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CCS Guards Fight for a Fair Contract. But the Administration Won't Budge

BY RACHEL HODES

As the tumultuous unionization effort by the security guards of the Center for Curatorial Studies draws to a close, the Student Labor Dialogue continues their goal to make students more aware of the struggle. Union negotiations between the college and the guards have spanned the entire year, and efforts to form this union, which is distinct from campus security's shop, have been exhausting for many involved.

On April 18, members of SLD—a student-run labor rights group—stood outside of a Speaker Series event at CCS. As people entered the room, they distributed pamphlets describing the CCS guards' difficult working conditions and sluggish negotiation process. Many in the packed audience began to read the handouts as they

waited for the event to begin.

SLD claims the fliers were extremely effective, and one allegedly found its way into the hands of Tom Eccles, the Executive Director of CCS. One, entitled "Call to Action!" included a message of support for the guards that could be emailed to various members of administration. Another depicted the disparity between the workers' proposals and the offer the administration has given them. Due to the size of the event, the SLD promptly ran out of pamphlets.

"We're hoping to get some of these audience members to care about the fact that [the] administration has not accepted a single one of the workers' proposals in the contract negotiation, and [we] hope that they will put pressure on the administration to

give a fair contract," said Bronwyn Simmons, an SLD member who writes for *The Free Press*, as she handed out fliers to the incoming audience.

At the end of April, SLD members once again stood outside of a Speaker Series talk at CCS. But this time, they were recognized and asked to leave.

Another such demonstration occurred on May 4, and SLD members gathered outside of CCS with signs and fliers. When a few members tried to enter the talk with banners, they were again asked to leave, so they opted to stay outside to distribute their literature to the incoming patrons of the museum. This time, SLD tried to focus their rhetoric on the administration's denial of the guards' requests. "The CCS guards are asking for the fundamental rights of any union contract," the flier read.

In their efforts to unionize, the guards were hoping for 'pay parity' with the campus security guards,

along with a formal grievance procedure. Other guard proposals included breaks from standing, an employee bathroom and locker room, and a place to eat. The administration claims to have given the CCS guards its best, last, and final offer, but it has not acquiesced to any of the guards' many requests, and it is unlikely that the guards will vote this contract into place. The pay the administration is offering (\$16.25/hr.) is less than some guards already earn, and for those who earn less than that, it is hardly a significant raise.

SLD members continue to support the CCS guards and the proposals they had hope to enact with their unionization. Once the guards have voted on this contract, their next steps will become more clear. For now, strong and loud support from the student body is the best aid that students can provide for the guards at CCS.

Bard College

FREE PRESS



TUESDAY, MAY 15, 2018

Annandale-On-Hudson, NY



NEWS

Bard Activists State Demands

BY FRANKIE SITLER-ELBEL

Upon walking into New Kline around 6 o'clock on Thursday April, 19, one may have noticed any number of things not typically heard or seen during a typical evening in the dining hall. Countless students crowded the tables, as a microphone and camera set-up recorded the voices of student-speakers calling for change. This was the "Kline Takeover," held and organized by the Bard chapter of Million Hoodies for Justice, a national network of Black activists.

During the event, members of Million Hoodies delivered their demands: more faculty of color to help build a support system for POC students, the re-thinking of the Difference and Justice academic requirement, and inclusive, radical curriculums to be instituted into the First Year Seminar readings. At the end of the event, hand-in-hand, stu-

dents joined together, repeating the words of former Black Liberation Army member Assata Shakur. "It is our duty to fight for our freedom, it is our duty to win, we must love and protect each other, we have nothing to lose but our chains."

President Leon Botstein has agreed to meet with Million Hoodies but no further comment has been released.



OPINION

Million Hoodies Talks Takeover

BY ANYA ANDREWS

I have been a part of Bard's chapter of Million Hoodies for Justice (MHJ) since September and was recently trained as a Policy Committee Leader for the Spring semester. I can tell you, without a doubt, that the Kline Takeover event, and the ripple effect it is currently having on campus, is what I have been looking forward to most this year.

