



TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

FROM: John L. D'Agati 

SUBJECT: Master Plan Amendment: Bard College,
Establishment of a Branch Campus at the Brooklyn Public
Library

DATE: October 5, 2017

AUTHORIZATION(S): 

Issue for Decision (Consent Agenda)

Should the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment to authorize Bard College to establish a branch campus at the Brooklyn Public Central Library and offer an Associate in Arts (A.A.) in Liberal Arts and Science at that branch campus?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State statute.

Proposed Handling

This question will come before the full Board at its October 2017 meeting, where it will be voted on and action taken. A related charter petition for the establishment of the branch campus and the authority to grant the A.A. degree at that branch campus will also be before the Board at the October 2017 meeting.

Procedural History

Bard College (Annandale-on-Hudson) submitted a proposal for an A.A. degree program in the humanities to be registered at a new branch campus on the premises of the Brooklyn Public Central Library. Both a charter amendment and a master plan amendment are needed to establish the new branch campus and to grant the College the authority to grant the A.A. degree in the humanities at that branch campus.

Background Information

Bard College and Brooklyn Public Library are cooperatively encouraging underserved adults in Brooklyn and giving them the opportunity to pursue, with the institutional support and resources of Brooklyn Public Library, a liberal arts and science education in their community. Small groups of students, around 30, will enroll in a Liberal Arts and Science program at the Bard campus at Brooklyn Public Central Library and will graduate with a Bard College A.A. degree. Students will not pay tuition or for books, the cost will be covered through a combination of state and federal student financial aid and scholarships supported by grants and private philanthropy. The educational program is modeled on the Bard Prison Initiative (BPI), which has enrolled incarcerated women and men across New York State for 15 years. To date, Bard has conferred 443 associate and bachelor's degrees through BPI.

The Bard College at Brooklyn Public Central Library is for students who are ambitious and intellectually curious, but who may have been deterred from attending college or put their education on hold. Prospective students must hold a high school diploma or its equivalent. Those whose household finances qualify them for state and federal financial aid will be given priority.

Students admitted to the Bard branch campus will enroll full-time in the A.A. degree curriculum, which will follow a standard academic calendar. It is expected that most students will complete their degree in five to six semesters. The requirements for the A.A. degree will be identical to those in the established BPI A.A. degree curriculum. The curriculum emphasizes breadth of knowledge across academic disciplines, with a focus on writing. Students will be required to take courses in The Arts; Language and Literature; Science, Mathematics, and Computing; and Social Studies. The A.A. curriculum will also include two semesters of *First-Year Seminar*, and workshops in *Language and Thinking* and *Citizen Science*.

An academic review of the faculty, curriculum and other program elements has been completed by the Department. The Department has determined that the proposed degree program meets the standards for registration as set forth in the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

In August 2017, following its standard protocol, the Department conducted a canvass of institutions of higher education in the New York City region. There were no objections or statements of negative impact.

Related Regents Items

N/A

Recommendation

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approve an amendment to the master plan of Bard College to authorize the establishment of a branch campus at Brooklyn Public Central Library, and authorize the College to grant the Associate in Arts (A.A.) degree in Liberal Arts and Science. The amendment will be effective until October 31, 2018, unless the branch campus and degree program are registered prior to that date, in which case the master plan amendment shall be without term.

Timetable for Implementation

If the Board of Regents approves the master plan amendment, the branch campus and Associate in Arts in Liberal Arts and Science program will be registered.