

TOOL *and* DIE

A Newspaper of Bennington College

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Admissions Office: *New Faces And Ideas*

By JESSE KATZ

Deborah Corbin sits behind the desk in her office in the Barn, talking on the telephone and looking out the window as large flakes of snow hit the panes. Her voice is calm as she tries to reassure a guidance counselor from one of New York City's largest high schools that Bennington College will be open this fall.

"Well, that's how rumors get started," she says. "Bennington is doing just fine. I have no doubt that Bennington will be here and will be thriving." She leans back in her chair and smiles. "We've just sent out our acceptance letters today, and the students are looking marvelous."

Deborah Thomas Corbin, class of 1970, is the new acting Director of Admissions. Over the last 14 years since she has graduated from Bennington, Ms. Corbin has worked extensively in educational environments. She has taught elementary and secondary schools, directed a kindergarten and a child care center, and she is currently working toward degrees in English Literature and Educational Policy. Yet before Ms. Corbin returned to Bennington last fall to serve as Director of Admissions, she had never worked in an admissions office.

Hanging up the telephone, Deborah Corbin shakes her head. "A day in the life of the Director of Admissions," she says. "One of his students was accepted early decision, and now the parents are furious because they've heard that Bennington is closing."

Indeed, now is not such a good time to be the Director of Admissions at Bennington College. As of the beginning of April, 334 students have applied to Bennington. That's down from 418 at this time last year. And that's down from 473 the year before.

In fact, the numbers are so embarrassingly low that Ms. Corbin wondered out loud whether making them public could be detrimental to the school. "When people find out the numbers, they might think that Bennington is too easy to get into, that there is something wrong with us."

There are places for 250 new students to enter this fall, but so far only 170 students have been accepted from the applicant pool of 334. Because most

students apply to more than one college, it is necessary for Bennington to accept at least twice as many students as there is room. This means we need at least 500 applications to fill spots for 250 new students, and considerably more than 500 if the Admissions Office hopes to exercise a degree of selectivity. Deborah Corbin has said that 700 would be an ideal number.

Yet here we are at the beginning of April with 334 applications, a number Ms. Corbin describes as "ridiculously low." Traditionally, Bennington receives 20 percent more applications during the summer, but even with those additional numbers we fall desperately short of what is necessary to maintain the operating budget for fall 1984.

"The students that we've accepted are students that would be accepted under any circumstances," says Ms. Corbin. "We have no slush pile that we intend to draw from if things get really bad. If we only have 10 people in the class, then we only have 10 people in the class."

Yet, there is unfortunately a direct correlation between the number of students at Bennington College and the number of faculty members we are able to employ. At the last Community Meeting, President Michael Hooker predicted that we would be as many as 80 students short of what is necessary to maintain the existing operating budget, although he claims the numbers are "a little better now." With that kind of shortage, you can count on missing some of your favorite teachers next year.

Hooker has also stated that the student/faculty ratio will not change: "We won't cut any faculty, we will freeze vacancies." But the loss of 80 students can mean as much as \$1 million to Bennington College. Freezing vacancies could very well cover anyone's contract coming up for renewal next year. Even the difference of five students in a school this size has a significant impact on our faculty.

"One of the worst things we can do in this kind of situation is to panic and take anybody who applies," says Ms. Corbin. "The best thing we can do right now is

STUDENT COUNCIL VOTES TO OVERRIDE HOUSE VOTE ON NEWSPAPER

By RICHARD LEITNER

On March 27th, Student Council representatives reported to Council the votes houses had cast regarding a proposal for the allocation of this term's Student Council budget. While the package was not approved as a comprehensive allocation, the representatives reported that houses had voted to allocate the amounts specified to every organization represented in the proposal.

The newspaper proposal was the only one to pass by a slim margin (nine in favor; eight opposed). A motion was made to nullify this vote. This action not only deviated from the standard and accepted voting procedures of the Student Council, but also selectively disregarded one of the decisions made during house Coffee Hours. The motion was made on grounds that the newspaper was the only organization represented in the proposal which had not been in existence prior to this term and, as such, it should have been voted on in the same manner as Leroy Logan's Shakespeare film series and the Friday Night Film proposals. The reason that Leroy's proposal was excluded from the package is that he failed to report to Council on follow-up to Council's recommendation that he appeal to the Dean of Faculty for funds. He also failed to appear at the meeting called by President Wulkowicz and Treasurer Brown with representatives from all the organizations requesting funds. At that meeting a film committee representative agreed to drop the Friday Night Film Series proposal to ease the financial burdens of other organizations.