As a national organization, MHJ set goals to develop 'freedom cities and campuses' across America. We are trying to design campuses like Bard to return power to underrepresented communities, such as the POC student body, and make these spaces "centers for innovation," as the Executive Director and Co-Founder of Million Hoodies, Dante Barry, calls them. In other

words, we are trying to further POC influence on Bard's campus to actually create the safe spaces and administrative changes that will cultivate a healthy community of color in a predominantly white institution.

Even though our chapter is small in number—a core group of about ten members who consistently and actively participate in events, demonstrations, and planning—we have made it our mission to be loud and active on Bard's campus in order to achieve the change we want to see. A perfect example is the development and execution of The Kline Takeover. This event was the biggest performative measure taken this year, and its purpose was to focus Bard's attention on the work we have been putting in to establish constructive change and encourage radical thinking.

It is important to note that most of what MHJ does is behind the scenes. Much of our time was not spent on organizing the event so much as it was about articulating our demands of Bard College in specific and accessible ways. The designing of the demands required working in groups that met outside of our regular club meetings, and conducting research—all in addition to school work, other clubs, and classes. These groups went forward to meet with existing deans, faculty, and administrators to comprehend the pre-existing policies and procedures for things like curriculum development, and to find the best ways deliver a set of demands to the administration.

There were also many minute operations that went into making the Takeover successful, such as designing and printing posters and placing them all over campus. We also had to develop a plan to grab the attention of everyone in the dining hall and maintain that focus throughout the

reading of the demands. Thus, developing a script was another part of our preparation for this event. These were the smaller scale tasks that still needed to be done in order to make the Takeover as powerful as it was. Without advertisement, we wouldn't have drawn as large a crowd. Without a script, we wouldn't have been organized. Without working together to print out a copy of the demands and tape them on the president's door, taking pictures, contacting the head of the national organization, or manning the camera for the live video that would be shared with the world—this event would not have existed in the magnitude we desired.

As our former chapter leader and graduating senior Lexi Parra said, "Activism isn't always sexy. This kind of work is messy and gritty," and I believe those are the exact reasons why it is beautiful. This type of work is as real as we are; it is a reflection of ourselves. We understand that our demands may appear too radi-

cal or impossible to the administration, but we are still working for a change. I, along with my co-organizers in Million Hoodies—and I'm sure beyond the realm of our club as well—are always going to fight.

That being said, the Kline Takeover was not only a demonstration of our demands. The prep work gave us an opportunity to practice various organizational tactics, because besides trying to cultivate a better climate of diversity and inclusion at Bard, we are also looking to empower and educate ourselves as youth organizers in the fast-paced world of activism.



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Robert Gober's "Prison Window," (1992), permanently installed in CCS lobby

Bard Student Government Says They Represent You: How Do They Do It?

BY HAYDEN FW. HARD

If you don't know what the Bard Student Government actually does, you're not alone. Ostensibly, they function as a liaison between the student body and the administration of the college, and they work to implement students' demands, like longer library hours and a fundraiser for Puerto Rico. But information on them is hard to find. The official BSG website has remained unchanged for over a year, as have their three Facebook pages. Their bulletin board in the campus center has gone unused for years, and their "General Assemblies," which are public meetings that encourage direct student input, have been relatively scarce. Accordingly, increased transparency dominated the rhetoric of the recent campaigns for speaker of the student

body.

So their role in student life is mysterious, why should you care? Well for one, you pay them. Currently, BSG is the only student-run organization that pays stipends to individual members. That money comes from the "Convocation" or "student activities" fund, which every student pays into. Beginning every semester, the "Fiscal Committee," part of the Financial Branch of Student Government, divides up the fund and distributes it to numerous clubs and student organizations, such as SMOG, Million Hoodies, International Student Organization, Spring Fling, and the *Free Press*. So far, students have paid that fee out of pocket. But this year, student government negotiated a deal with Jim Brudvig, the CFO of the college, to fold

those with disabilities.

