

OBSERVER

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Cover Page Faculty Downs Moderation Reforms

Back Page Advertisements

Page 1 History Dept.

Quote From Ezra Pound

“More Honest Value”

David Corey, Fred Crane, Mary Goodlett,

Wes Moore, Peter Skiff, James Sullivan,

Bernard Tieger, William Walter, William Wilson

Gov't. Dept.

Page 2 [“Reform of the moderation process has been
a need for a long time now, . . .”]

[Cartoon]

Feiffer

Gold Star Black Mark

Page 3 Proposal's Defeat Creates Confusion!

Page 4 Faculty Downs Moderation Reforms

observer

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special issue

FACULTY downs MODERATION REFORMS

To: The Faculty and the College Community
From: The Curriculum Committee

At the Moderation hearings in the fall it was reaffirmed that the Moderation is an important factor in a Bard education, and the dominant sentiment was that it remain so. It also became evident then that the Moderation was not now considered as effective as it should be and as, perhaps, it once was. It was felt that there were needless complexities and obscurities in the present Moderation Document, that the Moderation itself had in some cases become too rigid and in others a mere formality, that it did not effectively predict a student's success in the Upper College, and that the prospect of Moderation caused an irrational and unproductive anxiety among students in the Lower College, even as early as the first semester of the Freshman year. The revision of the Moderation Document which is proposed here, is meant to simplify and clarify procedures and to give new life to the Moderation itself.

At the Faculty Meeting on April 15 the Curriculum Committee, with the support of the Educational Policies Committee, will move that the Moderation Document, as approved by faculty action December 16, 1964, and as revised May 22, 1968, be revised so that it read:

MODERATION

1. The Purpose of the Moderation.

The Moderation is a very significant feature of Bard's educational program. It is that crucial point mid-way in a student's career at which he signals his readiness and intention to pursue a 'major' in the Upper College and at which the faculty of the College reviews his preparation for such pursuit. The purpose of the Moderation is to enable the student to assess his intellectual maturity, his clarity and seriousness of purpose, and to receive recommendations from informed and concerned members of the faculty for his program of study for his remaining years at Bard in the light of the academic goals of the College and of his own educational and professional objectives.

2. Timing of the Moderation.


The Moderation will normally take place during the second half of the second semester of the student's sophomore year, at the end of which he should have accumulated about 60 course credits. However, a student who believes he is ready to moderate earlier or who has reason to moderate later may, with the support of his adviser, elect to do so in any semester after his first year and prior to his senior year, and he should communicate that choice, with the endorsement of his adviser to the Chairman of the Division into which he



intends to moderate and to the Registrar during the last two weeks of the semester preceding the semester in which he intends to moderate. A student who transfers into Bard from another institution will normally moderate earlier than his second semester at the College, and the option for a later Moderation is the same for a transfer student as for a student who begins his career at Bard. All students must moderate, and refusal to moderate by the end of the junior year will constitute grounds for academic dismissal from the College.


3. The Form of the Moderation.

The Moderation conference is a colloquy between the student and several members of the faculty (usually three) concerned in the general area of knowledge the student proposes as his major concentration for his work in the Upper College. In connection with the Moderation the student will be expected to demonstrate his proficiency and his promise in a particular discipline by way of a formal presentation indicative of his best work, which may take the form of a critical or scholarly paper, a group of paintings, a musical performance, a feat of acting or directing, the working of a laboratory problem, or some other appropriate example of his work, the precise nature of which will be determined by the discipline the student proposes for his major. During