The motion passed to override the house vote. A new motion to allocate the newspaper \$1,000 was immediately passed, giving the paper less than one-third of its original request for \$3,135. Other organizations took cuts of 20 percent off their original proposals. The newspaper staff is grateful for the funds from Council, but Council's new-found right to overrule house votes has mysterious origins.

GALLERY

By SUE DIMM

Personal Imagery

Clay

"Tinted Moments"

Hand Colored Photographs from the Past

"Personal Imagery," a show of eight artists who work in clay, is a strong exhibit. There is a good appreciation of materials, apparent in the glazing, which is integral to the work. This natural quality in glazing is quite unique to the exhibit and provides a contrast with most modern ceramics which are painted with shiny, bright glazes.

Aurore Chabot creates modern fossils that stand on legs like creatures, and liken themselves to ancient architecture. This ancient aura about the work is opposed by the modern color on the surface. "Arboreal" should, in my opinion, be called "Waiting for the Fall," since it appears that it will collapse at any moment; putting the viewer in suspense of something that will not actually happen.

Graham Mark's large sculptures are also reminiscent of fossils — inside is a smooth oval which draws one deep within, with a piercing that makes you feel the structure is light and hollow, until you look at the outside, which is rough and hard with fractures. One feels as if something was broken in half and the seed removed. The green piece is particularly striking. It reminds me of a slice of a giant rock with an outer skin of cut ovals. There is a dry green glaze which loses its opacity in spots and allows one to see the clay surface, creating another skin.

Arnold Zimmerman's seven-foot-tall vessels have a strong sense of presence. They are rimmed with deeply carved

spirals that lead the eye upward. There is a thick skin of glaze that unites the forms, while the tops are offset to break up the symmetry and provide a satisfactory conclusion to the form.

"Tinted Moments" — Hand Colored Photographs from the Past, is an exhibit that was selected from the collection of Tom and Elinor Burnside of Pawlet, Vt. It begins with a short essay about the origins of the daguerreotype and the talbotype. These were introduced in the winter of 1839, and within months people began to add color to photographs' monochromatic depiction. "The efforts to add color by hand brought representation into the expressive possibilities of photography, and with representation came imagination and departure from nature's painting itself."

The show is basically divided up into three parts: photographs of the Orient, photographs of America, and portraits. The Oriental photographs attract the most attention. They are scenes from everyday life — women drinking tea, arranging one another's hair, working in a rice paddy. Looking through a layering of color is the effect of these pictures; one cannot imagine the picture without color. There is a feeling that one is looking at the subtleties of Oriental culture that as Westerners we often miss. The perfect arrangements of the folds on the women's kimonos while drinking tea is not staged for the photographer so much as it is an inherent part of their culture. How subtle and quiet and expressive these photographs seem in our world of blatantness — small windows into a large world!

Usdan Gallery is open Monday through Friday 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., through April 16.

raise our standards and make Bennington look like an attractive place to apply to. If you accept one obnoxious student who is really difficult to deal with, you can easily lose five good students who become disappointed with the quality of their peers. We can't afford to lose five for one."

Yet, according to Ms. Corbin, Bennington can afford to withstand one rotten year.

"I don't feel directly responsible for the numbers," says Ms. Corbin. "I'm worried about next year, not this year. As Boris Spasky once said, 'It's not the first mistake that kills you; it's the one you make because of it.'"

As a result, the Admissions Office is waging a zealous campaign to secure those students who have been accepted to Bennington, yet might still make a decision to go elsewhere. Based on President Hooker's belief that "the best recruiters we have for new students are current students," Ms. Corbin is enlisting the services of Bennington students to make the college more attractive to potential freshmen.

