

REPORT TO THE FACULTY AND TRUSTEES OF BENNINGTON COLLEGE

The Trustee-Faculty Committee to
Explore the Future of the College

April, 1961

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Explore the Future of Bennington College

Mrs. Richard S. Emmet, Chairman
Mr. Charles Dollard
Mr. Myron S. Falk, Jr.
Mr. Stanley Edgar Hyman
Mr. Lionel Nowak
Mr. Wallace P. Scott
Mr. Rush Welter

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Preliminary Considerations	1
1. Philosophical Considerations	4
2. Empirical Difficulties	9
3. Other Considerations	22
II. Proposed Changes in the Curriculum	33
1. The Sophomore and Junior Years	35
2. The Freshman Year	45
3. The Senior Year	48
III. Counseling and Panels	53
1. Counseling	53
2. The Educational Counseling Committees	62
IV. Non-Academic Activities	72
1. The Non-Resident Term	72
2. Student Social Life	78
3. General Meetings	80
V. Expansion of the College	83
VI. Unsolved Problems	99
Appendix. The Non-Resident Term Questionnaire	104
Index.	110

Tables:

Table I. Enrollments for 603 Students Extrapolated from Fall 1959	96
Table II. "Ideal" Enrollments	97
Table III. Expansion to 62 Faculty Members, Charging Sabbaticals Against Appointments	98
Table IV. Potential Values Assigned the N.R.T.	105
Table V. Actual Values of the N.R.T. in 1960	105
Table VI. Realization of Potential Values Assigned to the N.R.T.	106

I. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Soon after President Fels came to Bennington College he initiated, with support from the Fund for the Advancement of Education of the Ford Foundation, a series of studies of the operations of the college. These preliminary studies prepared the way, in turn, for an extended exploration of the educational future of the college, which was also supported in part by the Ford Foundation, and which was undertaken by a committee made up of three members of the board of trustees of the college and four members of its teaching faculty. The pages that follow constitute the final report and recommendations of that committee to the president, the faculty, and the board of trustees.

The preliminary studies of the college were intended only to provide information that would assist in educational planning for the future, but they presented the members of the trustee-faculty committee with one inescapable financial consideration bearing on the educational stature and prospects of the college. Because of revolutionary developments in American higher education, which Bennington cannot afford to ignore, it must soon take steps to raise faculty salaries markedly. There is no need to elaborate on the circumstances that led to this conclusion, because its main elements are obvious. Colleges throughout the United States are pre-

paring themselves to teach a vastly increased number of students, and they will be forced to compete for effective teachers. To the extent that Bennington College prides itself on effective teaching it will be vulnerable to this sort of competition unless it too can compete in salaries and other professional perquisites.

Hence the committee to explore the future of Bennington College began its deliberations with a discussion of the features peculiar to the college that make it unusually expensive of faculty time: weekly counseling, small classes and tutorials, frequent close contact with students. The committee soon agreed, however, that a really good college education requires most of these faculty commitments, or at least that no arithmetical formulas increasing the ratio between students and faculty or otherwise changing our educational policies can be justified a priori. It decided to approach the college's future in other terms entirely, considering shortcomings in our present academic practices, and devising means whereby they might be overcome. It had some faith that a better education for our students might also be a more economical enterprise for our faculty, in that there is admittedly a good deal of unrewarding drudgery in what the faculty now finds itself doing. But the committee's main premise was that the quality of our education is the only criterion we can adopt in reexamining our present policies, and in the light of Bennington's experience it had

reason to hope that quality would attract financial resources.

Fortunately, the same phenomenon that forces the college to search for additional sources of revenue may also afford it some opportunity for adjusting its standards and curriculum. A continuing increase in college applications should make possible (among other things) a still more selective admissions policy, a more deliberate shaping of our student body, or an expansion of the college if that step proves advantageous. But the opportunities that increased applications may create must be dealt with consciously and constructively if we are to derive the maximum advantages from them. To leave the policies of the college unexamined and unrevised at this time would almost inevitably be to condemn it to carrying forward the shortcomings of the past under an illusion that our problems will disappear automatically as college applications rise.

It was in this context that the committee began to re-examine the fundamental commitments of the college: not to abandon what was good, but to consider which of its original premises were still valid and which might be amended or discarded either in theory or in practice. In the opinion of the committee, the college is such a strong institution educationally that its premises and practices invite the most rigorous and candid scrutiny its supporters can give them.

1. Philosophical Considerations

In general, of course, the committee recognized that our goal is and should be a liberal education. Whatever our students are destined to become after they graduate, they will have been well served by us only if they have had some opportunity to develop an informed perspective on their culture and their time, and they will have been badly served if we have offered them no more than technical preparation to meet the specific demands that their prospective roles in society may place upon them. For the same reason, the college curriculum should embrace the visual and performing arts as well as the social sciences, the natural sciences and mathematics as well as literature and language. The committee accepted these commitments of the college without controversy.

