



# BOWDOIN STUDENT GOVERNMENT

## **Meeting of the General Assembly**

Wednesday, 24 February 2016, 8:30pm

Daggett Lounge, Thorne Hall

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# Agenda

## Meeting of the General Assembly

24 February 2016

Daggett Lounge, Thorne Hall

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

III. Approval of Minutes

IV. Public Comment Time

V. Introduction of Guests

VI. Old Business

VII. Reports of Committees

a. Student Affairs—*Luke Von Maur '16*

b. Student Organizations Oversight Committee—*Emily Serwer '16*

c. Academic Affairs—*Andrew Millar '16*

i. **Proposal to Vote:** Academic Calendar Change—*Andrew Millar '16*

d. Facilities & Sustainability—*Kevin Hernandez '18*

e. Student Activities Funding Committee—*David Levine '16*

f. Executive Committee—*Daniel Mejia-Cruz '16 / Michelle Kruk '16*

i. **Proposal to Vote:** Statement of Solidarity—*Daniel Mejia-Cruz '16*

VIII. Reports of Members

a. Class Councils

b. Inter-House Council

c. Entertainment Board

d. Athletic Council

e. McKeen Center

f. Multicultural Coalition

g. At-Large Representatives

IX. Report of the President—*Daniel Mejia-Cruz '16*

X. Announcements

XI. Adjournment

# *Proposal to Vote*

## **Proposal 141531**

Proposed by: Executive Committee

Date: 24 February 2016

### **STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY**

*Bowdoin Student Government, convened in General Assembly:*

**WHEREAS**, cultural appropriation refers to a power dynamic in which members of a dominant culture take elements from a culture of people who have been systemically oppressed by that dominant group, perpetuates racist stereotypes, and misrepresents people's culture;

**WHEREAS**, cultural appropriation is distinctly different from and not to be conflated with issues of political correctness or freedom of expression;

**WHEREAS**, on Saturday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016 members of the student body hosted a "tequila" party, during which students appropriated aspects of Mexican culture;

**WHEREAS**, this act of cultural appropriation is offensive for the previously stated reasons, is disrespectful, creates an environment where Latino, and specifically Mexican, students feel unsafe, and contradicts our goal to refine the education of students in an inclusive residential community;

**WHEREAS**, our nation and our Bowdoin community continue to struggle to address issues of difference, especially race;

**WHEREAS**, we promote and prioritize justice for systemically marginalized people;

**WHEREAS**, the Latin American Student Organization, together with support from other student organizations, individual students, and the Bowdoin Student Government, has resolved to address the aforementioned party for purposes of restorative justice and the education of our Bowdoin community;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT**

***R*ESOLVED**, That the members of Bowdoin Student Government, convened in General Assembly—

1. The Executive Committee issues a Statement of Solidarity to the Student Body on behalf of the Bowdoin Student Government. This Statement will define cultural appropriation, demonstrate how it is

unacceptable, indicate support and solidarity for students who feel marginalized by the incident of racial and ethnic bias, promote honest conversations about issues of race and cultural appropriation, and urge the student body to think deeply about how their actions may infringe upon others' identity.

2. The Executive Committee is approved to execute any and all documents for the issuance of this Statement.

3. The Executive Committee, with the General Assembly, is authorized to develop articles for the amendment of the Constitution and the By-Laws of the Bowdoin Student Government regarding the status of those members found to be in breach of Bowdoin College and Bowdoin Student Government policies regarding issues of inclusivity.

**BY ORDER OF BOWDOIN STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

# Appendix A



BOWDOIN STUDENT GOVERNMENT  
BRUNSWICK, MAINE

Office of the President of Bowdoin Student Government

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

24 February 2016

**Contact:** Daniel Mejia-Cruz '16  
dmejiacr@bowdoin.edu  
Michelle Kruk '16  
mkruk@bowdoin.edu

## **BSG Assembly [unanimously] Condemns Recent Incident of Cultural Appropriation, Offers Recommendations to the College**

At 9:30pm on Wednesday, 24 February 2016, the General Assembly of the Bowdoin Student Government voted on a resolution to take a definitive stand on an incident of cultural appropriation that took place on Bowdoin's campus on Saturday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and the anonymous attacks that took place on social media in the aftermath. The Assembly, representing the entire student body of Bowdoin, stands by all students who were injured and affected by the incident.