For issues that pertain to diversity, the SLC defers to the Multicultural Diversity Committee, or MDC, which is also part of the Student Life Branch. According to the BSG website, the committee advocates for increased diversity in the academic, institutional, and social lives of students, and it acts as a liaison between students and the relevant administrative departments, like the Difference and Media Project, the Center for Civic Engagement, and the Dean of Student Affairs office. The constitution also mandates that they organize at least one panel every semester, like the cultural appropriation workshop held last April. Jazlyn Johnson, the current chair who was recently re-elected, did not return our request for comment.

The Educational Policies Committee is the final third of the Student Life Branch. The official website claims that EPC works with students and administrators

on curriculum changes, new faculty selections, and tenure evaluations. They also examine academic programs when prompted by student complaints. The current chair, Mark Williams Jr., did not respond for comment.

On the darker side of student life, the Judicial Branch consists of the Peer Review Board and Student Judiciary Board. These committees oversee alleged violations of college policies by students, although violations of academic regulations and cases of sexual misconduct are outside of their jurisdiction. The cases they handle and the people involved are also confidential.

If you got busted bringing beer into Tewksbury your freshman year, you probably met with the PRB. According to the BSG website, they deal with small or first-time policy violations, and their imposed sanctions are intended to be "restorative," so community service and conversations with administrators and other community members are common punishments. The next chair of the PRB will be Amber Junker, and besides that position, between seven and nine students oversee it, along with the area coordinators—as outlined in the constitu-

Government's ledger. Odett Salcedo, the treasurer this past year, did not respond to our request for comment.

Also part of the Financial Branch, the Socially Responsible Investment Committee is perhaps the most idiosyncratic of the BSG committees, and according to the current chair, Sophie Logan (also the chair of SLC), "[SRIC and BSG] literally never interact." It was founded roughly a decade ago, and their goal is to enact progressive social changes by investing in multinational corporations and using their shareholder status to propose "shareholder resolutions." As reported in the March 9 issue of the *Free Press*, publicly traded companies need to discuss resolutions at public shareholders' meetings, but to avoid that publicity, they can sign a legally binding agreement to enact a resolution's demands.

This semester, SRIC sent out an email soliciting votes from the student body on which company to invest in and for what reason. From

the 41 responses they received, Exxonmobil was chosen for their decades-long dissemination of fake climate science. As such, \$2,000 dollars will be invested in the oil conglomerate, and a resolution will be submitted after the investment has been held for at least a year. That up-front capital does not come from the Convocation Fund, but is instead paid by donors solicited by Taun Toay, Bard's VP for Enrollment and Strategic Initiatives.

The minutia of student government may be boring, but their role straddling the administration and student life can be used, by you, to improve all of our college experiences. As an institution with some (if limited) power, they must also be monitored and held accountable. Next year, the *Free Press* will report extensively on BSG, but you can do it more directly as well: email the chairs, make demands, and don't stop.

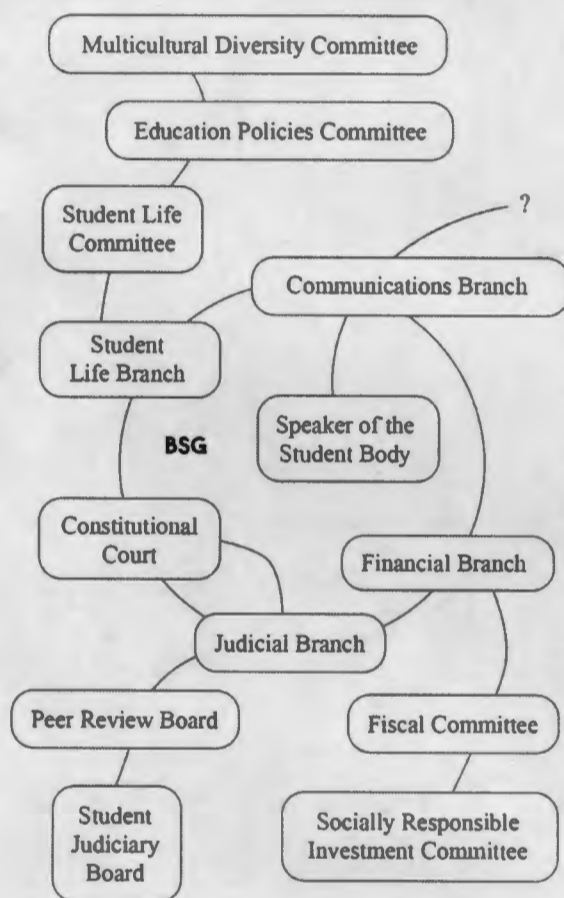
the fee into tuition, thus making it eligible for financial aid. Beginning this fall, BSG and the administration promise that this sliding scale model will add an additional \$50,000 to the Convocation Fund each semester.

