

Mariko Silver, president of Bennington College
Testimony to the Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC)
1 pm on 10/18/17

- **Introduction**

- I have lived in the Bennington area for four years -- moved up from DC and have lived in New York City, Bangkok, Phoenix, and Los Angeles.
- Bio
 - Dr. Mariko Silver took office as president of Bennington College on July 1, 2013. Prior to this appointment Dr. Silver was a senior advisor to the president of Arizona State University (ASU). She previously held roles in the Obama administration, in the administration of Arizona's governor Janet Napolitano, and at Columbia University.

Silver served in the Obama administration as Acting Assistant Secretary for International Affairs and Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Policy of the US Department of Homeland Security, where she spearheaded the creation of the first department-wide international strategy, managed the Department's international engagements, and co-developed a global initiative to enhance aviation security. Prior to that, she served as Policy Advisor to Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano, with responsibility for the state's public and private universities, community colleges, and vocational institutions; the Arizona Department of Commerce; and Science Foundation Arizona. In these capacities she worked with multiple communities and constituencies around the world and very close to home.

As senior advisor to ASU President Michael Crow, Silver was a key strategist in what Newsweek called "one of the most radical redesigns in higher learning since the origins of the modern university." She designed and led international and community initiatives focused on economic development, interdisciplinary science initiatives, and student success. Silver also served as Professor of Practice in ASU's School of Politics and Global Studies and established international research and teaching partnerships, including the international University Design Consortium.

In the Office of the Executive Vice-Provost of Columbia University, Silver co-developed a multi-institution research response to the events of 9/11 and helped establish the International Innovation Initiative (I-3). She has also worked in London, UK; Bangkok, Thailand; and at the United Nations headquarters in New York City.

Silver sits on the board of Mass MOCA, is serving a three-year term on the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and also serves on the Climate Leadership Steering Committee of Second Nature, an organization that works with colleges and universities to help make the principles of sustainability fundamental to every aspect of higher education. She has in the past served on the boards of the Humanity in Action Foundation, Planned Parenthood of Arizona, and the Arizona Commission on the Arts, and is a member of the American Association of Geographers and a former term member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Silver holds a BA in History from Yale University, an MSc in Science and Technology Policy from the University of Sussex (UK), and a Ph.D. in Economic Geography from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA).

Silver is married to musician Thom Loubet and is the mother of two children.

- **The College's vision:**
 - History -- The College's connections to the town are in our DNA. Town leaders were among our founders; support from members of the local community was instrumental in getting the College off the ground.
 - Our futures are intertwined
 - Priority of my administration is to support the relationships between Bennington College, the Town of Bennington, and the Village of North Bennington

- **The College's needs of downtown:**
 - **Prospective students** are looking at both on- and off-campus life when choosing a college.
 - **Faculty and staff** also want a **vibrant, walkable downtown** with **restaurants, entertainment, and rental options** for housing.
 - More **recent graduates** want to stay in the area than do; a lack of rental options is a major barrier.
 - Some **parents of students or alumni** fall in love with the area and want options to relocate or visit here regularly.

- **Putnam Project will help meet those needs.**
 - The College is a Leadership Equity Investor in the Putnam project, as well as a founding member and partner in the Bennington Redevelopment Group (BRG)
 - The College is an **anchor tenant** in Phase I. Will lease space in both the Putnam Building and the Winslow building (building on Main street between the Hotel Putnam and Oldcastle Theatre).
 - The College will use its leased space for:
 - **Residential space for faculty housing** - apartment units in the Putnam Building (second and third floors).
 - **Residential space for post-baccalaureate students** - apartment units in the Winslow Building (second and third floors).
 - **Office space for some of the College's administration** in the Winslow Building (second floor).

- **The College's impact on the town and the region:**
 - Economic impact
 - One of the larger employers in the county, with
 - **Over 200 full time staff**, and
 - An additional **60 part-time staff**
 - About **100 faculty**

 - Total institutional economic impact **\$31.1 million**
 - Payroll/Benefits Expenditures **\$23.9 million**
 - Paid to Vermont Businesses **\$7.2 million**
 - [as of 2/17]*

 - Field Work Term
 - Every student, every year must complete a 7-week internship or work experience, which is integrated with their academics.
 - Over the past four years, Bennington students have worked for:
 - over **70 Vermont businesses and not-for-profits**,
 - including **over 40** in the Bennington area alone,
 - contributing approximately **25,000 hours** of work.

 - Events and visitors
 - We are a **cultural hub** for the region, with **hundreds of performances, readings, lectures, and other events** every year that are free and open to the public.
 - **Over 5,000** visitors per year

- AVIC's report
 - The Association of Vermont Independent Colleges released a [report](#) which states that **private colleges** (including Bennington) contribute a combined **2.1 billion** to Vermont's economy each year
- Many alumni who stay shape the community through businesses and other ventures.
- The College -- and its visitors -- help draw a national eye to the town and the region
 - Food and Wine Magazine: [Where to Eat, Drink and Stay in Bennington, VT](#), According to Chef (and parent) Josiah Citrin
 - Expedia: [15 of the most beautiful college campuses](#)
 - [Best College Town](#)
- **Our experience working with the BRG and the municipality has been positive.**