

10/8/67

Re: The faculty resolution.

Students are going to other schools because:

1. They do not desire to reside in a physical environment consisting of one acre per student, surrounded by 1 square mile for every person, 350 miles in every direction.
2. They need more diversion and varieties of activity than their own introspection and productivity, spiced with the joy of bickering over the hours for non-existent men in rooms. This assertion is based on the assumption -- no offense to Dewey or Marx -- that men (sic) are more than producers.
3. Many prospective students are going to other institutions because those institutions are offering increasingly rich and vital programs in the humanities. Sometimes the programs are far more exciting than corresponding areas of study offered here.
4. The combination of those academic programs with the wealth of urban life and the cultural advantages of urban communities accounts in great part for the rejection of Bennington.
5. In addition, Bennington is very expensive.
6. The faculty, in making reference to our student generation, must recognize that the attrition rate in all universities and colleges are climbing for many complex and important reasons, and that Bennington's attrition rate has always been high. ( It has been suggested by some that it used to be considered important that a student have the sanctioned alternative of leaving Bennington for a variety of educational, emotional, or purely personal reasons.)
- (7 and parenthetically: The insistence that students, all students, live on campus in effect puts many students in a more socially restrictive situation than their counterparts in universities, where off-campus living is available.)

The faculty seems to find the cause of many of Bennington's problems in the inability of students "to cope with a situation in which legal privileges are taken for granted and the primary focus of interest is the welfare of the community" as witnessed by the "anarchy that prevails in their houses", which, according to the Resolution, is making "many students unable to function effectively".

As we understand the Resolution, the faculty has made a causal connection between the inability of students to cope with freedom, privilege, and community responsibility and what they call the "consequences", I.e.:

1. a "mounting attrition rate"
2. a "mounting number of applicants for admission who turn us down after we have accepted them"
3. "an apparent decline in total application"
4. "the growing anxiety of alumnae and other friends of the College, on whom the College depends to recruit students, raise scholarship funds, and make up part of the annual deficit that our

o operations entail".

5. ~~that~~ "the vitality and significance of the College are threatened".

We see no reasonable connection between what the faculty cites as the causes and consequences in this situation. We do not understand the content of the cause and effect sequences set up in the Resolution and we would welcome further explication from the faculty.

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P.S. This galley is in no way a quarrel with either the privilege or the advisability of direct faculty participation in all issues. The signers of this galley welcome that participation and hope that it will prove invigorating and meaningful. Nevertheless we do question the assumptions of cause and effect made in the Resolution. We hope that this galley will be interpreted as a manifestation of the reciprocity that we are certain the faculty desires.

October 8 1967

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