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Bernard Iddings Bell
Warden of the College
1919–1933
"No facts taught here are worth anything until students have assimilated them, correlated them, interpreted them. It is the student, not the bit of knowledge, that we are teaching."

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Bard



Ludlow Hall, built in 1869, houses the College's administrative offices.

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Bard College was founded, as St. Stephen's College, in **1860**, a time of national crisis. While there are no written records of the founders' attitude toward the Civil War, a passage from the College's catalogue of 1943 applies also to the time of the institution's establishment:

"While the immediate demands in education are for the training of men for the war effort, liberal education in America must be preserved as an important value in the civilization for which the War is being fought. . . . Since education, like life itself, is a continuous process of growth and effort, the student has to be trained to comprehend and foster his own growth and direct his own efforts."

This philosophy molded the College during its early years and continues to inform its academic aims.

Also see the [Bard Archives](#).

Timeline of Bard History

John Bard, who founded St. Stephen's in association with the New York City leadership of the Episcopal church, came from a family of physicians and teachers, whose country estate, Hyde Park, lent its name to that Hudson River town. For its first 60 years, St. Stephen's offered young men a classical curriculum in preparation for entrance into the seminaries of the Episcopal church. In support of this venture, John Bard donated the Chapel of the Holy Innocents and part of his riverside estate, Annandale, to the College.



The Chapel of the Holy Innocents, built in 1857, was a gift to the College from Mr. & Mrs. John Bard.

With the appointment in **1919** of Dr. Bernard Iddings Bell—educator, writer, and churchman—as warden, St. Stephen's began a period of transition to a broader, more secular mission. Social and natural sciences augmented the

classical curriculum, and the student body was recruited from a more diverse population. The 1920s were marked by great teachers with distinctive views. In addition to Dr. Bell, whose social concerns and polemical writings about education made him a figure of national significance, the faculty included Lyford "Trotsky" Edwards, a pioneer in American sociology, and Albert Jay Nock, the conservative historian, essayist, and "new humanist," who had graduated from the College in 1892.

In **1928** the College opened a radically new chapter in its history when it became an undergraduate school of Columbia University. Donald G. Tewksbury of Columbia was appointed dean in **1933**, and in **1934** the name of the College was changed to Bard in honor of its founder. Dean Tewksbury's famous "program" for the College, inspired in part by what he saw as best in the great English universities, encouraged students to pursue intensive study of their already established interests and abilities as the basis for achieving a broad cultural outlook and understanding; the program demanded of them disciplined and independent study. The tutorial and seminar system, a substantive examination at the end of two years (later called Moderation), and what Tewksbury called the "final demonstration" (to become the Senior Project) were established as part of his plan. One of the hallmarks of the program was an emphasis—unique at this period in American education—on the place of the fine and performing arts in a liberal arts curriculum. Although Tewksbury himself did not use the term "progressive," his program established Bard as a leader of the progressive movement then gaining prominence in higher education. In the 1930s Bard anticipated by decades much of the current thinking about undergraduate education.

The faculty was strengthened and enriched in the 1940s by the addition of distinguished émigrés from Europe. These scientists, artists, teachers, and writers included Stefan Hirsch, the precisionist painter; Felix Hirsch, the political editor of the *Berliner Tageblatt*; the violinist Emil Hauser, founder of the Budapest String Quartet and associate of Pablo Casals; the distinguished Austrian labor economist Adolf Sturmthal; the noted psychologist Werner Wolff; and the philosopher Heinrich Bluecher, husband of Hannah Arendt.

In **1944** Bard became a coeducational institution. As a result, it severed its relationship with Columbia University and became independent as a secular, nonsectarian liberal arts college affiliated with the Episcopal church. A new company of scholars taught at Bard during the late 1940s and 1950s. The list, which includes Mary McCarthy, A. J. Ayer, F. W. Dupee, Ralph Ellison, Franco Modigliani, William Humphrey, Theodore Weiss, Anthony Hecht '44, Saul Bellow, and Dwight Macdonald, indicates that Bard had assumed a place of eminence in the teaching of literature and writing and was attracting leading thinkers in the social sciences.