At the same time, the committee also concurred in the faculty's belief that the most effective means of achieving the goals of a liberal education are the techniques that are frequently identified with progressive education. It is not that the Bennington College faculty is deliberately or even consciously "progressive" in its orientation; but by temperament and experience alike most of its members have come to observe progressive principles in their everyday activities as teachers. That is, they bear in mind as teachers and counselors a number of desirable goals and capabilities toward which each student's career should probably lead, but they

also recognize that it is the student's own commitments and activities that will ultimately determine the extent to which she can and will make those goals and capabilities a part of her life. Hence they allow her a considerable freedom to find her own way to a reasonably complete education.

The committee had no wish to challenge these basic principles, but it felt some need to spell them out more sharply as a way of discovering where our current practice fails to serve our declared purposes. In reaffirming the college's belief in a liberal education, for example, the committee agreed that all of the tastes, values, and skills, all of the habits, facts, and perspectives that a college student may acquire become truly liberal only to the extent that they are a resource for her continued intellectual and aesthetic and emotional development. No college can guarantee that all of its students will be effectively educated persons when they leave the campus, and there is certainly no way to measure precisely what capacities for growth they take away with them, but the committee felt that so far as possible the Bennington College degree should stand for long-range educational promise as well as an achieved ability to deal with college work.

The committee's agreement on this point led naturally to a discussion of the extent to which any student can participate effectively in the culture in which she is to live unless she is reasonably well acquainted with its past and its

present and has some means for dealing with its future. In one set of terms, the problem is one of ensuring that all students who lay claim to a liberal education possess a minimal acquaintance with the basic ideas, values, theories, and techniques that have shaped the world in which they live. In other terms, the problem may be stated as one of ensuring both breadth and depth in every course of study leading to the degree, inasmuch as no one can be truly deep who is not also broad, and vice versa. In the judgment of the committee, however, these formulations and others like them misstate many of the problems they are designed to solve. They are valid in the sense that all truisms have their validity; but they fail to confront the educational process in directly relevant terms, and they threaten it with arbitrary criteria that can be met with facility and forgotten with ease.

It seemed to the committee that instead of attempting to define common educational goals to which each student must be held, the college is wise to encourage each craft or discipline that she pursues to define its own goals, but to make sure at the same time that no one craft or discipline becomes the only resource a student develops during her four years in college. The effect of such a pluralistic approach to liberal education is to assert the over-all educational aim of the college not as a hierarchy of formally-stated goals but as a cluster of different kinds of abilities that each student develops and brings to the point at which she will be capable

of further developing them independently or with a minimum of formal instruction. It is, in short, to carry the student to the point from which she can and in all probability will become an effective participant in the culture because of her informed interest in it.

The general proposition that the college best achieves its over-all goal by encouraging the development of each student's capabilities accords particularly well with the sense of the faculty that education is an intrinsically creative and clearly individual process. In the view of the faculty, which the committee shares, learning is a process that takes place in the student--not in the classroom or in the studio or laboratory, although these are indispensable accessories--and the strength of the college has been its insistence that every study constitute a rediscovery of significant problems and significant answers in the various crafts and disciplines it teaches. No one believes that this "creative" method is always successful, and everyone is aware that it leaves gaps not only between disciplines but also within them. But it has the virtue of providing the capable student with all the aids we can muster to enable her to become in her own right something of a musician, something of an anthropologist, something of a poet.

Dependence upon the separate disciplines to educate each student has the further effect of raising the standards that she must meet in order to qualify for the bachelor's degree.

Again, the structure of the college today is an accumulation of various precedents, which bear no necessary relationship to each other, or which solve some problems but aggravate others. A comprehensive new arrangement of our curriculum and our expectations should help to rationalize our work as teachers and make us more effective while reducing some of our burdens. Still further, when confronted with difficulties we are too often content to let pious affirmation substitute for actual performance. According to the general theory of the college, for example, every member of the faculty does everything well--and we ignore the possibility that each might be more effective in a renovated educational structure. All these considerations point to the potential value of institutional reforms as a way of dealing with our problems.

Perhaps our most significant problem, in the judgment of the committee, is that we do not challenge every student to achieve a bona fide education. Our well-founded belief that learning is a purposive activity, that only a student's own interests and activities can bring her to make good use of her educational opportunities, has sometimes led us to accept any kind of purpose and any kind of activity as a valid definition of the higher learning. In theory, an active student broadens the range of her thinking, moves out into new fields of study, as she becomes more involved in a given craft or discipline. In practice, however, she may not; and

we have found no proper way of making her degree depend upon this sort of extended grasp of the humanities.¹

This weakness in our educational system is most clearly demonstrated by the results of the committee's study of student programs. Several faculty members were asked to provide the names of relatively recent graduates who had made unusually effective use of the college. The same faculty members were also asked to provide the names of recent graduates who had made no better than an average use of it. The educational careers of these two groups of students were then compared in some detail to see whether there were important differences between them.

The differences proved to be striking. On one level, there was an obvious tendency for the "excellent" students to have made higher scores on the College Board aptitude examinations, and to have achieved greater distinction in the college, than the "average" students. Nevertheless, there were enough excellent students with low scores, and enough average students with high scores, to indicate that the faculty's designations were based upon the use made of Bennington College rather than upon the students' potential, and to suggest that student differences had not been overwhelming barriers to effective use of the college. More significantly, the excellent students had almost uniformly

1. By "humanities" the committee means all of the disciplines that Bennington now offers or would wish to offer.

chosen one kind of program while in college, whereas the average students had chosen another. The excellent students were distinguished by a serious pursuit of the major and an equally serious (though sometimes abbreviated) pursuit of at least one other field of study. Moreover, they displayed a tendency to work at the most advanced level of which they were capable outside of the major as well as within it, and to devote several terms or even years to second fields of study. They also tended to work hard: many of them had taken five courses during most of their stay in college.