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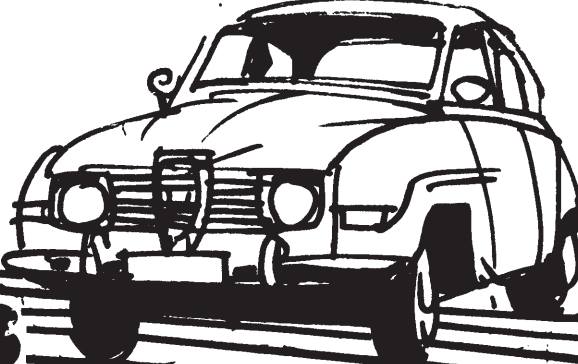
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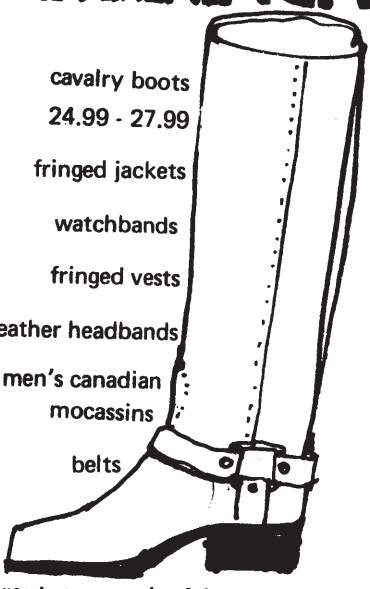
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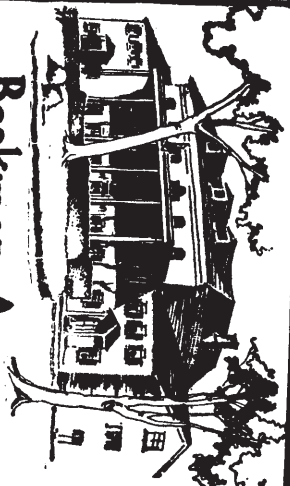
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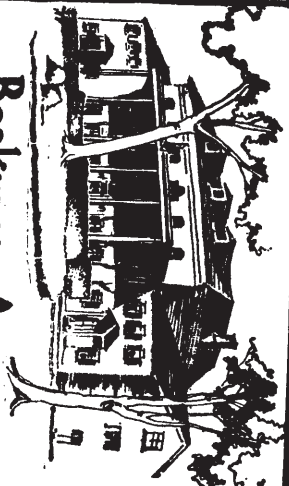
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history
dept.

The History Department will be meeting to consider a number of proposals regarding possible changes in the moderation procedures within the department in the coming week. Its faculty split to a certain extent in the Faculty Meeting on April 15 when the Reform proposal was originally presented, with Dr. Crane voting for the document he had co-authored and Dr. Fout voting against it because it

didn't go far enough.

Reached at his home, Dr. Fout said that while he favored reform of Moderation, he felt that the proposed reform did not take into consideration other elements of reform that are needed and was thus too isolated from these other reforms. He added that another reason for him personally not liking the proposal was that he felt that the faculty in this situation

would be giving up some of its responsibilities without taking on any new ones, thus acting irresponsibly.

Returning to the subject of reform in the history department, Fout added that if the Reform Document was not acted upon, the History Department would seek to reform its own Moderation procedures within the framework of the present Moderation document.

a **SLAVE** is
one who
waits for
someone
to
free him.

— Ezra Pound

dept.gov't.

As the Government Department Moderation boycott enters its third week, response from the rest of the school has begun to materialize. The boycott originated out of the various majors' individual feelings that reform is needed in the area of moderation, particularly in the Government Department, but after the faculty vote against the Curriculum Committee reforms, led by the Government faculty, support for the more radical reforms suggested by the boycotters has come from many quarters. The boycotters' suggested reforms, which center on the concept of each department having its own chosen form of moderation, are in direct contrast to the suggested form of the Moderation Reform Document which calls for a standardized form for the entire school.

However, the boycotters are not asking for support of their own demands at this point, but are rather asking for support of moderation reform in general, now that certain elements of the faculty have shown themselves hostile to such reform.

“MORE HONEST VALUE”

Remarks in Explanation and Support of the Motion

The Moderation is now described in the Moderation Document as that 'crucial point in the individual student's career at Bard at which, with the help of his teachers, he assesses his past record and plans his future course of study.' It is this aspect of the Moderation which the proposal aims to reinforce by what is, in effect, a reaffirmation of a long established assumption essential to Bard's pedagogical philosophy, enunciated early in the life of the College (in the so-called 'Blue Document' which outlined academic policy for the then new Bard) and often since then, that 'the student will be expected to assume the chief responsibility for his own education.'