Each of the eight members of the "Central Assembly," which is comprised of the speaker of the student body, the treasurer, and the chairs of each committee (explained below), have been paid \$850 dollars per semester since Fall, 2015. While that's hardly a living wage, it's still a sizable chunk of change. To put it in perspective: the Convocation Fund totalled \$134,274 this semester, and of the \$11,000 allocated to BSG, \$7,650 went to stipends. But the Central Assembly does a lot of work to earn that money. Each member holds weekly office hours, and they meet as a group every week in addition to their numerous micro-meetings.

You may be asking: what have they done for me

lately? While a list of their stated accomplishments may suffice, it's far more important to understand the various committees and individuals who influence many of your experiences at Bard—and who are supposed to represent you.

The speaker of the student body, currently Kevin Barbosa (soon to be succeeded by Jazondré Gibbs), is probably familiar to you already—Barbosa recently blew up your Bardmail with information about Spring Fling and a BSG-sponsored event to inform students about graduate school. Since they voted to remove the position of secretary of the press in April, 2017, which was ratified that Fall during Budget Forum, the speaker is the only member of the "Communications Branch" of BSG. The position is loosely defined by the Bard College Student Constitution (which is amended every two years), and according to Barbosa, it's "the most mind-fuck, amorphous, no-clear-anything role." Basically, the speaker oversees



The New Central Assembly

Speaker: Jazondré Gibbs—jg2644@bard.edu
 Chair of SLC: Jakir Hossain—jh3508@bard.edu
 Chair of MDC: Jazlyn Johnson—jj4798@bard.edu
 Chair of the EPC: Justyn Diaz—jd7357@bard.edu
 Chair of the PRB: Amber Junker—aj8961@bard.edu
 Chair of SJB: Chase Williams—cw0271@bard.edu
 Chair of FiscComm: Jady Gray-Hough—jg3586@bard.edu
 Treasurer: Ava Mazzye—am8903@bard.edu

CULTURE

Multimedia Nostalgia: Bocanegra at the Fisher Center

BY CAILEY MITCHELL

Saturday, May 5—For the first time, artist Suzanne Bocanegra performed her three-part lecture-memoir series at the Fisher Center for the Performing Arts. In the past she had only offered one performance at a time, but on Saturday they were stitched together into a complete performance.

The multimedia lecture-performances *When a Priest Marries a Witch*, with Anne Gridley, Body Cast, featuring Frances McDormand, and *Farmhouse/Whorehouse* with

Lili Taylor, are all about Bocanegra's childhood, detailing the origins of her artistic inspiration. Her stories are charming, relatable, and enticing. The words in the performance were so imaginary the audience was swept back into childhood. Comfortable in my chair at the Sosnoff theatre, it was as if my mother was reading to me an elaborate, whimsical bedtime story.

I was curious as to how and why the Fisher Center chose Bocanegra's performance to be part of their "Spring Talk" series, so I

the Central Assembly, "inform[s] the student body of BSG affairs," and "serve[s] as the intermediary between the student body and the administration," at least according to the constitution. But with such a vague definition, the role is chiefly defined by the personalities and goals of those who inhabit it.