Most of Ms. Corbin's plan seems to be riding on the success of Applicant Day to be held on April 15. The 170 students already accepted have been invited to attend, and if the Applicant Day is effective, Ms. Corbin claims that we might be able to increase the "yield" from 40 percent of the 170 to as high as 70 percent. Bennington students will have the opportunity to assist during Applicant Day; participating in a panel discussion, serving as tour guides, and even making their rooms available if visiting applicants wish to stay the night at Bennington.

"The more current students we have participating," says Ms. Corbin, "the better off we are."

Yet there are doubts within the Admissions Office itself whether this is enough to remedy the underlying problems.

"No one doubts that they're trying," said one student currently working in the Admissions Office who wished to remain unidentified. "But, besides the fact that the numbers are low, no one in the office has experience with admissions or has ever organized an Applicant Day."

Ms. Corbin, however, readily admits that her experience is limited.

"I've only been in the admissions business for six months," she says. "Everything I know about it is from what I've observed. But if you really believe in the Bennington theory of 'learning by doing,' then I should be able to make the Admissions Office work. And if I can make the Admissions Office work, then it proves that the Bennington education works."

NEWS SUMMARY

Democratic Nomination:

Hart, Mondale and Jackson face each other in the highly industrialized state of Pennsylvania Tuesday, April 10th. At stake are 216 delegates, as the Democratic contenders battle for the 1967 delegates needed for the Democratic nomination.

Iran-Iraq War:

With the Iran-Iraq War reaching a dangerous level of activity, and Iraq's newly discovered usage of chemical weapons, the U.S. prepares the Central Command for possible military action in the Persian Gulf.

El Salvador Elections:

With no definitive victor in El Salvador's recent Presidential Election, Jose Napoleon Duarte and Roberto D'Aubisson, the two leaders, will battle it out in a runoff election to be scheduled in the near future.

Haig's Memoirs:

Now that U.S. troops have pulled out of Lebanon to ships offshore, former Secretary of State Alexander Haig has charged in his Memoirs that the White House wrecked a troop withdrawal agreement in July 1982. The agreement would have secured the simultaneous withdrawal of P.L.O., Syrian and Israeli forces from Lebanon.

FROM THE EDITOR:

The editorial staff at TOOL & DIE are pleased to present this, our first issue of what will be a bi-weekly newspaper of Bennington College. We welcome your comments, suggestions, and editorial responses to anything you see published here. In addition, we are in need of feature writers on a part-time or continual basis. Please contact me if you would be interested in writing. This newspaper is designed as a vehicle through which college-wide communication can be established, and it is our hope that you will use it as such.

As a service to the community, TOOL & DIE will publish personal and classified ads in every issue. If you would like to place an ad, please fill out the form below and drop it in my box - #522. We will try to publish these ads as quickly and completely as possible, but if there is an excess of material your ad may be returned to you unpublished.

Thank you very much for your consideration and support.

Lisa Schnelwar, Editor

Staff:

Jesse Katz

Phillip Brown

Merritt Mulman

Richard Leitner

Name: _____
Box#: _____
Phone or Extension #: _____
Date: _____

TEXT OF AD: (1 word per space please)

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Younger Scholars Program

Summer 1985

The National Endowment for the Humanities has announced a grants program for individuals under the age of 21 to carry out their own noncredit humanities research projects during the summer of 1985. The Younger Scholars program will award up to 100 grants nationally for outstanding research and writing projects in such fields as history, philosophy, and the study of literature. Award recipients will be expected to work full-time for nine weeks during the summer, researching and writing a scholarly paper under the close supervision of a humanities scholar. No academic credit should be sought for these projects.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

All applicants must be under 21 years of age during the entire calendar year in which the application is submitted and must be U.S. citizens or foreign nationals who have lived in the United States for at least three consecutive years at the time of application.

THE HUMANITIES DISCIPLINES

Projects must focus on one or more of the following disciplines: history, archaeology; literature; languages; philosophy; ethics; comparative religion; jurisprudence; the history, theory, and criticism of the arts; and those areas of the social sciences that employ historical or philosophical approaches.