Following calls to action from student leaders, especially the Latin American Student Organization, the Executive Committee referred a resolution for action to the Assembly. The Assembly believes that it is its duty to respond to these calls to action, as it is constitutionally bound to refine the College's most important goal—the education of students in a residential community. The Assembly asserts that issuing a statement of solidarity is the right action that should be taken by student leaders in such a situation.

Moreover, the Executive Committee and the Assembly are determined to further the education of its own members and the entire student body regarding issues of race and inclusion. The Assembly affirms its role as a leading institution at the College in responding to incidents of bias this academic year, and in perpetuity.

To that end, the Assembly, as made clear in the Statement of Solidarity with student victims of last semester's "gangster party", adheres to the definition of cultural appropriation as the manifestation of racism where there exists a power dynamic in which members of a dominant culture take elements from a culture of people who have been systemically oppressed by that dominant group, perpetuates racist stereotypes, and/or misrepresents a peoples culture.

The Assembly furthermore asserts that such behavior as displayed on 20 February 2016 and the anonymous attacks in the aftermath are unacceptable and do not reflect inclusive values. Such behavior will not and should not be tolerated by the Bowdoin community. The Assembly is resolved to use this situation as a teaching and learning moment for all students, including its own members. It is the hope of the Assembly to move forward with a restorative vision and progress with the help of all parties.

## **A Resolution**

**WHEREAS**, the Assembly reaffirms its adherence to a definition of cultural appropriation as a power dynamic in which members of a dominant culture take elements from a culture of people who have been systemically oppressed by that dominant group, perpetuates racist stereotypes, and/or misrepresents people's culture;

**WHEREAS**, on Friday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016 members of the student body organized a "tequila party", during which students appropriated aspects of Mexican culture;

**WHEREAS**, this act of cultural appropriation is offensive for the previously stated reasons, is disrespectful, creates an environment where students of color, particularly Latino, and especially Mexican, students feel unsafe, and contradicts our goal to refine the education of students in an inclusive residential community;

**WHEREAS**, our nation and our Bowdoin community continue to struggle to address issues of difference, especially race;

**WHEREAS**, we promote and prioritize justice for systemically marginalized people;

**WHEREAS**, the Latin American Student Organization, together with support from other student organizations, individual students, and the Bowdoin Student Government has resolved to address the aforementioned party for purposes of restorative justice and the education of our Bowdoin community;

**WHEREAS**, the Bowdoin Student Government affirms its role as a leading institution at the College in responding to incidents of bias this academic year, and in perpetuity;

### **Now, therefore, be it**

*Resolved*, that the members of Bowdoin Student Government, convened in General Assembly—

Reassert the above definition of cultural appropriation, demonstrate how it is unacceptable, indicate support and solidarity for students who feel marginalized actions of their peers, promote honest conversations about issues of race and cultural appropriation, and urge the student body to think deeply about how their actions may infringe upon others' identity.

### **Be it further,**

*Resolved*, that this Assembly issue a set of Recommendations regarding the appropriate and desired response for incidents of this nature on behalf of the Student Body.

### **Be it further,**

*Resolved*, that this Assembly authorize and order the President to transmit a copy of this Resolution and the following Recommendations to the President of the College and the Dean of Student Affairs.

*Adopted [unanimously] in General Assembly: 24 February 2016.*

**BY ORDER OF BOWDOIN STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

## Recommendations

The General Assembly of the Bowdoin Student Government submits to the administrators of the College the following set of recommendations regarding response processes to incidents of racial and ethnic bias and stereotyping.

While the Assembly acknowledges the uniqueness of each such incident, we nonetheless encourage the College to develop a general framework for effective and meaningful response.