By contrast, the average students generally followed a major program surrounded by brief and even tentative experiences in a number of non-major disciplines. They also tended to work at the introductory level outside of the major, to the extent even of enrolling in beginning courses during their junior and senior years. Understandably, they were far less inclined than the excellent students to attempt five courses instead of four; but their records indicate that it was lack of commitment rather than lack of ability that held some of them back from a fifth course. Finally, their tentative plans and their instructors' comments indicate that most of them conceived of their education in external and transitional terms, as a step on the way to some other destination, be it profession, vocation, or marriage. On the other hand, the excellent students visualized their studies far more sharply in terms of goals and purposes intrinsic to them as humanis-

tic disciplines. Adapting the terminology that David Riesman has employed, we might say that the excellent students had been "inner-directed" and the average students "other-directed" with respect to their college educations.²

The differences, in any event, were unmistakable; their implications may be more problematical. Obviously, average students are not so likely as excellent students to pursue scholarship for its own sake, nor to press into more than one field of serious study at one time, nor to burden themselves voluntarily with additional courses. But the most significant finding of the whole study of student programs was that the educational counseling committees of the college had put obstacles in the way of the excellent students' typical educational planning, whereas they had accepted without criticism the undistinguished programs of the average students. This was one of the reasons the excellent students customarily enrolled in five courses: the committees insisted upon a distribution of academic interests, which the excellent students could accommodate to their much more serious purposes in fields outside the major only by taking extra courses. Meanwhile the average students effectively met the requirements of distribution, yet not--according to faculty members who had taught them--the demands of education.

2. The terminology is directly applicable, without adaptation, to those average students whose programs were apparently shaped by their parents.

On the basis of these considerations the committee believes that our present educational structure does not work effectively to maintain the standards that we generally ascribe to it. The committee recognizes that we may always have difficulty in attracting a sufficient number of potentially excellent students to enable us to gear the whole college to such excellence. But we have no reason to set our standards low, nor to define our educational patterns in such terms as to limit our best students unreasonably while making hardly any demands of our less able students. To the extent that many of our average students might well have met different criteria had we found means to enforce them, in fact, we have not even observed standards that are already plausible for today's student body.

Nor is our difficulty one that arises simply because the educational counseling committees have permitted weak students to choose weak programs while discouraging strong students from choosing strong ones; if it were, perhaps a simple exhortation to the committees would suffice for educational reform. Rather, the "balanced" program is a mark of our lack of institutional criteria for a legitimate education, coupled in many cases with sentimental confusions about student freedom and about tailoring every program to a student's inner needs. Within the major, it is clear, a student usually finds her path fairly clearly defined by requirements that the faculty has established or by natural

sequences in the courses the division offers. Here, indeed, the craft tends to set the standards; but in other realms of a student's career it frequently does not. As our study indicates, a weak student may "pick up" a course in the social sciences, sample work in the visual arts, acquire "background" in literature, all without developing the kind of insight into each that will make it a permanently effective part of her education. Meanwhile, she is far less likely merely to sojourn in music, which treats all of its students as if they were in some sense majors, and she finds time for dance on the side only because the dance "extra" makes it possible for her to treat dance superficially without being penalized for her lack of involvement. Clearly, our high purposes are seldom realized in our practice.

Our greatest specific weakness lies in our students' substantial neglect of the natural sciences as part of a liberal education. Bennington College prides itself upon treating every humanistic discipline as having equal value in the higher education, but only 7 out of 147 students who graduated from the college in the last three years presented major work in science for the degree.³ Admittedly, 114 of the remaining 140 students had taken at least one course in science or mathematics, but 13 had taken no work in the science division

³. Nineteen students are omitted from these tabulations because they had transferred to Bennington from other colleges where many of them had been compelled to take freshman science. Additional special students and students who did not graduate with their class are also omitted.

apart from mathematics, and 111 in all had taken no more than a single year's work in either science or mathematics. Furthermore, 89 students had taken only introductory courses in natural science, whereas 12 had taken more advanced work. Finally, just over half of the 101 graduates who had enrolled in a science had taken only Human Life and Environment. Every evidence suggests that exploration in the laboratory sciences had been slight.

This year's enrollments in the sciences suggest that today's freshmen may be more likely than some of their predecessors to begin their college careers with a course in science. (Many of the seniors of 1958, 1959, and 1960 first ventured into the sciences only during their junior or senior years.) In the view of the committee, however, these early enrollments will prove fruitful only if a number of beginning students go on to make science a continuing part of their education. Yet the expectations the college now lays before the student body, both formally and informally, hardly support commitments of this protracted sort for anyone but the dedicated majors. Even if most freshmen are being persuaded to attempt beginning work in the sciences, that is, we have not yet made science an equal partner in the curriculum. We have only installed an informal science requirement that works to satisfy our consciences without inducing students to view science intelligently.