Deadline for Receipt of Applications:

September 15, 1984

PROGRAM EMPHASES

In both subject matter and methodology, projects must be firmly grounded in one or more of the disciplines of the humanities. Further, projects must fall within one of the following three areas:

1. The interpretation of cultural works: In a project with this emphasis, the applicant may interpret works of literature, philosophy, the visual arts, the performing arts, or other cultural forms. (Although NEH does not offer support for the creation of original works of art or for training in the arts, it does support projects that develop historical or theoretical approaches to the arts.)

2. The study of historical ideas, figures, and events: Within this area of emphasis, the applicant would be expected to investigate significant ideas, individuals, groups, or events.

3. Understanding the disciplines of the humanities: In a project with this goal, an applicant might explore the nature of the humanities by focusing on the methods of a particular discipline or by tracing the evolution of different methods or approaches within it.

HOW TO APPLY

You may write to the address given below and request that the guidelines and application instructions be sent to you.

Younger Scholars Program Guidelines
Youth Programs
Division of General Programs, Room 426
National Endowment for the Humanities
Washington, D.C. 20506

Student Council Budget

By PHILIP BROWN

Tuesday night, March 27th, after much deliberation, a Spring 1984 budget package was passed by the Student Council. It was the product of weeks of work by the Student Council President Jason Wulkowicz, and Treasurer Philip Brown, which had involved compromises by representatives of all the organizations requesting funds from the Student Council. Because of the limited funds available to the Council this semester, all parties agreed to concessions.

The budget package, which had gone back to the houses for debate and a vote during coffee hour used graphic diagrams to show the proposed outlay of funds to particular groups. The proposal also made recommendations to the student body for cuts and revisions to proposals, which might alleviate pressures on the student body.

The original \$18,500 budget was later revised to accommodate a decrease in the funds collected for the Student Council from the student activity fee. The fee, which charges each student \$25 per semester for student activities, was depleted by \$950 because of low enrollment this semester. Another approximately \$250 was allotted for payment to the Student Council's secretary.

The resulting \$17,300 budget was less than expected and included the previous \$2,500 fall allotment to Silo, the literary publication, as well as Silo's new allotment presently estimated at \$2,000. Untouched was the previously allotted \$6,400 Film Society budget.

The Recreation Committee budget is currently estimated at approximately \$4,000 and the Newspaper at \$1,000. The Green Mountain Forum is set to receive \$400 and the Senior Committee, which will sponsor a speaker this year, will receive \$800. Due to the revisions that must be made to accommodate the new lower budget, each category will be cut slightly.

The Student Council, however, is making an appeal to Michael Hooker, President of the College, to make up the funds which have been lost due to lowered enrollment.

The proposal had trouble in the Student Council, coming under a great deal of criticism. The proposal's formation was particularly controversial, as it represented a change from the past. It was believed by Wulkowicz and Brown, however, as well as other members of

Council, that the only way to more equitably distribute Student Council's funds was to evaluate all proposals simultaneously. Presently, all that remains not allotted in Student Council's budget is an \$800 safety fund to cover any overexpenditures or miscalculations.

Each element of the package, as well as the entire package, was voted on in the houses. In Council, the entire package did not pass, but all elements of the package did pass, except for the Newspaper proposal, which was adjusted to \$1,000 from its original allotment of \$1,600.

A decision on the final and revised budget allotment is expected soon.

A PLAN FOR THE REVITALIZATION OF BENNINGTON COLLEGE

Submitted to the Administration, Faculty and Trustees, May 1, 1984.
Conceived and Written by Paul Beyer

INTRODUCTION: (first in a series) It has been said that Bennington College was founded upon, and at one time was the milestone, of Telic Reformation. In 1984, it is said that Bennington College has come dangerously close to the edge of an unreconcilable deficit, and that it looks with great trepidation into an uncertain economic future. Likewise, that its educational processes are stifled and numb with the precedence of an ever-changing society, and that its administrative faculties are impotent and shot through with an ineffectual complacency. This, like the current notion of the Art world at large, is a cruel admixture of realization and refutability. The loss of Bennington's one-time ontologic certainty, is now a built-in part of the institution. Dizzy and romantic with concealed doubt, Bennington College is once again the milestone for the subtle, evolutionary posture of the Arts and Humanities in Western society. Herein lies my own study of Bennington College, its history and its self-contained contract with the Art world since its inception in 1932. Setting a belaboring historical discourse aside, my observations stem from the most recent, i.e. the most observable; a topological survey of modernism, post-modernism, and contemporary art in this country, and how such a state has brought about a disquieting reversal of the philosophic apparatus Bennington College was founded upon.

