

OUR CORE VALUES: (DRAFT)

We, the members of the Bennington College community, aspire to live the following values through intentional practices of inquiry, empathy, and self-reflection. We enter into this community with thoughtfulness, integrity, generosity, honesty, and an openness to embrace the unknown:

A Commitment to Progressive Education, Creativity, Independence, and Experimentation

A Bennington education turns curiosity into knowledge, passion into practice, and a sense of urgency into action. We believe that a collaborative process of self-directed learning crosses disciplines, pushes boundaries, and leads to the most rigorous and innovative thinking. This conscious elasticity empowers our community to expand our creativity, critical acumen, and poetic imaginations. We are free to inquire in any direction we choose and express ideas, including those that are contrary to popular thought. We value learning by doing as exemplified by our commitment to a vibrant residential community and supported by the lived experiences of our faculty-practitioners, staff colleagues, and students engaged in a mix of classroom, and field experiences.

A Commitment to Antiracism and Social Justice

We envision a shared world constituted by equality across gender identity, race, ethnicity, class, neurodiversity, physical ability, sexuality, citizenship, and religion in pursuit of a truly inclusive society. We are dedicated to dismantling ideas, systems, and policies rooted in racism and oppression to advance those that promote equality and liberation for all people inclusive of our differences, intersecting identities and lived experiences. This commitment extends to how we carry out our shared work, examining and remaking our individual, implicit and invisible assumptions that can lead to inequity and injustice. We devote ourselves to constructive social purposes and to doing transformative work in the world.

A Commitment to Sustainability, Wellness, and Regeneration

We take our responsibilities to each other and the planet seriously through our commitment to ecological, social, and economic sustainability and to regeneration in an era of depletion. We believe that human health and wellness cannot be improved separately from the health of larger systems in which we exist, including our institutions and our planetary ecosystem. We believe sustainability is advanced through engaging with our evolving world, active questioning, intentional practices, dialogue, and the pursuit of individual and collective wellbeing.

A Commitment to Democratic Community

We believe education is simultaneously the practice of individual freedom and a form of democracy that is continually made and remade through the dynamic balance between

individuality and community. That balance acknowledges our interconnectedness and shared responsibility. Both within the classroom and the institution as a whole, we practice our commitment to working together through shared governance that creates the conditions for equitable dialogue and participation that informs decision making. This calls for communicating with clarity and transparency, and recognizing that care for the present community is fundamental to the future success of Bennington.

DRAFT