Under the present Document the stress has tended to shift from that assumption so that the Moderation is sometimes thought of as a qualifying examination, useful as a means to select and exclude students with particular strengths and weaknesses. Under the revised Document the Moderation itself is essentially unchanged—the student is expected to demonstrate his proficiency in a particular discipline by way of a formal presentation of his work to a Board made up of informed members of the faculty, and the Board is expected to write an evaluation of the student's accomplishments and prospects at the College—but the responsibility for making the decision whether or not a student shall attempt to pursue a major in the Upper College is shifted from the Moderation Board to the student, and the initial intention of the Moderation with its focus on student self-determination thus again comes into force. In reaching such a decision the student will have the evaluation and recommendations of his Moderation Board, and he would normally consult his adviser. Dismissal from the College for academic deficiency remains unaffected by the change in the Moderation Document.

It should be stressed that neither the idea of the major itself nor the principle that a student should be expected to show considerable expertise in the pursuit of

knowledge by the time of the Moderation is questioned. And it should also be stressed that the Senior Project is considered by those making this proposal to be as essential to a Bard education as the Moderation—the Committee has explicitly rejected all suggestions that the requirements for the Senior Project be diluted, or that the Senior Project be reserved for 'Honors' students only.

Furthermore, it is not anticipated and certainly not proposed that the Moderation become less exacting. With the onus of making a 'fatal' decision lifted from the faculty incoiled, and with the anxiety of having a 'fatal' decision imposed upon him lifted from the student, the Moderation itself should be more honestly serious and more productive. Some now feel that the major purpose of a Moderation is to 'Pass' or to 'Fail' student, and that a 'Pass' might just as well be achieved as quickly and with as little fuss as possible, whereas a 'Fail' should be amply 'justified' by extended proceedings. In both cases the tendency is to focus less on the immediate encounter than on its consequences. The purpose of the change is not to 'spare' the weak student, but to make greater demands on all students, and especially to challenge the best students to superior accomplishment. It is expected that under the revised procedures higher standards will be possible and that every student will be set tasks commensurate with his highest abilities so that the Moderation might become a challenge to excellence (as it presumably once was) rather than (as it is sometimes said to be now) ritual rite of passage for some and extended inarticulate despair for others.

The Committee has given considerable time in an effort to predict the effect of this proposal on the College as a whole, and on the Upper College in particular. Predictions are to be entered into cautiously, but it is felt that the revision will lead to a decrease in anxiety which in turn might contribute to an improvement in cultural and intellectual 'morals' among Lower College students. Faculty in various disciplines were questioned about consequences to the control of quality in the Upper College, especially among majors, and most felt

that the proposed changes would not make a significant difference. It was pointed out that few students are in fact now denied admission to the Upper College, that the Moderation does not efficiently predict success, and furthermore that a number of those not promoted have maintained such poor academic standing in the College that dismissal was likely anyway. The possibility was also raised that the change might lead to a substantial increase in the number of Upper College students and thereby threaten the already precarious Major Conference system in some departments. The actual effect on numbers is difficult if not impossible to predict, but it should be pointed out that over the past few years only 8% of the students who stood for Moderation were failed, and an unknown number of these were subsequently promoted in another Division. It seems doubtful, given the complexities of the attrition problem at Bard and in colleges throughout the nation, that the change would lead immediately to substantial changes in the composition of the Upper College.

In summation, Moderation procedures are not very much altered by this proposal, but it is believed that the initial purpose of Moderation will be better served, that more self-determination will be given to the student, that both the student and members of the faculty will be relieved of unproductive anxiety, and, most important, that the Moderation itself will more readily become a 'meaningful educational experience,' or more particularly, that standards of excellence can be set higher and a student can be induced to perform more effectively; with the change the Moderation will become more directly concerned than it is now with the achievements, at whatever level, of the individual student, and the written evaluations will be more genuinely disinterested and thus of more honest value.