The Art world, like a study in the Humanities, has become an im-

provisation in the face of a crisis: the withering away of traditional culture. Art and language forms having de-ossified themselves and their relation to patronage, are now stuck in an opaque, post-modern pluralism, the credo of subjective determinism. In the educational realm, passive aims and unchallenged decadence have led to a meaningless permissiveness, the abrogation of responsibility, and the unfocused eccentricity too often epitomized by the adolescent, scanty flourishes of the written and plastic arts at Bennington. Having lost faith in itself, "general studies" at Bennington College provides little more than an elaborate history lesson, the conditions of which are no longer connected to the problematic index of personal inquiry instilled in the media-struck youth of today. "Insularity," as the Accreditation Report insightfully points out, is the result, shielding the already atrophied faculty from confronting issues directly, from allowing a cross-pollination of ideas to transform and enrich the social arena outside Bennington College. An arena, which today thrives on integration and heterogeneous forms of commercialism. For an institution based on the institution of "change," Bennington College would appear to have become quite the opposite. In short, Bennington College is choking itself to death, and steps toward the revitalization of technique and subject matter can no longer be seen as a luxury, but a necessity for the survival of the institution. To approach the college's severe deficit with cushy Student Service incentive plans, or the unimaginative refurbishing of a campus cafe, is a good initial attempt toward the attitude of change, yet superficial and immediate. Conquering inflated attrition and deflated admission rates is a complex issue that needs attending from a number of perspectives.

It is my sole intention to agitate a response in regard to these issues, hence I would like to place a challenge to anyone interested in contributing to this forum. This introduction, being the first of a four-part proposal I will be submitting to the Administration and Trustees on May 1, will be followed-up by a discussion on the following issues:

1. The post-modern stance: transcendence of the "object": the re-interpretation of history. Tragedy in a contemporary society?

2. The mismanagement of Bennington College.

3. Plans, proposals, restructuring, specifics; how to implement the conceptual and bring Bennington College into the 20th century; an attempt to stretch towards a vital, vibrant network of contemporary ideas and people: a highly marketable social commodity.

BAR NEWS

By JESSE KATZ

If you haven't heard yet, The Carousel — snuggled in the hamlet of Walloomsac, N.Y., home of late night disco and atavistic urinals — was closed this winter. Located on the north side of Route 67, right next to the sign explaining New York's handgun laws, The Carousel has survived fights, fires, and theft to become one of New England's leading recreational facilities.

Well, last fall a 17-year-old kid from the town of Bennington allegedly got drunk at The Carousel and proceeded to wrap his Jeep around a telephone pole, which resulted in "serious injury to his spinal cord." The parents, of course, sued Triumph State Line Enterprises Inc., which does business as The Carousel, on four counts of negligence, coming to a grand total of \$6 million in damages.

Gareth H. Caldbeck, a Rutland attorney who is representing the youth's family, claimed in a recent article in the Bennington Banner: "The Carousel negligently promoted a reputation for a loud and raucous atmosphere, as well as a reputation for admitting minors to its place of business..."

Meanwhile, The Carousel remains closed, and Triumph State Line Enterprises Inc. has no listing in the Hoosick, N.Y. telephone directory.

One completely unsubstantiated rumor has it that The Carousel was purchased by a Boston-based disco chain, which is now in the process of remodeling the facilities. But will the oil cans go?

Also being renovated is Delaney's, about another couple miles past The Carousel on Route 67. Once merely the final stop of last-call slugs, with old Forrest there not hesitating to serve up a Genny from the 19th century bar at 4:30 a.m., Delaney's is now attempting to capitalize on The Carousel's absence from the weekend dance scene. Some of the back rooms, once banquet rooms for the decaying hotel, have been opened up to accommodate a dance floor and the sounds of Visible Twitch every Saturday night. Forrest is gone, and with him most of the character, but the dart board remains.