The administration of the College has improved its response processes to incidents of racial and ethnic bias and stereotyping. Most notably, the Assembly acknowledges the following:

1. President Clayton Rose, together with the Bias Incidence Group, has undertaken to develop a process by which responses to acts of racial and ethnic bias and stereotyping are improved and institutionalized.
2. Dean of Student Affairs Tim Foster readily acknowledged the occurrence of the incident in question. We further note that students appreciated the immediacy of this acknowledgement.
3. The Student Center for Multicultural Life, located at 30 College Street, was opened for discussion and communal processing of the incident in question. We further note that Counseling was appropriately made available to students.

**Nonetheless, the same conversations and calls to action compel the Assembly to issue the following recommendations to the Offices of the President and the Dean of Student Affairs.**

The Members of Bowdoin Student Government, convened in General Assembly, and speaking with the authority of the Student Body—

*Recommend*, that the administration should more immediately acknowledge incidents of this nature, and it must acknowledge not only their occurrence but also the deep hurt that students may be feeling immediately following such acts.

**Further Recommend,**

That the administration must make clear to students, well in advance, their commitment to creating a supportive space for students who have been or feel targeted, *for as long as students deem necessary*.

**Further Recommend,**

That the administration must create a space for those students who have been or feel specifically targeted.

**Further Recommend,**

That the administration must create a separate space open to other students for discussion, support, and processing of the incident.

*Approved unanimously in General Assembly: 24 February 2016.*

**BY ORDER OF BOWDOIN STUDENT GOVERNMENT**



# *Proposal to Vote*

## **Proposal 141532**

Proposed by: Academic Affairs

Date: 24 February 2016

### **ACADEMIC CALENDAR CHANGE**

*Bowdoin Student Government, convened in General Assembly*

**WHEREAS**, The faculty of the College plans to vote on a proposal to the change of the start date of the fall semester from its current day, a Thursday, to a Wednesday;

**WHEREAS**, This vote presents an excellent opportunity to consider the broader implications of the fall semester academic calendar on Bowdoin students;

**WHEREAS**, Students have noted that the weekday start of the fall semester has been detrimental to students, particularly students for whom travel costs are burdensome, students who live far away from the College, and students whose families do not have weekday workplace flexibility that allows them to assist in the move-in process;

**WHEREAS**, Students have also reported that the current Thanksgiving break schedule causes travel inconveniences and burdensome costs;

**WHEREAS**, Survey data indicate that classes on the Monday and Tuesday preceding Thanksgiving are both inconsistently held (on the part of faculty) and inconsistently attended (on the part of students);

**WHEREAS**, Among our peer institutions, Amherst, Bates, and Hamilton, have moved to a week-long Thanksgiving break, giving Bowdoin an opportunity to lead among its peers;

**WHEREAS**, Bowdoin should seek to meet the needs of a geographically diverse student body;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT**

***R*ESOLVED**, That the members of Bowdoin Student Government, convened in General Assembly—

1. Support the faculty proposal, to the end that it allows students to sample all classes in their schedule in their first week.

2. But are in favor of amendments to the proposal that would include further changes to the Fall semester start date, Thanksgiving break, and/or exam period;

3. And support a fall semester academic calendar which begins on a Tuesday (allowing for weekend arrival of students) and, as compensation for these added days, eliminates classes on the two days falling either

- a. On the Monday and Tuesday preceding Thanksgiving or,
- b. The last two days of the semester.

**BY ORDER OF BOWDOIN STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

# *Appendix B*

## **BSG Survey Data from the 2014-2015 Academic Year**

Students were asked to answer several questions pertaining to Thanksgiving break and the academic calendar. Over six hundred responses were recorded.