Inadequate science enrollments are in some ways only

symptomatic of a larger problem of student freedom, however. In the considered judgment of the committee, the freedom a student should have in choosing among legitimate paths to the degree (or making lesser choices en route to it) does not constitute a reason for permitting her to choose her path badly--i.e. at random, or without due regard for the educational implications of her choice. Yet individual students have notoriously failed to meet legitimate standards of performance and expectation because the college had no firm ground for dealing with their oversights or their neglect. Discussion of such students among the faculty almost invariably raises controversy, in which advocates of "freedom" take extreme positions against the equally extreme advocates of "standards," and the committee is aware that it is inviting cleavage within the faculty by raising the question. It feels, however, that the issue of student freedom must be dealt with explicitly and imaginatively if we are to raise our educational achievements to the level of our professed aims.

The committee suggests that, in establishing what amounts to a science requirement, in authorizing educational counseling committees to supervise student programs, and in permitting the various divisions to establish requirements for their majors, the faculty has already adopted the view that free choice by students must none the less contribute to certain recognized goals. At the same time, however, the

committee feels that neither the informal science requirement nor the counseling committees' rule-of-thumb "balance" in student programs has worked to encourage truly significant work, and it finds that divisional supervision of students' final two years has often prevented them from developing anywhere but in the major. In short, it senses that we have moved from a regime of freedom toward a regime of controls without achieving the over-all educational goals those controls should properly serve.

From the point of view of the committee, in fact, our various institutional techniques for shaping student programs wisely have gone too far toward establishing formal models of a satisfactory education, which may well be arbitrary in some cases if ineffective in others. And our practices have also had the unfortunate effect of emphasizing the differences between those who defend the freedom of the student in virtually anarchic terms, and those who inspect student programs for evidence of conformity to the tenets of general education or other external standards. Some new approach is needed that will offer every student a bona fide choice among the paths that she may follow, but leave no confusion in her mind about her need to follow those paths to a point of some achievement.

It is one of the premises of the college that counseling solves (or can be expected to solve) such difficulties. Ideally, the counselor ensures that the student's program makes sense both in and out of the major, helps her to order

the wide variety of demands upon her time and energy, encourages her to extend the range of her interests, and presides over her development as a scholar and a human being. But while everyone who counsels undoubtedly serves all of these purposes well some of the time, hardly anyone can be equally competent to achieve all of them as often as we hope. If everyone counseled as effectively as we agree everyone should, in fact, there would be no need to discuss the academic problems of the college.

Entirely apart from the ordinary human frailties that beset every counselor, however, there are particular ways in which counseling appears in the judgment of the committee to fail to support its intended objectives. In the first place, so much is expected of it that it cannot possibly achieve all it is supposed to. Almost any shortcoming or difficulty the college discerns in a girl's career is likely to be referred to her counselor, from defects in her spelling and composition through racial or social prejudice to low morale or a lack of commitment to college work. More important, there is reason to think that a counselor should not be assigned responsibility for such matters anyway--not because they place such a burden on him, but because his constant intervention in a student's life tends to increase her dependence upon him just when she should be learning to depend more fully upon herself. The intimacy that counseling at its best creates may threaten as well as nourish independence, and at the junior and senior

levels in particular it often seems to develop overtones of an unhealthy discipleship.⁴

Again, to the extent that counseling is a device employed by the college to secure the ends of a liberal education by means of persuasion rather than explicit rules, it tends on the one hand to substitute an adult's judgment for a student's deliberation over the alternatives open to her, and on the other hand to provide the wilful student with means to defeat the very purposes that counseling ostensibly serves. (In these terms, counseling may both guarantee the vices and abandon the virtues of a conventional curriculum.) At the same time, the counselor tends to become each student's advocate rather than her mentor; yet the college relies heavily upon him--a single individual--to make most of the critical evaluations affecting the student's career.

Largely because of the weaknesses evident in counselors' supervision of student work, the faculty substituted annual review of student programs by the Educational Counseling Committee for biennial review by the Junior and Senior Division Committees in 1954. As this report has already suggested, the

⁴. The committee invites those who would dispute its judgment to consider whether the student in a large conventional college is not in many ways forced to be independent. The committee does not advocate either the kinds of independence or the kinds of coercion that may exist on such a campus, but it feels bound to recognize the possibility that in some respects students in such colleges have an advantage over our sometimes overprotected clients. At the very least, it thinks that the question is an open one, which deserves kinds of study the committee has not been able to give it.

operations of this new committee are marred by intrinsic weaknesses. There are no clear-cut criteria for its decisions, and in the absence of such criteria the members of the individual panels are forced to rely upon a sort of generalized prudential wisdom that frequently bears no specific relationship to the capacities or needs of individual students. In addition, the committee is in practice an indefinite number of separate panels of faculty members, called together at irregular intervals and able to exercise neither continuous nor consistent oversight of student programs.

