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Bemington College
March 19, 1941

The Educational Policies Committee met with the newly elected members at 6:30 in the committee dining room on Wednesday, March 19. Present were Elizabeth Plimpton, Vida Ginsberg, Antoinette Larrabee, Phoebe Arnold, Sylvia Thayer, Mary Berna, Cynthia Jenkinson, Joan Leonard, Margaret Klaw, Hilda Wheelright, Joan Strong, Helen Levine, Ann Mills, Margaret Dudley, and Mr. Leigh.

Philosophy Series

The chairman reported that the General Meetings Committee would like the EPC to foster interest in the coming Philosophy Series. The Community Council is making a point of explaining the series in house meetings, to the Freshmen in particular, and the EPC members could cooperate with them to advantage. The fact that the series is planned for the whole community, not for special interests, and that it is actually on subjects of vital significance in the light of contemporary events should be stressed. It was mentioned that the EPC and Council members could suggest means of student participation in the Series, such as writing out questions as they occur in the course of a lecture, and organizing small, informal discussion groups led by Philosophy students.

Subcommittees of the EPC

The chairman asked Helen Levine to tell the other members how she had handled the selection of her Freshman member on her sub-committee. Since there are thirty-three first year Social Studies Trial Majors, Helen explained, she did not know which one would be most helpful to her or would be most useful to the other Freshmen. So she called a meeting of them and discussed the functions of the EPC and its sub-committees with them. Then she asked them to nominate several of their number, and after consultation with these girls' counselors, Helen will make her choice.

The committee agreed that this was an excellent procedure to follow in cases where the group is large and the representative does not know them individually. It was noted that this mechanism provided a good way for the EPC to clarify its functions to Freshmen and to establish closer contact with them.

It was agreed that this procedure should be recommended for future utilization.

General Meetings Committee

The secretary introduced the subject of nominations for the student member of the Meetings Committee. She said she had talked with Miss Shelly on the subject in regard to expression on the part of some students of dissatisfaction with the present degree of representation of student opinion on the committee. Enlargement of the representation is not a practical solution, it was felt by the Meetings Committee, but the suggestion was made that the student member be from the Community Council. Then she would have ready access to student opinion.

The EPC felt that this was not the solution, however, because (1) the council members are busy enough, and (2) an older student (the Council members are generally Sophomores) who knows the past meetings program better would be more useful.

It was decided that the best safeguard against a member who does not bring student opinion to the Committee properly lies in (1) thoughtful nominations by the EPC, and (2) stress by the EPC upon the member's making use of the Council and EPC to obtain opinion. The secretary was instructed to write a memorandum to the Community Council informing them of the functions of the student member of the Meetings Committee, as outlined on p. .

The new EPC agreed to meet on March 20, after thinking over possible nominees, to make their selections. The Meetings Committee wants these as soon as possible.

Election of Officers

The chairman opened discussion of qualifications for the office of chairman. Executive ability, real appreciation of the functions, values, and prestige of the EPC, and the ability to subordinate the problems of her own Major in favor of consideration of general problems was stressed.

The nominees were Joan Leonard, Helen Levine and Cynthia Jenkinson. Joan Leonard was elected chairman.

The duties of the secretary were then outlined by the retiring officer. The necessity for attention to detail and cooperation with the chairman were emphasized. Helen Levine and Cynthia Jenkinson were nominated. Helen Levine was elected.

Functions of the EPC

Mr. Leigh outlined his concept of the EPC as an institutionalized channel for student reactions to educational policies. Its business is to present to faculty in orderly, responsible form what lies in students' minds about teaching methods and the general educational experience.

Membership on the EPC is a delicate responsibility calling for diplomacy and tact, and some instructors have yet to learn to accept the EPC as a valuable and serious-minded group.

In watching the careers of a number of EPCs, Mr. Leigh has found that when the committee takes too important a view of its function, it is unsuccessful. Sometimes they attempt to tackle problems which are either not in their province at all, being best handled by the Executive Committee as being more expert, and at other times they attempt things which are too big. It is necessary to attack only manageable problems, within the realm of possible accomplishment in a year. For instance, the Committee might be agreed that Ferrington should be a coeducational college. But to effect that change would take years and a great deal of money, etc. It would be futile for the EPC to attack it.

Mr. Leigh closed by wishing the new Committee success, and the meeting was adjourned at eight p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret Dudley, secretary