The faculty of this period set forth a statement of academic goals that continue to inform Bard's curricular philosophy. Based on the premise that the College should transmit in living form an intellectual and artistic heritage, the student should:

- develop a genuine interest in things intellectual and artistic sufficient to motivate continuing self-education in several diverse fields
- make a substantial start in formulating ethical standards as well as intellectual or artistic standards in his or her fields of concentration and have some understanding of the crucial role of standards in intellectual or artistic work
- show ability, in more than one field, to attack an intellectual or artistic problem, translate it into workable terms, organize procedures, locate and use relevant material, synthesize findings, and produce a creditable result
- whatever his or her major, be able to read English accurately and intelligently and write it intelligently and clearly
- master the materials, techniques, and methods necessary for beginning independent work and making independent judgments
- develop the knowledge and confidence necessary to acquire new materials, techniques, and methods and have a reasonable grasp of the extent of his or her field, its history, its relations to other fields, and its place in the culture
- have some grasp of the history of mankind and of the broad lines of intellectual and artistic development and achievement

In **1960** Reamer Kline began a 14-year tenure as president. Under his care, the number of students and faculty increased; the curriculum was enlarged, particularly in science, art, art history, and sculpture; a film department was created; and the study of anthropology was added to the social sciences curriculum.

Bard's 14th president, Leon Botstein, took office in **1975**. Since then, the College has expanded its program, building on the strands of its curricular history: the progressive tradition developed from the Tewksbury program and the classical tradition of general education emanating from St. Stephen's and the émigré faculty. The range and distinction of the faculty have grown. Among those who have taught at the College in recent years are artists Roy Lichtenstein, Elizabeth Murray, Ken Noland, Judy Pfaff, Stephen Shore, and William Tucker; writers Chinua Achebe, Ian Buruma, Norman Manea, Edna O'Brien, Cynthia Ozick, Nobel laureate Isaac Bashevis Singer, and William Weaver; mathematician Abe Gelbart; chemist Carl Djerassi; theater director JoAnne Akalaitis; poets John Ashbery, Robert Kelly, and Ann Lauterbach; anthropologist Stanley Diamond; art collector and dealer E. V. Thaw; filmmaker Arthur Penn; sociologist Troy Duster; philosopher Peter Sloterdijk; and literary scholar Jerome Brooks.

Bard has developed a new vision and model of the liberal arts college, as a central body surrounded by significant institutes and [programs](#)—"satellites"—that strengthen its curriculum. This model is distinctly different from the structure of a large university. While it is flexible enough to include programs for research, graduate study, community outreach, and other cultural and educational activities, the undergraduate program remains its focus. Each satellite program is designed to enhance the undergraduate course of study by offering students opportunities for interaction with leading artists and scholars.

A number of important educational initiatives developed within the framework of [The Bard Center](#), which was created in **1978** to organize programs that complement and enhance the undergraduate College and address issues and problems of national and regional import. The Center conceives and presents artistic and intellectual programs and appoints Bard Center Fellows—visiting artists and scholars who present seminars and lectures to undergraduates and the public. Among its programs is the Distinguished Scientist Lecture Series, which has brought to Bard more than a hundred scientists, including four Fields medalists and 45 Nobel laureates. The nationally known [Institute for Writing and Thinking](#) has had a major impact on the teaching and learning of writing and reasoning at high schools and colleges around the country and in Sweden.

In **1979** Bard assumed control and ownership of [Simon's Rock Early College](#) (now called Bard College at Simon's Rock) in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Although Bard and Simon's Rock remain distinct and carry on separate academic programs at their respective campuses, the relationship between the two institutions gives Bard an exceptional opportunity to apply its experience as a liberal arts college to the development of a strong curriculum for younger students.