### **1) Class attendance**

Students were asked to report how many of their classes were cancelled and how many of their classes they skipped on the Monday and Tuesday preceding Thanksgiving:

#### *Cancellations*

- Average number of classes cancelled on Monday:  
1.12 per student
- Average number of classes cancelled on Tuesday:  
1.37 per student

#### *Skips*

- Average number of classes skipped on Monday:  
1.22 per student
- Average number of classes skipped on Tuesday:  
1.46 per student

### **2.) Travel plans**

Percentage of students traveling home for Thanksgiving break given the current calendar:  
78%

Percentage of students who said they would travel home for Thanksgiving break in the event of a weeklong break:  
92%

# Appendix C

## BSG Survey Data from February 2016

Students were asked to describe how certain elements of the fall semester academic calendar have impacted them. Seventy-nine responses were recorded. Below are some anecdotes that represent common students concerns.

### 1) The weekday start date:

- “Tuesday move-in has proven to be difficult for me, as I live in Maine but cannot get a ride from my parents because they are working.

Thursday start for classes has often felt like a waste of a week to me, since I've only once in eight semesters had Friday class.” – *Abby Roy '16*

- “The point raised by faculty about the prolonging of being able to try out all classes in the first week rings true with me, I think. While I moved in early because I live off campus, in the past I think that getting rides from family to the airport would be easier with move in on the weekend and class starting on a Tuesday (or I guess Wednesday is what's being voted on).” – *Emily Talbot '16*

- “Moving in such a short time before the start of classes has made the move-in process extremely stressful...I have also been highly dissatisfied by the inability to attend Wednesday courses during the first week of [classes]...Last semester, one of my courses that met on Mondays and Wednesdays met once during reading period due to the shortage of normal meeting days. Stopgap policies like this undermine the entire purpose of reading period, and adding another day to the first week is a much more logical solution”. – *Rayne Sampson '18*

### 2) Thanksgiving break:

- “The short length of Thanksgiving break meant that I didn't go home for it. While American students who celebrate Thanksgiving might be willing to make the effort to fly home for such a short break, students like myself who do not celebrate the holiday can't justify flying home for what is really only three days - Wednesday and Sunday are spent traveling, so Thursday, Friday, and Saturday are the only full days spent at home. If the break included Monday and Tuesday, however, I would travel home. This would allow for seven days at home and two days of traveling. In addition to allowing students to justify spending the money required to fly home, incorporating Monday and Tuesday into break would get rid of the, frankly, pointless classes on those days. Professors are weary of covering too much material when they know many students are going to be skipping those days to get home earlier.” – *Sean McParland '19*

- “...It is often very expensive for students to buy tickets to travel home for only 4 or 5 days...therefore, many people decide not to go home for Thanksgiving. This is unfortunate because we work very hard at Bowdoin - the academics are rigorous and often stressful. Many students could use more time to unwind and extending Thanksgiving break could provide that mental health break needed! But more so, starting break on the day before the holiday is ridiculous...it just cuts things too close. For example, when a snowstorm hits on Tuesday night or Wednesday, and flights are delayed or canceled, students

risk not being able to get home at all. I would rather us start a few days earlier in the fall (in August or September) so we can get the full week off for Thanksgiving, as many other colleges do.” – *Alex Logan ‘18*

- “This has been one of the worst breaks because travel is absurdly expensive for such a short period of time. Having the full week would not only allow students to afford going home (myself included), but it would also make the break feel like it's actually rejuvenating.” – *Class of 2017 Member*

### **3) The end date of final exams:**

- “Finals end TOO LATE! I've had the issue before of a winter storm making it hard for me to get home. When finals end on December 21st, I may not be able to leave until the 22nd. If there's a storm, I'm always worried that I won't get home for Christmas (not a fun feeling).” – *Class of 2017 Member*

- “I had a Monday final and it was the worst because I could not see my family while everyone else was returning home. It really dampened my spirits and during this time I considered strongly transferring from Bowdoin. In hindsight, I like Bowdoin, it was just the awful schedule that made me question my choice to go here.” – *Class of 2019 Member*

- “It was a real pain to get flights out of Boston back home, and more expensive. Flights are much cheaper the week before (even toward the end of the week).” – *John Sledge ‘18*