These weaknesses are magnified in turn by the role the counselor normally plays vis-à-vis each panel. In the first place, he often acts the part of a lawyer for the defense rather than a consultant on educational planning. Because he knows the student well while the members of the panel usually do not, moreover, even the most scrupulous counselor finds himself representing her individuality and idiosyncracies--which are in some sense a reflection of his own idiosyncracies--against the necessarily gross and possibly arbitrary dicta of the panel. Further, a panel is almost inevitably committed to ruling ex post facto on decisions reached by counselor and student in conference, which it can seldom mend except by taking extreme measures. Finally, the counselor of a student in her junior or senior year normally functions in a divisional environment, against which a panel often has little hope of asserting the general educational objectives of the college.

The over-all effect is to employ an elaborate apparatus of faculty consultations without finding any firm basis for making general review of student programs effective against individual counselors' misjudgments.

The committee cites these weaknesses in counseling and in the supervision of student planning because it recognizes the virtues of both. It finds frequent contact between students and faculty members, some of it in private conference, to be a virtue, especially when most of that contact is devoted to exploring intellectual issues; and it believes that the faculty must bear the main responsibility for supervising student programs because no other agency is equally competent to judge how to enforce and how to relax the college's educational expectations. But it also concludes from its review of both functions that each can be provided for with fewer hazards to the students and fewer burdens on the faculty. In particular, it feels that a more sharply defined role for counseling, and a more restricted definition of educational review of student work, will save time and avoid errors implicit in the present system.

3. Other Considerations

In reviewing our curricular problems, the committee has also been forced to consider a number of other areas in which our practices fail to carry out our principles. One of our most serious problems, the committee feels, is the Non-Resident

Term. Here, indeed, much of the difficulty may again lie with our early "progressive" orientation, which suggested that a college education would be incomplete unless it involved some sort of engagement with life in the real world, and which still compels the college Bulletin to speak of the winter period with a reverence that the experience of many of our students can hardly justify. Recognizing the difficulties of making any sort of non-resident period work properly, in fact, the college has treated it variously as an occasion for vacation and travel, for practical field experience, for study and research, and for job-holding per se. In recent years, however, the N.R.T. has become identified almost exclusively with a job experience, which becomes increasingly difficult to defend in the classic progressive terms. A job held for nine or ten weeks can seldom offer our students satisfactory vocational experience, and the pure job experiences it provides--especially for juniors and seniors--are often already familiar to them. Hence the committee is particularly critical of the job presumption for every winter period. Whatever the justifications for the Non-Resident Term may be, they do not warrant holding every student to four winter jobs as a condition of her graduation.

The committee prefers to postpone any discussion of the positive values inherent in the Non-Resident Term--and the committee believes that despite its defects there are many of them--to the section of its report in which it makes construct-

ive recommendations for changes in the nature and expectations of the winter period. Here, however, it will record certain additional findings about the N.R.T. that it thinks deserve explicit recognition whatever policies the college adopts with respect to it.

In the first place, the Non-Resident Term too often serves as a substitute for financial aid to needy students. That is, the college has traditionally awarded needy students remissions of part or all of their tuition, and more recently it has begun to make even larger grants in aid of other college expenses as well. Nevertheless, in estimating a student's financial aid, the Financial Aid Committee has customarily assumed that she will contribute something like \$500 or \$600 out of her current earnings to her college expenses--half of this sum normally being allocated to winter earnings, and the other half to term-time and summer employment. In general, the committee is sympathetic with a policy that expects needy students to contribute something toward the expenses of their education, just as it is sympathetic with well-to-do parents who ask their children to earn something for the same purpose. But it also observes (as the Financial Aid Committee has already pointed out) that an earnings requirement often forces our needy students into winter jobs chosen only for the money they will bring in, while it permits our wealthier students to enjoy more interesting and more rewarding activities.

The college has sometimes modified its earnings expecta-

tion. Indeed, when students in dance have arranged to go on tour for the winter, the requirement has often been relaxed entirely, and there have been other instances in which needy students have been relieved of the necessity for winter savings. But the committee feels that our policy with respect to earnings--rather than our administration of that policy in individual cases--requires some revision, even though revision may burden the college with additional financial responsibilities.

Second, the committee confirms what is already common knowledge, that many members of the faculty apparently take no great interest in the Non-Resident Term or in its significance as part of a student's educational program. Their attitude is understandable in the light of the disappointments work periods sometimes hold in store for our students, and it reinforces the committee's recommendation that the very concept of a winter work period be reexamined. But the committee feels compelled to note that if the attitude persists through prospective reforms in the Non-Resident Term, it must have the long-range effect of depriving the winter experience of any college significance whatsoever.

Finally, the committee finds that in recent years the N.R.T. Office has operated on an annual budget that was woefully inadequate to meet its needs as the one college agency formally charged with helping students to find jobs and with exercising general supervision over them in those jobs. Like

the Non-Resident Term itself, that is, the Non-Resident Term Office has lacked sufficient support from the college to enable it to serve effectively even those purposes with which it may properly be charged. Here too some reconsideration of the operations of the college is in order.

It is the further judgment of the committee that student social life and living conditions in the student houses also constitute a major problem for the college. Some of our difficulties are undoubtedly inherent in the original plan of the college: we propose to educate students for life by throwing them upon their own resources from their very first week in college, and we have relatively few techniques available for helping those who are in difficulty to get through these early experiences successfully. But it is not only the freshmen who suffer. In various ways student social practices interfere with the well-being even of our best upperclassmen, and the student officers of the houses are often in no position either to protect other students against petty distractions or to help them to find a way out of trouble after they have become involved. Here, indeed, counseling about personal problems becomes necessary for almost every student, and above all for freshmen. The committee suspects, however, that non-academic counseling by the faculty is generally ineffective in reaching major problems that most students face at one time or another.

