

NEWS

First years, Office of Inclusion and Diversity staff reflect on EdGE course, new beginning for DEI programming

By [Talía Traskos-Hart](#)
Staff Writer

February 17, 2023

All first-year students have begun the second unit of the Education through Global Engagement (EdGE) program, a part of the College's efforts to expand diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programming.

The EdGE program was designed by Willy Oppenheim '09, leader of non-profit Omprakash. Assistant Dean of Student Affairs for Inclusion and Diversity and Director of Multicultural Student Life Eduardo Pazos connected with Oppenheim last year in regard to [student volunteer](#) opportunities with the organization. They then explored the potential of Omprakash tools for first year programming and collaborated to design EdGE programming.

"This curriculum really is built out of Bowdoin," Pazos said. "This is a very Bowdoin-y curriculum in a very positive way, reinforcing a lot of the values that are very present here for our community. This is not just a third party with their own understanding of how to talk about DEI work."

The program requires first years to engage with 90 minutes of media aimed at beginning conversations over DEI every month. Each unit is hand-selected by Pazos and Oppenheim and culminates in students using a class-wide discussion board to reflect on the material.

Senior Vice President for Inclusion and Diversity Benje Douglas asserted that the implementation of the EdGE program is representative of the College's broader goal of working toward a more inclusive and equitable Bowdoin community.

"Our two main aims for institutional inclusion work is to build a sense of belonging for students and employees and to build an equity of opportunity for our community members as well," Douglas wrote in email to the Orient. "Those two things in tandem animate the way we think about this work at every level of campus."

While some students have found the program to be a valuable learning experience, not all members of the first-year class have taken the program seriously.

First years Chase Lenk and Jeremy Tewari witnessed peers posting cursory responses on discussion boards, clicking quickly through lengthy articles and videos and joking about program content. Lenk noted the difficulty of enforcing more contemplative engagement with the course.

"A lot of people did take it seriously, but not everyone. I know a lot of people who didn't want to do it and were almost annoyed that they had this extra work to do," Lenk said.

Last week, Bowdoin Student Government discussed the pitfalls of the system, including what many students view as its excessive time demands. While 99.9 percent of first year students completed the EdGE program last semester, Tewari noted that a number of his friends failed to devote the expected 90 minutes to the training and participated only after Pazos informed first years that students who did not meet the program's deadline would have OneCard functionality revoked.

I've heard from some people that you can do it in three minutes, just clicking through," Tewari said. "It was just something people did to do and then moved on and didn't think about again. It feels like a waste of time and resources at the moment.... Making it a thing that people perhaps had more engagement with could make the program more enticing would be beneficial."

The second unit of the EdGE program, beginning this semester, includes the requirement of an in-person or virtual live session in addition to modular engagement; Pazos remarked that students will have a number of timing options to select from and that the total time commitment will not exceed



94 MAINE ST.
BRUNSWICK, ME

CROOKED KEG
BREWING CO.

WE ARE HIRING

Contact us at:
info@crookedkegbrewing.com

PART-TIME HELP NEEDED
THURS-SAT 2-9PM
COMPETITIVE PAY IN A FUN FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

ADVERTISEMENT

SHARE THIS ARTICLE



MOST POPULAR

1 BRUNSWICK

Social Goose Bar takes flight in downtown Brunswick

By [Emma Kilbride](#) • 5 days ago

2 LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Orient article offers singular, alarming interpretation

By [Margaret Boyle](#) • November 16, 2018

3 OPINION

Don't buy Black Rifle Coffee

By [Noah Saperstein](#) • November 11, 2022

4 BSG

Wirsching '24 and Bookbinder '24 revamp outdated Bowdoin Course Review website

By [Lucy Watson](#) and [Sam Borne](#) • 5 days ago

5 INTERNATIONAL

Rabbi Bachman talks Israel-Palestine violence, provokes student engagement and dissatisfaction

By [Clara Jergins](#) • 5 days ago

90 minutes. He emphasized that spending just an hour and a half each month on the program is a small sacrifice given its ability to create an inclusive College community.