This past year, the speaker worked closely with the Student Life Committee, which was chaired by Sophie Logan who will be succeeded by Jakir Hossain in the Fall. One of the three boards that comprise the Student Life Branch, the SLC works with students and the administration on issues regarding "student life," an ambiguous concept that is defined by the ideas and complaints brought forth by students during any given semester. For the past few years, they regularly sent out Google surveys to the undergrad mailing list, often asking "what's your beef?" Questions range from "Do you think that clubs have

enough funding," and "How satisfied are you with the social scene," to "Do you feel supported by your department for academic pursuits?"

The SLC also reaches out more personally. At their event "Please Start Complaining" in March, the council members opened by noting some of this year's recent accomplishments, such as dish-return bins in dorms and new lighting and rugs in the Manor and Robbins common rooms. When the floor was opened up to students, Bard's alienating social life was a common complaint, as was the general atomization of groups on campus (both social and institutional), and the lack of structural support for student projects was also discussed. Those are broad, deep-seated issues that are admittedly quite hard to address through policy, but there were more specific complaints as well. One student brought up the fact that many of the campus' handicap access buttons don't actually work, and that there is conflicting information about transportation services for

tion. Also a "silent" representative from the Dean of Student Affairs Office or Office of Residence Life and Housing is in attendance, although they don't speak during hearings or take part in adjudications. Chase Williams, the upcoming chair of SJB, said that these silent reps. are there in case things get out of hand, like "someone screaming at us or threatening us."

For repeat or severe policy violations, students are brought before the Student Judiciary Board, which is comprised of eight students, four faculty members, four administrators, and a silent representative as mentioned above. Williams said that "severe" violations are often vague: A student could have been sent to PRB numerous times already, and online harassment of fellow Bardians falls into this grey area as well. Unlike PRB's gentle sanctions, the SJB meters out more serious punishments, like social probations, suspensions,

and expulsions.

On the more administrative and internal side of student government, the Fiscal Committee (part of the Financial Branch) distributes money from the Convocation Fund to student-run clubs. Club heads submit itemized budgets to FiscComm at the start of every semester, and clubs receive most of their requested money up front, while the rest is distributed throughout the semester. The committee functions like a central bank by controlling the "emergency fund" (the motion to change the name to the "stimulus fund" was ratified last February, but based on email exchanges between the *Free Press* and FiscComm, the name hasn't stuck). If clubs run out of money, they can theoretically request more—to be approved or denied by the committee chair. But due to this year's relatively small Convocation Fund, the e-fund was empty by early April.

While the treasurer is not an official member of the Fiscal Committee, they are responsible for approving or denying purchase orders and reimbursements for club expenses. The rest of their job involves balancing and maintaining Bard Student

asked the executive director of the Fisher Center, Bob Bursey, for the inside scoop.

The Fisher Center is a place where people experience "something unique," Bursey said. "Being based in a college, the Fisher Center works at the crossroads of learning, research, and professional artistic practice. We're primarily a producing organization, meaning that we create new work and develop unique programs, as opposed to presenting touring artists and shows."

Indeed, Bocanegra's performance fell into the category of new work, considering the fact it was the first time her three lectures were performed together. As an interdisciplinary artist, Bocanegra uses media in a creative, unconventional way. Music, visuals, oral accounts, and costumes turned her life story into a fascinating cultural essay.

The innovative and avant-garde performances

presented at the Fisher Center are not only intended for students and Bard community members—the Center has embedded itself in the cultural fabric of other local communities. Bursey commented, "We're planning a free performance series at Montgomery Place, and creating projects in Kingston and Hudson."

The Fisher Center is a growing hub of entertainment and art performances in the area. Last year, they offered 200 events and hosted 50,000 visitors, claims Bursey. Recently, a generous donation to the Center from an anonymous Bard alum subsidized student fees. Now, all Bard undergraduates need only pay five dollars for any perfor-