The committee has not found means either to examine

student social life closely or to evaluate the role that non-academic counseling can play in helping students to deal with the difficulties they experience as adolescent girls. But it has had no difficulty at all in concluding, entirely apart from any consideration of the emotional and personal needs of our students, that the physical conditions of living in the houses work a severe hardship on many of them. As the college has gradually expanded since 1936, 82 rooms designed as singles have been converted into doubles, and sometimes in recent years double rooms have even been converted into triples; small wonder that the ordinary sounds of daily existence reverberate through the corridors and walls of the buildings! If the college is to make no other improvements, it owes it to its students to house them better.

The General Meetings Program constitutes another aspect of the college's early planning that has not worked effectively. Intended originally to be a device whereby student interests might be refocussed on problems of common interest to inhabitants of the modern world, the program has long since lost much of its general quality and many of its meetings. Most recently, it has been divided up among the faculty divisions, each of which is invited to sponsor its own speakers out of college funds. The committee has no quarrel with this method of administering general meetings funds, given the circumstances into which the program has fallen as a community enterprise. But it feels some concern

that students nowadays seldom find time or inclination to use the meetings conducted in its name either to broaden their intellectual horizons or to acquaint themselves more fully with the world in which they must live.

There are other kinds of difficulty affecting the college than those generated so directly by its original commitments, however. The most serious is undoubtedly our recurrent failure to reach prospective students whom we believe to be genuinely capable of using Bennington College well. In part, the problem may be one of the college's public image, about which the committee has only scattered information. It knows, however, that qualified high-school students have failed to come to Bennington after being admitted, and that they have offered us a wide variety of reasons including not only such obvious considerations as our rural isolation, our small size, and our high cost, but also such matters as our emphasis on creative experience, our social and academic freedom, and our unusual academic year. Obviously, many of the girls who failed to come to Bennington may have made the right choice, insofar as they lacked sympathy with some of our most basic commitments. But the committee wonders whether the image of the college may not underrate our virtues, and whether we may not find in that image additional reasons for redefining our purposes and restructuring our institutions.

Even if our public image were impeccable, however, the committee senses that the admissions process might be made

more effective for our declared purposes. We know that we do not know much about the process--where it works well, where it works badly, how it might be improved, where it is best left alone. We know that the comparisons that have been made between student applications for admission and subsequent success in the college have been superficial, vitiated in part by the complexity of Bennington's criteria of effective education, but also by its confusions. We know as well that there is very little feedback from the college to the Admissions Office, so that admissions are affected only in the very broadest sense by the felt needs of the college. And we know that the records the Admissions Office maintains for its immediate purposes provide an inadequate basis for on-going reevaluation of admissions procedures. In sum, we know that we should begin to view admissions much more thoughtfully, much less pragmatically, if we are to employ admission to the college as one way of shaping our academic standards and effectiveness.

Another phenomenon of considerable significance for the college is what everyone recognizes as "sophomore slump." No one knows its cause, but there is a widespread feeling that whereas the transition from high school to college is both taxing and exciting, the transition from freshman year to sophomore year in college is neither. Certainly there is some warrant here for considering curricular changes, the more so if we can devise thereby some means to separate the "junior-college" students from the college at the end of one year

rather than two. The committee, at least, is willing to try, because it believes that students who have no clear commitment to completing the work for a degree create a disproportionate burden on our time as teachers and counselors, and so deprive our better students of the education they deserve.

Changing the structure of the curriculum to enhance the work of the sophomore year might, however, accentuate another of the problems that seem endemic in our present structure. The committee believes that even now the senior year outside the major is unrewarding to many students, and it surmises that the senior year might be even more unrewarding if it came as a third year of advanced work without being in some fashion differentiated from the sophomore and junior years.⁵ At present, moreover, the senior project often encroaches on other work, with the effect of narrowing a student's interests just as she is most capable of extending them in a sophisticated fashion. Both phenomena point toward a redefinition of the senior year, which must be achieved by a restructuring of the curriculum and not simply by a faculty resolution reasserting its objectives.

Still another kind of problem arises from what may be described as a maldistribution of the student body. Our students' neglect of the sciences, and in particular their

⁵. A norm of four years in college is assumed. Plans to accelerate the student body--or even selected students in large numbers--through the curriculum strike the committee as educationally unsound even if mechanically feasible.

neglect of advanced work in the sciences, is often a weakness in their educational experience. But it is also extraordinarily wasteful of the teaching of our science faculty. To put the matter in its barest terms, there is no practical reason why advanced classes and laboratories in the sciences could not be as large as most classes in literature and the social sciences, provided that we had comparable facilities to house them. Stating the problem differently, a redistribution of our student body that sent more students into the sciences would also help to reduce the swollen size of other classes. No one urges a redistribution of the students simply for arithmetical reasons, of course; but it is an inescapable fact that in indulging neglect of science in the educational process we have also made poor use of our science faculty.

