

Bowdoin Student Government

Meeting Agenda

03/25/09 - Daggett Lounge

- I. Call to Order (8:30pm -
- II. Roll Call
- III. President's Welcome
- IV. Approval of the Minutes
- V. Public Comment Time - 8:35pm)
- VI. Committee Reports (8:35pm-8:40pm)
 - a. BSG Affairs Committee
 - b. Student Activities Funding Committee
 - c. Student Affairs Committee
 - d. Student Organizations Oversight Committee
 - e. Academic Affairs Committee
 - f. Facilities Committee
- VII. New Business
 - a. Prep for Meeting with Randy (8:40pm-8:45pm)
 - b. Ivies Event (8:45pm-9:00pm)
- VIII. Member Reports (9:00pm-9:05pm)
 - a. Class Representatives
 - b. IHC Representatives
 - c. A-Board Representative
 - d. Athletics Representative
- IX. President's Report (9:05pm-9:06pm)
- X. Adjournment (9:06pm)

Bowdoin Student Government

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Bowdoin Student Government

BOWDOIN COLLEGE

Meeting of the Bowdoin Student Government

4 March 2009

I. Call to Order at 8:35pm.

II. President's Welcome: We're switching the order, start here, then roll call. We have lots of visitors- reps from BHS student council, and Mary Pat, Kate (director of QTRC and WRC), and Lisa. As you know, whenever we have guests, it is particularly important that we raise hands, speak in order, and keep on topic, just because this is a very multi-layered issue that we aren't necessarily in a resolution state yet. Let's stay focused.

III. Roll Call: Greg, Branden, Mary, Esther, Nyle, Lindsay, and Luke are absent.

IV. Approval of the Minutes: Approved.

V. Public Comment Time: None.

VI. Mary Pat McMahon, Kate Stern, Lisa Rendall—Discussion about gender-neutral housing

Sophia- we're ready to open the conversation about gender neutral housing. As you know, we've been talking about this for a bit, and there's definitely been support for talking about the issue. If you would like to say anything about your involvement in the issue:

Mary Pat- I'm new in the role of director of ResLife, I was dean of first years for a while, but I'm a bit of a newbie in ResLife. We've had some interesting conversations this year (with Dean Foster, for example). And Lisa is now director of housing operations. She's been in a policy-making role in our office more recently. I am excited to talk about this. One of the fascinating things I've found in my research is that some schools with gnh have what we have- coed in suites. I am definitely all about looking at ways of making our campus more accepting/welcoming towards non-heterosexual students. I don't want reslife to be oppressive for people.

Kate- I started at the QTRC in August. I've been wondering about Reslife, and I've been amazed at how willing everyone is to think about students. Thanks for opening the conversation, I think it's an important one. I will happily answer questions.

Sophia- now we'll move to questions.

- Allen- when I first got here, there was a transgender student living in halls, maybe Lisa or Mary Pat can talk about that student's experience.

- Lisa- as part of the lottery, any student seeking a housing accommodation can see the director of reslife. This student came several years in a row within the deadline. Her big issue was not sharing bathrooms. We worked to secure her a spot in a 2 room quad and have the bathroom situation in which she felt comfortable. We asked her to go through the regular lottery process, but if she couldn't secure the space, then we would supply her with it.
- Rasha'- how would this gnh policy affect operations in terms of logistics, communication with students?
- Mary- logistics-wise, I would like to see a way for there to be a personal touch, but not feel like students have to go talk to THIS MARY PAT MCMAHON person about their personal issues. I'd like there to be more information up front in the system. The lottery documents are long, but we'd like to get a better word out to first years and incoming students...so you don't have to seek out an individual person to talk to.
- Lisa- it's going to depend on what the policy change is. Some schools have gnh floors, which would mean we'd have to change the lottery. I don't anticipate doing that, but that would be a possible change.
- Dan- we talk about whether or not to allow first years to have the opportunity for gnh. I'm wondering what you think?
- Mary- first years right now are the only group with gender segregated floors. I have not thought beyond how we would approach it. We discuss your legal sex vs. how you identify yourself.
- Mike- explain difference between coed and gnh?
- Mary- I see coed as woman and men being in the same school. Gnh you're not boxed into either.
- Sam- beyond gender identity, what if a guy wants to live with a girl in chambo double or something?
- Mary- I want to hear what you guys think?
- Sam- our biggest concern was about couples wanting to live together. We mostly thought couples would be smart enough to not live together. Beyond that, I think it's a great idea. If your best friend is opposite sex, then live with him/her.
- Justin- a girl rooms with a female friend but always has her bf over, but maybe if she had the option to live with the bf then there wouldn't be a problem or tension there.
- Mary- my thought on people wanting to live with opposite sex is that the "we're just friends" approach to living together is tricky because maybe there's a subtext, maybe it will happen. I would encourage anyone in a romantic relationship not to live together. Personally my fear would be the "just friends but maybe not someday". But yeah you guys are adults.
- Sam- someone mentioned the idea, if they want to live together, let them live

together.