Most of you are familiar with the sight of John Briggs coolly uncapping Rolling Rocks every night at The Villager in North Bennington. Yet all nights are not created equal. Wednesday at The V is College Night, featuring large pitchers of draft for \$1.75, small pitchers for 90 cents, and free music on the jukebox. Thursday is Ladies' Night with the first drink at regular price and the next one-half off. And Monday through Friday, 4-6 p.m., is of course, Happy Hour, at which time you can buy a Beck's Dark for only \$1.10. Try playing Big Strike, wholesome American fun without a video screen.

Future Prospects

By MERRITT MULMAN

(This is part one of a two-part series dealing with life after Bennington. Part two will deal with the question of student loan debt. The survey referred to in this article was conducted over the 1983 Non-Resident Term by Richard Leitner and myself. We contacted by mail all of the graduates from the 1981 and 1982 classes. We received 17 percent of the questionnaires back.)

"The only job available to me was waiting tables part-time at a local restaurant. I recently entered graduate school, part of the reason for continuing my education was lack of viable options (i.e. no good employment opportunities)."

These could easily be the words of any recent college graduate. The job market is saturated, and a job, even a lousy one, is difficult to find. The element that distinguishes this quote is that it comes from a recent Bennington graduate.

While we are at Bennington, it is difficult to picture ourselves out there in the "real world." The fact of the matter is that at some point in our careers here the realization that this stay in Utopia is but a limited one will befall us all. Thus, we are forced to ask the question which has been taboo for four years: What awaits us when we leave Bennington College? In order to answer this question we felt that a look into the histories of those who have experienced it was necessary. A direct survey of the two most recent graduating classes was conducted. The questions were on various topics including annual income, parental support and student loan status. The responses were sobering.

In this age of high technology and specialized education a liberal arts degree is becoming somewhat of an endangered species. We all knew upon entering Bennington that the degree would show a commitment to learning, not a specific career goal. Although the Bennington diploma is a relatively respected document, it does not automatically manifest itself into a job for its recipient. The reality is that many students are out of school an average of three months before they can find some employment. Much of this employment is in the form of part-time, non-career oriented work. The amount of time needed to find work is even greater among people who wish to find employment in the areas of visual and performing arts.

The average annual income for these men and women was \$9,820. Of all the respondents, only one person was ear-

ning an income in excess of \$25,000. Of the people who said they were able to find work immediately, the average income was \$6,941.

These incomes are not enough money to support oneself. This, of course, may be disputed, but according to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) students who borrow \$10,000 in guaranteed student loans will need to be earning an annual income of \$25,000 in order to repay the loans. This figure is based on 6 percent of the income, which is what VSAC considers to be the proper percentage to be used to repay student loans.

What has inevitably occurred is that the graduates find themselves in positions which require them to take support from their families. Forty-two percent of the respondents were either receiving money to subsidize their incomes or room and board, and in a few cases students were receiving both from their parents. Some of the parents have picked up the student loans, while a couple of the other students have been forced to default on their loans altogether.

The Non-Resident Term is in part incorporated into the curriculum to help alleviate the employment problems that most liberal arts graduates encounter. There was no mention in the survey that any jobs were derived from the NRT. The NRT is in theory a terrific forum for creating employment opportunities, but there is no evidence from this survey that the theory has any practical applications. Most of the students find NRT jobs relatively easy to obtain; a job to support oneself on in New York is more difficult to find, but both types of jobs are truly easy to get when you compare them with a permanent position. The employer knows that it is for a nine-week period and is much more willing to take a chance. What may be occurring is that students are not aware of the tightness of the job market and have been fooled with the good fortune of landing NRT jobs in the past. It was offered by a respondent that people should begin their post-graduation preparation before June of the senior year.

We realize that the benefit of a Bennington education is not something that one can put a price tag on, but the reality of the situation is that at some point most of us are going to have to find a job and support ourselves.

To be continued next issue

EDITORIAL

When school reconvened this semester, a new proposal, the NRT proposal, was passed out to the student body. The proposal, which made its way to the Student Council earlier this semester, called for a restructuring of student government and was meant to kick off further dialogue in the community about how to improve the quality of life at Bennington College. The committee's findings were the result of the concern many students felt about the present structure of student government and student activities, and offered suggestions on how to improve communication among different groups in the community. Judging by Student Council's handling of the proposal and the current state of Student Council, the committee's findings should be seriously considered.