We have made poor use of that faculty in still another sense. Our laboratory facilities are no longer adequate to serve the purposes of a first-rate offering in the sciences--nor to attract capable students to the college who would be interested in them. In this respect our neglect of the disciplines has helped to hide from us our need to expand and improve our facilities, although laboratories in some of the science courses have already been taught more than once a week simply because we could not accommodate all their students at one time. Any attempt to encourage work in the sciences, therefore, will necessitate new facilities.

By the same token, shortages of facilities also affect

work in other areas of study, although our needs in science are undoubtedly most urgent and probably most elaborate. Our theater space and facilities generally are notoriously inadequate for work in dance and drama--not to mention the audience that is encouraged to attend performances in both. And our studio space in the visual arts includes two basements that are too small to accommodate our students adequately. Here as in science our facilities unnecessarily limit our students' education.

Finally, the size of our various faculties is itself a major problem for the college, although not one that can be solved by simple means. In the judgment of the committee, the existence of one-man departments in the college is almost inevitably a disservice both to the faculty and to the students enrolled in such departments. In most cases the faculty member must be spread thin by his responsibilities, while the student is deprived of a desirable complexity in her approach to the discipline she is studying: a small college can be too small to be educationally effective even if every faculty member is a paragon as a scholar, teacher, counselor, and colleague. Hence whatever other changes may be made or proposed in the college, a prompt expansion of most of the fields in which one man or one woman stands alone for a discipline seems imperative.

II. PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE CURRICULUM

In the judgment of the committee, the difficulties and problems it has discussed point not to a need for new theory but to a need for new techniques to serve generally agreed-upon ends. The plan the committee now presents attempts to meet our problems in their own terms. There is no guarantee that it will work, other than the best judgment of the committee, supported by a handful of special studies (e.g., of student programs in the past) and by the committee's sense of the meetings it has held with the several divisions and with other spokesmen for the college. After months of meetings, however, the committee believes that it cannot achieve greater assurance or greater wisdom through further deliberations, and it urges the faculty and the board of trustees to adopt the present plan on a trial basis, stipulating that the experiment will be thoroughly reviewed after perhaps five years in operation.

The committee's plan is based upon a redefinition of the program leading to the degree, consonant with most of our traditional principles. Recognizing that painting as well as history, chemistry as well as literature, is a proper vehicle of humanistic learning, the committee proposes that each be equally eligible as part of a student's path leading to the degree. At the same time, accepting the college's implicit commitment to liberal education as demanding genuine

competence in more than one area of the humanities, the committee also proposes that each student be asked to establish herself in at least one discipline based upon reading and writing and one based upon non-verbal symbols. Because spoken and written language are the most common vehicle for defining and communicating human experience, the committee thinks that every student program should include at least one field of study in which language serves as both technique and evidence of intellectual achievement. But because large areas of human experience can be explored and communicated only by other than verbal means, the committee also believes that every student program should include at least one field of study in which these other means are paramount.

Certain practical considerations attach to any such definition of student work. First, a novice cannot be expected to establish herself in a discipline or craft in the course of only one or two years of intermittent work; except in rare cases three or even four years' continuous experience is indispensable. For this reason, the college has consistently required students to concentrate in a chosen field of interest, although its arrangement of the steps in the major has shifted over the years. Second, whatever the paths a student chooses to follow within the framework of our expectations, each should make approximately equal demands of her. She cannot make herself an educated person unless she confronts each with equal seriousness. Finally, because

she must be held to a standard of significant performance in each of her disciplines, the student must have an opportunity to choose the paths that she will follow according to a considered estimate of her needs and capabilities. None of her paths is likely to contribute to her effectiveness as an educated person unless in some fashion it responds to her own special characteristics as a human being.

The committee has reacted to these considerations by devising a degree program defined in three separate stages. The first is to be a freshman year devoted to intellectual exploration and the necessary adjustment to the demands of college work. The second is to be the sophomore and junior years considered as a continuum, during which students are to spend their time in the intensive pursuit of three chosen disciplines, hopefully bringing each to a point of some significance. The third stage is to be a senior year requiring both consolidation of work begun in one of these disciplines and broadening of work begun in the others. What follows is a fairly detailed description of each stage beginning with the middle years, which are the heart of the proposed curriculum.

1. The Sophomore and Junior Years

The committee proposes that at the end of her freshman year each student be expected to commit herself to two years of intensive work in each of three disciplines, one of which

must be either literature or a social science, one of which must not be either literature or a social science, and one of which may be any of our disciplines. Thus, a student might opt for sequences in French literature, painting, and psychology; in history, dance, and music; or in physics, biology, and literature--but not in French literature, history, and psychology; nor in mathematics, dance, and the visual arts. Her three disciplines are to be continued from the sophomore into the junior year, and each should normally be a continuation of work begun during the first year.⁶

The committee also believes that each student should be expected to spend between fifty and sixty hours on her college work each week, including the time she spends in class and in conference as well as in preparation for these meetings. Hence it proposes that each of her three disciplines require a minimum of fifteen hours' work a week, and that none require more than twenty hours without the approval