- Mary- here's the answer- we don't have a lot of flexibility with moving people around. So romantic relationships that break up could be stuck together. We can't really give people a full set of options.
- Lisa- on that same thing, logistics- I would never now assign a male to a space with a female when we have 5 empty spaces. What happens when there are 3 guys in a quad and a girl gets assigned, we'd have to think about that.
- Dan- if there were 3 girls in the tower and a male had a problem with his roommates, would he be able to move in with the girls if they okayed it?
- Lisa- I'd want to hear from them, but yes.
- Sophia- I know this conversation has come up in previous years, but I was wondering why it hasn't really moved forward?
- Mary- Tim Foster and I both don't really know.
- Kate- it seems like it hasn't not worked for anyone. It's kind of a theoretical thing, no one has seemed to be in a bad situation. More pressing- first years, an out or not our LGBTQ student could be placed with a homophobic roommate. It hasn't been pushed for because there hasn't been a big need.
- John- I think maybe it hasn't come up because if I were transgendered, I would look at housing policies if I was looking at colleges. It may not be a problem because we are not intentionally trying to exclude these people.
- Lisa- a reality, but not a huge problem because most trans students come out in college.
- Mary- a lot of colleges might not even have queer/trans resource centers, I'm really proud of that.
- Justin- I'm interested in gn-bathroom. We've discussed in the past. Maybe in dorms?
- Mary- old Maine state law that says you can't have a signed bathroom be unisex. Apparently it's been around, but people can progress past it. Just a historical note. I don't know enough about the current state, though.
- Lisa- I don't think we've really talked about it.
- Kate- I understand that Bowdoin's in a precarious situation until that gets dealt with. It took Maine a long time to pass the law about gender identity and expression. State schools deal with that??
- Rutledge- I'm curious how gn-bathrooms in dorms would be different than in college houses. I've been asking around campus...it was fine, uncomfortable at times, but I like having segregated bathrooms. I don't want a girl in the bathroom when I go number 2.
- Allen- or a guy.
- Kate- right it comes back to how a gay guy would feel in the bathroom when another guy walked in.

- Rutledge- can anyone answer this question?
- Allen- ideally we would have mixed gender bathrooms in the union. Part of it is structure and cost. There would be closed cubicles, but you would see them at the sinks. Frankly we're not that progressive, we're not there yet. Also in social houses, showers would be the same thing- individual shower rooms that close and lock.
- Kristen- in other college houses, there are similar bathroom situations. However they're assigned, many bathrooms are functionally coed.
- Mary- I recently saw a shower stall in a college house where there are two showers in the same space with just a curtain in between them. In Baxter.
- Carly- the shower curtain doesn't even cover the space!
- Mary- we're working on bathrooms in general. We're all living together in a community and having respect that everyone has a different comfort level. This is a residential community. I want people to be thinking really broadly- my Bowdoin experience is myself, 1700 other students, and faculty. And we want it to be a personal space. Let's get some people who can offer support and navigate slightly awkward situations. Times when we're all a little too close.
- Kate- I wanted to add about students having to approach Mary Pat. Some students come to me and then I can go to Mary Pat. There's kind of a double-piece, so they're not stuck on their own. There are lots of students who talk to different people on campus.
- Mary- there's a bunch of options, paths for people. We can always get better.
- Anirudh- can you tell us how many people choose to opt for off-campus housing because of couples or LGBTQ.
- Mary- anecdotally, yes, numbers I can't tell you.
- Kate- one situation, but they're still living together and doing well.
- Hannah- do you guys think that Bowdoin needs a very upfront piece that says we have gnh, or can we keep it how it is?
- Mary- I think it's important that everyone knows we are welcoming and supportive of everyone. There are all different kinds of ways that we can make this clear—different things that go out to students. We can talk to proctors about it. Roommate contract, let's not assume it's only the opposite sex you're bringing home. Great question.
- Sophia- question for Kate, potentially for Lisa also. Mary said your biggest concern is the "just friends but not" situation. Kate what's your number one concern?
- Kate- I don't have concerns because I don't have to deal with the real life stuff that they have. I like this last piece of the conversations- that all students know up front that they will be respected, accommodated, and valued. They know that the BSG is having this conversation. People know who aren't you guys

who are in the loop. Information sharing. There are these great options.