In **1981** Bard established its first graduate program. [The Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts](#) extended the College's tradition of strength in writing and the arts by offering a program leading to a master of fine arts degree. In **1988** the College inaugurated its second graduate program, the Graduate School of Environmental Studies, which offered a master of science degree in environmental studies. [The Bard Center for Environmental Policy](#) was created in **1999** to promote education, research, and public service on critical issues pertaining to the natural and built environments. At the core of the Center's activities is an innovative graduate program leading to either a master of science degree in environmental policy or a professional certificate in environmental policy. This graduate program succeeds that of the Graduate School of Environmental Studies.

In **1986** Bard established the [Levy Economics Institute of Bard College](#), which is dedicated to improving the human condition through the study of economics and the generation of effective public policy responses to important economic problems worldwide. The Levy

Institute's program includes research, conferences, workshops, lectures, and publications. In addition, members of the Institute play an increasingly active role in promoting public policy analysis in Washington. Through a cooperative arrangement with Christ's College, Cambridge University, in England, the Institute offers undergraduates exposure to the highest levels of economic thought and possibilities for internships.

Furthering the College's efforts to promote freedom of inquiry internationally, in **1990** Bard initiated the Program in International Education, which brings students from emerging democracies in Eastern and Central Europe, the former Soviet Union, and southern Africa to Bard for a year to study issues of democratic transition. To date, more than 190 students have come to Bard under this program.

In the same year, Bard became the publisher of *Conjunctions*, the semiannual literary journal. Edited by novelist Bradford Morrow, professor of literature, *Conjunctions* has published the work of more than 1,200 writers, including many new and unknown talents.

In the summer of **1990** the [Bard Music Festival](#) presented its first season. Designed to give listeners a deeper appreciation of the repertory of major composers, the festival illuminates each year the work and era of a different composer through orchestral and chamber performances, lectures, demonstrations, and a book of original scholarly essays and translations published by Princeton University Press. The festival has taken as its subject the music and times of Brahms, Mendelssohn, Richard Strauss, Dvorák, Schumann, Bartók, Ives, Haydn, Tchaikovsky, Schoenberg, Beethoven, Debussy, Mahler, Janáček, Shostakovich, Copland, and Liszt. With the opening in 2003 of [The Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College](#), the festival had a brilliant new home, designed by renowned architect Frank O. Gehry.

[The Center for Curatorial Studies and Art in Contemporary Culture](#) was founded at Bard in **1990** by Marieluise Hessel and Richard Black. The Center is devoted to the interdisciplinary study of contemporary art and its relationships with social and cultural developments. In **1993** the Center instituted a graduate program leading to a master of arts degree in curatorial studies. The Center also mounts exhibitions and sponsors symposiums, publications, and research fellowships. A recent expansion of the Center's facility has enlarged the library and created the 17,000-square-foot Hessel Museum of Art, which will house the Marieluise Hessel Collection, on permanent loan to the Center for Curatorial Studies.

Since **1993** [The Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture](#) has presented a unique, multidisciplinary, and broadly international approach to the study of the decorative arts. The BGC offers a master of arts degree in the history of the decorative arts and a doctor of philosophy degree in the history of the decorative arts, design, and culture. It sponsors several major exhibitions annually and presents diverse public programs for audiences ranging from decorative arts professionals and collectors to schoolchildren. The BGC is located in New York City, in two Beaux Arts town houses close to the city's leading museums and galleries and in Bard Hall, a renovated residence facility.

The Bard faculty reviews the College curriculum periodically. In **1995** the faculty adopted a revised curriculum that affirms the validity of traditional academic disciplines and retains the central features of the Bard education while it also stimulates new approaches to fields of study through the development of interdisciplinary programs. In **2004** the faculty approved two changes to the general education curriculum: The first identifies clear, simple, and intellectually compelling categories for distribution requirements. The second is a new "Rethinking Difference" requirement that exposes students to innovative critical thought on issues related to diversity.

In **1998** Bard further expanded its commitment to international education by founding the [Institute for International Liberal Education](#). The Institute's mission is twofold: to develop long-term collaborations between Bard and other leading institutions around the world and to encourage debate and experimentation that will lead to new forms of international

educational cooperation based on mutuality and equality. A partnership established in 1996 between Bard and Saint Petersburg State University in St. Petersburg, Russia, has led to the creation of Russia's first liberal arts program, which is offered at the university's [Smolny College](#). Students enrolled in the program may earn credits toward a dual B.A. degree offered by Bard and Saint Petersburg State University.

