



**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

**Emily Berge-Thielmann**  
**Writer & Digital Content Producer**  
**413-644-4113**  
[eberge@simons-rock.edu](mailto:eberge@simons-rock.edu)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — April 6, 2023**

**Announcing the Bard Queer Leadership Project at Simon's Rock**



GREAT BARRINGTON, MA—Bard College at Simon's Rock announces the Bard Queer Leadership Project (BQLP), a B.A. degree program designed for and by LGBTQIA+ college students, aiming to elevate LGBTQIA+ college graduates into leadership roles in fields across the workforce. The BQLP is envisioned to expand to a complete college serving traditional age and transfer students over the next few years and would be the first intentionally queer-serving college in the world.

The BQLP aims to increase the presence of LGBTQIA+ individuals leading at higher levels within organizations, while serving as a space for envisioning and actualizing educational practices designed for LGBTQIA+ students to thrive.

With its history of innovative practices and successful outcomes with LGBTQIA+ students at the Early College and high school levels, Bard College at Simon's Rock will also expand its LGBTQIA+ student focus to more traditional college-aged students. Its policies around LGBTQIA+ inclusion are already sought after by other institutions as models, and the college's LGBTQIA+ graduates are among its most satisfied alumni. This project is an organic extension of this ongoing commitment on campus. The Bard College at Simon's Rock campus was rated 4.5 out of 5 stars as of December 2022 on [Campus Pride Index](#), the national listing of LGBTQ-Friendly Colleges & Universities. In addition, the school is honored to be part of the [Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals](#).

The Queer Leadership portion of the academic program spans across four years, but can also be completed in two or three years, to accommodate transfer students, including transfers from the Early College program of Bard College at Simon's Rock. The BQLP will lead to a four-year

B.A. degree. All students will have an academic program incorporating at least one Concentration in a liberal arts academic field and a new Concentration in Queer Leadership. The academic program will culminate in two capstone experiences: a Senior Thesis aligned with their academic field, with or without a queer studies focus, and a work/internship experience



contributing to the growth of their leadership skills. Simon's Rock is facilitating a working group composed of faculty, staff, and students devoted to the advancement and development of the Bard Queer Leadership Project.

According to Provost John B. Weinstein, "Simon's Rock's location in Massachusetts is well suited, given the rising tide of legislation

limiting LGBTQIA+ instruction in many states. BQLP meets this need, responding in Bardian tradition by stepping forward to respond to the crisis of rising LGBTQIA+ student exclusion."

### **About Simon's Rock**

[Bard College at Simon's Rock](#) is the only college in the country specifically designed for highly motivated students ready to enter college after the 10th or 11th grade. Simon's Rock offers a challenging program in the liberal arts and sciences, taught exclusively in small seminars by supportive, highly trained faculty, who are leading scholars in their fields. The College grants degrees in more than 35 majors. The Princeton Review's *Best 380 Colleges* rates academics at Simon's Rock higher than Harvard and Princeton.

[Bard Academy at Simon's Rock](#) is the nation's first two-year boarding and day program designed to prepare 9th and 10th graders to start college early. A student entering Bard Academy as a high school freshman will earn an Associate of Arts degree from Bard College at Simon's Rock after only four years and a Bachelor of Arts degree after only six years. The Academy curriculum is designed and taught by students' future college professors who are leading scholars in their fields.

For more information, visit [simons-rock.edu](https://simons-rock.edu) and [bardacademy.simons-rock.edu](https://bardacademy.simons-rock.edu).

###