- Rutledge- LGBTQ first years end up with a homophobic person. Are there things on the first year housing form to deal with this?
- Kate- there aren't but there will be. Big issue was the potential of first year dorms.
- Lisa- on the form, there are a lot of questions on a scale of 1-5, we're working on questions that gauge support of living in a queer-friendly environment.
- Kate- that's wonderful, because it doesn't make people say I'm gay, just that it's mixed in. But what if it ends up with all homophobic people in the same building? Erica Osterman said, what if we just did it room by room? Instead of dorm by dorm. Yes, people will lie...
- Mary- sometimes your peers have their parents fill out the form and lie. We want to make sure people fill it out honestly themselves.
- Rutledge- maybe put some language saying students must fill it out.
- Rasha'- how would change to gnh affect proctor training?
- Mary- people here might be able to talk about what happens during proctor training?
- Morgan- I'm a proctor in West. Kate came one day during proctor training. We always know that we're supported if we have a situation where we don't feel comfortable.
- Justin- there were several moments, the presentations gave us the feeling that there are different things that make all of us uncomfortable. Create a reslife environment where that fact is understood- we all have needs. How you deal with conflicts and different things and people in general.
- Morgan- talked a lot about language and never assuming anything.
- Kate- proctor group was my first experience with students at Bowdoin, and it was very moving for me.
- Carly- back to logistics, one problem about what could happen, hypothetically, we really have no idea what would happen if there was gnh. There are so many unknowns, what would be the big deal in one year just giving it a shot? How many people would be interested? Maybe men and women would actually live together very well. I feel like it could lead to a lot of problems, can we do some swapping?
- Mary- as we've checked in with other schools with gnh, it's done okay and there hasn't been a ton of demand. That makes my job easier. It's good to think about potential problems, but at the same time I don't think there would be an uproar.
- Carly- one of the biggest worries is that two students of opposite sex living together go from friendship to sexual relationship...if you really stress to students that they need to think critically and maybe you won't be able to switch rooms if a problem arises. I think we're old enough that there can be

penalties like that. That would deter a lot of students from pushing boundaries.

- Dan- with increasing student size, will that affect your ability to move people?
- Mary- we'll do some work to increase capacity. There are spaces on campus where we could put quints. We would make sure there's room for switching.
- Sophia- seeing no other hands, one more question- ideally, how would you see this conversation moving forward?
- Mary- in my experience with policy change at Bowdoin, having people have the chance to reflect on concrete possibilities, and then in 6 months to a year get it going (for next year's lottery). Just want to hear lots of people's voices.

VII. Committee Reports

a. BSG Affairs Committee: did not meet this week due to exams, we know pretty much about class council elections.

b. Student Activities Funding Committee: money is good. But to class reps- get rid of extra gifts in the office. Those boxes should not be in the office. It's a fire hazard and disrespectful. Secondly, bring up issue that was brought up during budget meeting about spring gala. To classes and houses- be very generous when spring gala comes to you for money.

Hannah- normally, 1200 is taken out before you guys even know.

Ugo- budget is already astronomical. I strongly, strongly urge you guys to be generous.

c. Student Affairs Committee: Carly- second exhibition for social issues task force is being taken down hopefully tonight and third one will be up and running the week we get back from spring break. Also we're going to talk about plans for ivies.

d. Student Organizations Oversight Committee: didn't meet, but spring break, so no more new charters and charter review will start soon.

e. Academic Affairs Committee: didn't meet, but after break, we want to finalize opinions on credit/d/fail, peer advising, and campus conversations.

f. Facilities Committee: nothing, but we have movie tickets. Shuttles up and running for spring break.

VIII. Member Reports

a. Class Representatives:

2009: Caroline- finishing budget proposals for every day of senior week, and tight on funds so money is not good.

2010: main thing just about advertising for 2010 relay for life team.

2011: still planning formal and website, and service project.

2012: formal last Friday was great and we're working on a t-shirt design.

b. IHC Representatives: lot of scheduling, potential of rotating dance party.

c. A-Board Representative: Luke's in orgo test, but gibali acrobats will be in smith union march 28th and teaser in the morning. Also a workshop. Ivies t-shirts in design

stages. And contracts for ivies still going.

d. Athletics Representative: hosting NCAAs for women's basketball, spring homecoming on April 11th.

IX. President's Report: Monday was faculty meeting, very exciting. Otherwise, meeting with people from reslife. Over break I'll be on a conference call with trustee exec board. Randy's coming the week after break to talk about Ivies and shuttle, how the saferide to shuttle transition has been going. Just be marinating on that over break. Hopefully he'll be here at one of the first meetings after break.

X. Adjournment at 9:30pm.