(David Corey, Fred Crane, Mary Goodlett, Wes Moore, Peter Skiff, James Sullivan, Bernard Tieger, William Walter, William Wilson).

observer

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PLAN PULLS

from front page

the Moderation conference he will be expected to elucidate, to discuss, and to 'defend' his presentation in response to questions addressed to him by members of his Board. He should be prepared to discuss matters pertaining to the discipline he has chosen, broadly, and in some instances in detail and depth, and he should be prepared to discuss matters of wider cultural and intellectual interest. The student should be set tasks for the Moderation commensurate with his highest abilities and the Moderation should be considered a challenge to excellence. In short the Moderation will provide the ground on which a student may engage in close intellectual discourse with others interested and skilled in the discipline he has chosen.

for his remaining time at Bard. This review will focus on an account written by the student of his academic achievements and goals at Bard.

PROCEDURES MAY VARY

4. Evaluation and Recommendation.
In consequence of the Moderation, the Board will provide a written evaluation of the student's accomplishments and prospects, and it will make recommendations for his future work at the College; it will point to strong weak aspects of his talent and preparation; it will make suggestions for courses to be taken, techniques to be mastered, intellectual positions to be investigated; and it will comment on other matters of potential pertinence to the student's academic success. Standards of excellence should be high. The Board's evaluation and recommendation will be addressed to the student, and a copy will become a part of the student's academic dossier.

INQUIRY INTO INTENTIONS

The Moderation will also serve as a review of past academic achievement, including grades in course and evaluations from criteria sheets, and as an inquiry into the general as well as specific intentions of the student

Reform of the Moderation process has been a need for a long time now, but it was not until this semester that the dam of inertia was broken with the Curriculum Committee and the Government Department students both taking action in regard to this autocratic and increasingly irrelevant institution. In the one case, a committee has suggested that we leave the process intact, but, in the words of Dr. Crane, 'pull the teeth' of moderation. In the case of the government students there continues to be a concerted boycott of Moderation until reform is achieved. These people urge a more radical solution to the problem of Moderation with each department having its own choice in the 'moderation' procedure, but they are mainly interested in achieving reform. However, this hope has been frustrated by the negative faculty vote of a week ago.

We now have a situation where there is no real reform achieved, and where the student boycotters will wind up screwed into the ground. From talks with various faculty members regarding the faculty vote, we realize that not all voted out of a negative feeling towards reform

of moderation, indeed, some say they voted against the proposal because it did not go far enough. Yet this winds up being a negative act nonetheless. We need reform, and we need it now. We need action not prevarication.

What we feel would be the best solution for all concerned is to pass the present reform proposal, thus allowing the student boycotters to pass through Bard, and not get screwed for their determined stand against a corrupt and corrupting system, and also give us all a chance to experiment a bit with the Moderation process, now under less restraint than before. The proposed reforms, while not to our own liking, will do for one, or maybe two semesters, until we can arrive at a system that is more rational. However, we cannot abide for any more time under the old gold star, black mark system. WE APPEAL FIRST FOR THE PROGRESSIVE ELEMENTS OF THE FACULTY TO UNITE AND PASS THIS DOCUMENT, AND SECOND, WE APPEAL FOR MODERATING SOPHOMORES TO BOYCOTT MODERATION UNTIL REFORM IS ACHIEVED. Too many years have gone by with a bad system getting worse-if we all unite now we can achieve a victory for joint student-faculty reform of an institution.

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OH, YOU MEAN SOCIALISM.

ECOLOGY IS DEAD AS AN ISSUE.

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5. A Second Moderation.

If, as may happen in unusual case, a student elects to change his area of concentration subsequent to his first Moderation, he may petition for a second Moderation to evaluate his accomplishments and prospects in the new discipline. In the normal course it is not expected that a student would want or have time for a second, and certainly not a third, Moderation, but subsequent Moderations are not explicitly ruled out.

