this, but she thinks they should be. She wants to have that discussion about the language requirement. Blue and Yellow Book: check it out on the website and see if there's anything you think needs amendment.
- v. Dustin says that all bills shouldn't come just from committees. Members are encouraged to sponsor bills and come forward with ideas. Not everything should be top-down. Don't worry about the language, but get the idea to Kata by Monday evening.
- w. Ben says that club leaders are/can be using 30 College (there is a calendar)—check it out. He is working with getting a webpage or site to make it visible to campus.
- x. Dennis adds that Reed house has a speaker series coming up. The first is Burke, who works for TBS. Someone from LLBean is coming. Someone else is too. Good stuff. Sam D says that it would be cool if the houses combined to do a series.

Allison says the History dept. is bringing in their speaker, Hochschild.

Darren says that Dante's Inferno is showing in Kresge, which will be cool. It is followed by a discussion in Mac House.

BSG meeting next week, Thorne dinner tomorrow.

**VIII. Adjournment** at 9:21 p.m.