"I firmly believe that any time we can spend doing this work matters," Pazos said. "Our students are busy but being able to have a 90 minute commitment ... I would hope that all of us would agree that is pretty doable."

Lenk noted that his experience with the program was beneficial overall, particularly because it provoked him to think about challenging previous ideas, habits and assumptions.

"I enjoyed the articles and videos and I learned a lot, especially last semester," Lenk said. "I really like the messages that the EdGE program is allowing us to think about as a community and to have conversations about.... It's not perfect, I think there's a lot of things that could easily change to be better, but I don't think we should ditch the idea."

Pazos is in the process of planning for the EdGE program's likely implementation next year, and hopes to take student feedback into account in altering the program for the Class of 2027.

"I want the program to work for students, so hearing what students think matters a lot," he said. "If we can commit ourselves to treating each person in our community with dignity, respect, compassion and empathy, that will have met the goal for this program. We don't all have to agree, we don't all have to believe the same thing about everything, but we can all treat each other with a lot of dignity."

Pazos noted that, while the course represents a new system for first year DEI work, it is meant to be only a first step in students' connection with the Office of Inclusion and Diversity over their time at the College. Opportunities such as Real Talk on Class sessions for sophomores in College Houses and Multifaith Fellows programming aim to continue the relationship between students and the Office.

"Part of our goals as the Office of Inclusion and Diversity is to have multiple touchpoints for all students at different times in their experience. This is the ... beginning touchpoint for all first years," Pazos said.

Read More **diversity**

Your ad here.

The Orient is looking for web advertising partners. Reach a readership that's tens of thousands strong: bowdoinorient.com/advertise

ADVERTISEMENT

More from News:

Faculty Forum explores the future of artificial intelligence

By **Kaya Patel** • February 17, 2023

On Monday, the Committee on Governance and Faculty Affairs (CFA) hosted a faculty forum framed around the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and technology in teaching and learning prompted by the recent popularity of AI software ChatGPT.

Leading with place: Ethan Kent '98 promotes people-centered placemaking movement

By **John Schubert** • February 17, 2023

Students and community members filed into Kresge Auditorium Tuesday night to learn about a campaign for better and more people-centered public spaces: the placemaking movement. Executive Director of

BSG talks alumni donations and new laundry

By **Celeste Mercier** • February 17, 2023

Editor's Note February 17, 2023, at 9:45 a.m.: An earlier version of this article included three errors. First, the budget for the food truck was \$1,300, not \$13,000. Second, there was not a discussion of creating a BSG alumni director position.

Arctic museum transition ramps up; Hubbard main entrance to close sporadically to facilitate move

By **Miles Berry** • February 17, 2023

Over the next two weeks, the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum will be entering the final stages of its transition to a new home in the John and Lile Gibbons Center for Arctic Studies. On Thursday, February 23, the main

Sign up for our weekly newsletter.

Catch up on the latest reports, stories and opinions about Bowdoin and Brunswick in your inbox. Always high-quality. Always free.

Enter your email.



Sign up

We'll never use your email for anything other than this newsletter. Read our full privacy policy for more.

Comments

Before submitting a comment, please review our [comment policy](#). Some key points from the policy:

- No hate speech, profanity, disrespectful or threatening comments.
- No personal attacks on reporters.
- Comments must be under 200 words.
- You are strongly encouraged to use a real name or identifier ("Class of '92").
- Any comments made with an email address that does not belong to you will get removed.

Leave a Reply

Any comments that do not follow the policy will not be published.

Comment

0/200 words

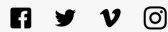
Name

Email

Post Comment

THE BOWDOIN ORIENT

orient@bowdoin.edu • 6200 College Station, Brunswick, Maine 04011



[News](#) [Features](#) [Opinion](#) [Arts & Entertainment](#) [Sports](#)
[Random](#) [About](#) [Staff](#) [Subscribe](#) [Advertise](#) [Policies](#) [Contact](#)
© 2023 The Bowdoin Orient