6. Procedures for the Moderation.

Although procedures may vary with the individual student and the nature of the discipline and no two Moderations will be entirely similar in stress and sequence, the following will be considered normal college-wide procedures:

a. Each semester the Registrar's Office will furnish the Divisional Chairmen with lists of students expected to moderate in that semester, and the Divisional Chairmen in turn will transmit their Moderation schedules to the Registrar two weeks before the mid-term date. These schedules should contain the composition of each

Moderation Board and indicate the specific nature of the presentations which will be expected. The Divisional Chairmen should also post Moderation schedules.

b. There should be no fewer than three faculty members on each Moderation Board, one of whom shall be the student's adviser. One member of the Board shall be

REGISTRAR WILL INFORM

designated the chairman. Whenever possible, the Board shall include one instructor who has not had the student in course or in conference, and it is highly desirable that at least two members of the Board have previously participated in Moderations. When desirable, in terms of the student's course of study, a member of another Division, or another department, or a fourth member may be invited to participate in the Moderation conference.

c. The Registrar will inform each moderating student that he must prepare in quadruplicate a written evaluation of his previous college work and a projection of his plans of study in the Upper College. One week after the mid-term date the student must submit the original of these papers to the Registrar's Office and a copy to each member of his Board, personally or through the campus mail.

d. The Registrar will also inform each moderating student of the specific nature of the presentation which is expected and which must be executed according to

e. Before a Moderation conference the Chairman of the

Board will collect the confidential grade sheets at the Registrar's office, and at the same time consult the complete file of the student in order to supply the Board with all pertinent information.

f. Just before each Moderation conference, the Board should spend from five to ten minutes deciding the most important points to be brought up during the conference.

g. During the conference, the Chairman of the Board should direct the Moderation proceedings. He should see to it that the points which have been decided on are covered, that even in the heat of academic disputation the central purpose of the meeting--to expose the student's academic accomplishment and promise--is maintained, and that the student is given sufficient time to formulate his answers. The Moderation should be conducted so that it will leave the student with a sense

A SENSE OF ITS VALUE

of its value in helping him plan his education, and not with a feeling that the Moderation is a mere formality.

h. At the end of the Moderation conference, the Board shall review the student's work at the College, evaluate his presentation, and make recommendations for his work towards his goals. In making its evaluation and recommendation, the Board shall among other criteria consider the student's (1) past academic record, (2) his ability to speak and write effectively, (3) his command of facts, methodology, and theories in his own and related fields, (4) his promise as a member of Upper College seminars, not only in his major but also in other subjects, (5) his ability to complete a satisfactory Senior Project in his major, (6) his performance during the Moderation conference, (7) his intellectual maturity, and (8) his clarity and seriousness of purpose. The Moderation report shall promptly be transmitted to the Divisional Chairman and to the Registrar who will communicate its content officially to the student.

(End of revised Moderation Document)

creates confusion



The defeat, last Wednesday, April 15, of the proposed Moderation reforms was a surprise to many in the community, and protests against the decision were mounted soon after the meeting ended amidst confusion and some bitterness.

The incomplete list shown here was compiled after the meeting and is a partial listing of those who were present and voting. The meeting itself was described by some observers as 'stormy' with numerous members of the faculty taking firm stands on the issue. Among the more vocal supporters of the suggested reforms were Jim Sullivan, William Wilson, and Fred Crane, all drafters of the reform

Those faculty members who voted in favor of the Moderation Reform Document are:

Black, Carl
Crane, Fred
Driver, William
Greenwald, Bernard
Kakatsakis, Charles
Kelly, Robert
LaFarge, Benjamin
Rockman, Robert
Rosenthal, Michael
Skiff, Peter
Sleeper, William
Sullivan, James
Tieger, Bernard
Walter, William
Wilson, William
Yarden, Elie

Those faculty members who voted against the proposal are:

Bertelsmann, Heinz
Dewsnap, Terence
Griffith, William
Koblitz, Robert
Lambert, Mark
Lensing, William
Minihan, Michael
Oja, Frank
Rodewald, Clark
Sourian, Peter
Stambler, Elizabeth
Selinger, Carl
Fout, John
Brandeis, Irma

document. Opposition was led by Frank Oja, Heinz Bertelsmann, and Robert Koblitz, who received a hand of applause from some of the attendees after roundly condemning the proposal.

Soon after the motion by John Fout to table was defeated, the final 22 to 17 negative vote was taken. After the vote, Koblitz and Bertelsmann requested that despite their votes and speeches against moderation reform for the whole school, they be allowed to experiment with moderation reforms within the Government Department, where they had a group of boycotting students. That proposal was defeated overwhelmingly by a voice vote.

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