Since 2000, new initiatives for undergraduates have included:

- the [Bard Science Initiative](#), a program of curricular innovation, faculty hiring, external opportunities, and new facilities aimed at improving the level of science literacy throughout the College. Examples of the science initiative include the Bard-Rockefeller Program, in which Rockefeller University in New York City offers courses to Bard students and reserves places for them in its Summer Undergraduate Research Fellows program, and The Gabrielle H. Reem and Herbert J. Kayden Center for Science and Computation (scheduled to open in the fall of 2007), 42,000 square feet devoted to research, classes, and programs in the sciences.
- the [Bard Program on Globalization and International Affairs](#), a one- or two-semester residential program in New York City that offers specialized study in international affairs
- the [Human Rights Project](#), interdisciplinary and humanities-based, in which students learn about and take part in the contemporary human rights movement
- the [Bard Prison Initiative](#), led by a recent graduate, in which students are working to restore higher education in New York State prisons

In **2001**, in response to the crisis in American secondary education, Bard and the Board of Education of New York City collaborated in the creation of a four-year alternative to traditional high school. Called [Bard High School Early College](#), the public school program is designed for a diverse, highly motivated student body. Beginning in grades 9 and 10, students undertake studies in an alternative high school curriculum that prepares them to do serious college work at the outset of grade 11. At the end of the four-year program, students receive an associate of arts degree in the liberal arts and sciences. Graduates are prepared to proceed to another college, either with advanced standing or as first-year students who will attend for four years.

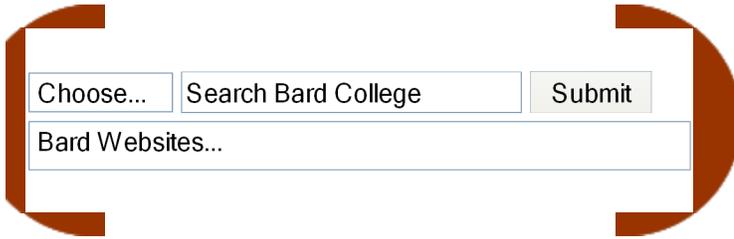
Bard continues to add to its graduate programs. In collaboration with the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, the [International Center of Photography–Bard Program in Advanced Photographic Studies](#), based at the ICP facilities in Manhattan, awards an M.F.A. degree in photography. [The Master of Arts in Teaching Program at Bard College](#) offers an integrated curriculum leading to a master of arts degree and a teaching certificate in adolescent education in one of four areas: English, mathematics, biology, or history. Certification in additional fields will be offered in future years.

The spirit of innovation in arts and education continued at Bard with the fall **2005** opening of [The Bard College Conservatory of Music](#). In a unique five-year program, all Conservatory students pursue a dual degree, a bachelor of music and a bachelor of arts in a field other than music. Among the distinguished musicians recruited for the Conservatory faculty is Dawn Upshaw, internationally acclaimed soprano. In the fall of **2006**, the Conservatory opens graduate programs in two fields, offering M.Music degrees in vocal arts (in a program designed by Upshaw) and conducting (as the [Conductors Institute at Bard](#), now in its eighth year on campus, becomes part of the Conservatory).

In **2006** the College established two new endowed professorships. One chair honors the late James Clarke Chace, who was director of Bard's Globalization and International Affairs Program. It is held by award-winning writer and MacArthur Fellow Mark Danner, who is also the Henry R. Luce Professor of Human Rights and Journalism. The second chair honors Jacob Neusner, Distinguished Service Professor of the History and Theology of Judaism.

Bard's continuing willingness to make changes and take risks, as reflected in its creation of an innovative structure and reexamination of its curriculum, makes it a vital force for

excellence and coherence in undergraduate education. In the early years of a new century, Bard seeks to strengthen its capacity to play a significant role in the revival of the humanities and arts in the United States and in the reform of American education.



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Contact

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Saturday,
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