Diagnosed Student Council ills include: poor organization, a limited scope, and illegitimate representation. The casual/effect relationship of these problems can be found in a lack of student interest in the community and even in outright despondency for student government. Helplessness, hopelessness, and apathy have been the result. Perhaps the greatest disease smothering our student government today is the lack of student leadership.

Leadership for the Student Council could mean apathy's eventual demise. It could mean a greater awareness from the student body that there were people who cared and were willing to donate their time and energy for the benefit of the community.

Presently the Student Council does not respect leadership or innovation, but strives to condemn it. Many members of the Council do not perceive their role in student government as responsible leaders, but as mere messengers to their constituency. Some may chalk this up to the inexperience of these members of Council. I, however, see this as a trend which has existed for a long time. Other representatives believe that a one-hour long Sunday evening bullshit session (Coffee Hour) is structure enough to adequately convey the pros and cons of a particular issue or proposal, so that the houses can vote on it in an educated fashion.

Given the results that have been forwarded to Student Council on a number of issues, educated, even representative, decisions are not being made. For example: Is it best to have the houses vote on proposals for money when there is no current balance to work from? This is precisely what happened at the first Sunday night Coffee Hour. Clearly, if the student body had been told by their representatives that a balance of the general fund was not available, it would

have refused to vote on any measure involving money. This type of representation is only representative of the fiasco we now call student government.

A message to all present and future Student Council Representatives — The position of Student Council representative is not clearly outlined anywhere, as can be assumed from the ineffectiveness of our present system of representation. There is reluctance by representatives, first, to explain the issues to their houses completely, both pro and con, and then, to make sure they completely understand what they must decide upon. Representatives are student leaders. They are elected officials who have been given the trust of their houses to serve the community in the best way they can. Right now, however, student government refuses to address its most basic concern, the welfare of the student body. Instead, trivial debates, time-consuming and often hostile, turn student council into a bunch of self-interested people who love to listen to their own voices, yet who refuse to consciously develop proposals. Student council is not serving everyone's best interests if representatives continue to see themselves as serving only once a week. Working for the community so as to gain respect and clarity as to your position requires hard work and determination as well as the guts to lay your ass on the line in a group for what you think is right. Respect should also exist for one's adversaries in Student Council, as one day they may be allies. Respect for oneself as a leader requires recognition of the leadership ability of others.

Similarly, the laws of the Student Council constitution are consistently overlooked, as are Robert's rules of order, which are an absolute necessity in a forum where debate is heard. This lack of respect for the institutions of the Student Council, indeed, the very nature of the position of a representative, leaves much to be desired. The stark and sobering truth is that if Student Council is to function more effectively in the future it must first establish some order while Council convenes in the present.

I speak specifically to the many occasions when votes were either nullified or business that had begun was never ended. As the March 27 meeting showed, where debate had begun on the legitimacy of some of the Council representatives while debating the very important budget package which then stood before Council, Council has a habit of getting sidetracked from the agenda. This was damaging and irresponsible behavior. Recreation Committee, Film Committee, and this newspaper all

waited for the Student Council to come to some understanding on the nature of being an off-off campus representative while important proposals were on the floor for discussion. Off-off representation may be an important issue but it was not on the agenda that evening and debate on that issue only deferred discussion on that evening's agenda. Other important issues have been shelved indefinitely, such as the functioning of the newly elected Student Council budget committee which was designed to review the Council's many financial proposals.

Being a representative and a leader means searching for the elements of a new constitution, a new understanding of being a representative, and a new vitality to accomplish these things. The president of Student Council cannot lead the community in a rebellion singlehandedly as happened last semester, as this movement will ignore the existing system. We must first have a system to change the system. However, the community does need the individual leadership of the president to initiate the small changes necessary to implement large scale alterations. For Student Council to function as it should will require a lot of thought and effort. Leadership is nothing without the determination to see it through to its completion, and to do this requires representatives who will force the Council to take up issues to change the existing system, as suggested by the NRT proposal. Now that the spring budget has been decided upon, there is finally an opening for real and constructive change.