⁶. The committee intends that except in unusual cases all literatures and languages are to be considered as a single field of study, although each student is to be encouraged to devise a sequence within the literature division that emphasizes either literature in English or literature in a foreign language. Were the college to expand to the point at which it could afford advanced work in linguistics, on the other hand, the committee would recommend treating literature and languages respectively as separate fields of study, and permitting qualified students to choose sequences in both.

of the educational counseling committee.⁷

Obviously, fifteen to twenty hours is more time than students have traditionally been expected to devote to their work in separate courses in a four-course program. The committee believes that the extra time offers students and faculty alike a valuable opportunity to make work in each of a student's sequences more significant. In its preliminary report the committee proposed to the faculty that it consider enhancing the course-work assigned in each sequence with a wide variety of subsidiary activities adapted to each student's needs: extra reading, special projects, study in parallel fields, even auditing other classes having a special significance for the sequence to which a student had committed herself. Unfortunately, the proposal was stated in mechanical terms in order to illustrate the time that would be available for these different activities, and for simplicity's sake it employed auditing as its chief illustration of the committee's intentions. As a result, some faculty members concluded that the main innovation the committee proposed was auditing.

In the view of the committee, auditing may still serve excellent purposes when a student would otherwise be deprived of an opportunity to broaden her perspective on the discipline she is pursuing. (One of the examples that the committee

⁷. The role of the educational counseling committee in supervising student programs is described in chapter 3.

used frequently in its conferences with the faculty divisions was the student of American history during the nineteenth century, who would surely benefit from being permitted to take part informally in a course in European history during the same period even though she could not make herself a master of European history on this part-time basis.) But the committee agrees with the faculty that auditing seldom provides satisfactory access to an unfamiliar discipline, and it has no wish to suggest it except as one possibility open to students if they receive the approval of both the teacher whose class they hope to audit and the teacher who is responsible for their formal course work.

Here, indeed, is the substance of the committee's definition of extra work: each student is to enhance the work of each of her three courses in a manner to be decided upon in conference between her and her instructor. Most of the time her additional work will undoubtedly consist of extra reading or special projects growing out of the course itself, and be dealt with in further conferences with the instructor. Sometimes, however, an able student may justify enrolling in two courses in one-third of her program, especially in cases in which she might in our present terms be considered a "major" in that field. For example, a serious student of Russian literature might reach the point at which she was capable of handling both advanced work in the Russian language and the course in The Russian Novel in a twenty-hour week--or, with

the approval of the instructors in her other fields, she might be permitted to spend even more than twenty hours on these two courses. Again, a student interested in art might justify including both a studio course and art history, or two studio courses, in one-third of her program, provided that she also continued to work effectively in her other two disciplines.

For that matter, a qualified student might well justify dividing her time unequally among three sequences even if she were formally enrolled in only one course in each sequence. In any case, the limit on her pursuit of one sequence would be, on the formal level, her commitment to a minimum of fifteen hours' work in both her second and her third sequences, and on the practical level, the judgment of her instructors in those other sequences that she was making good use of her opportunities in each of them. The committee hopes that--especially during the sophomore year--many students will divide their time almost equally among their three sequences, but it is convinced that other distributions of time can readily be worked out in the give and take of individual panel meetings once the main criteria for student programs have been established.

The committee proposes that a student work in three disciplines through the sophomore and junior years for several reasons. For one thing, experience suggests that a four-course load tends to fragment most students' time so minutely

that they have little opportunity and sometimes little incentive to develop real proficiency in more than one or at the most two fields of study. Hopefully, a redistribution of student time among three courses, each amplified to develop that student's particular interests, would ensure better education in all three. Yet reducing the students' normal commitments from four courses to three does not warrant reducing them still further from three to two. The committee feels that our students are rarely able, especially in the sophomore year, to profit from the intense concentration of study that a two-course program would entail, and there are other equally important reasons for discountenancing it.

In all likelihood, most students would not be able to choose two disciplines to which they wished to devote so much energy, even if it were proper to let them make such a choice so early in their careers. Furthermore, a student who committed herself to work in only two disciplines would by definition in our plan limit herself to two widely divergent studies, and would also be precluded from dividing her interests unequally between (let us say) the natural sciences and economics, or the social sciences and drama. On the other hand, a student working simultaneously in three disciplines will have an opportunity either to work in three distinct areas or to pursue both a major and a minor interest without introducing educationally harmful distinctions among her courses. Thus, in the cases invoked above, she might take physics and biology

and economics, or psychology and philosophy and drama, dealing with each as a significant intellectual enterprise yet at the same time following a preponderant interest (in science or in social science, respectively) during more than half of her time.⁸

It should also be made clear that the committee intends that the concept of a continuous experience in three disciplines be interpreted with reasonable flexibility. One of the purposes of the distribution of sophomore and junior work into thirds is to encourage the extended pursuit of studies begun in the freshman year or at the latest in the sophomore year. Such pursuit would normally preclude a student from spending her sophomore year in one discipline in each of three areas (e.g. chemistry and history and painting) and her junior year in other disciplines in the same areas (e.g. physics and philosophy and architecture). Nevertheless, the committee also recommends that the educational counseling committee permit a shift from one discipline to another within the same divisional area at any time during a student's sophomore or junior year that such a shift makes good sense

8. As these examples suggest, the committee believes that the variety of disciplines represented by our social science faculty, and to a lesser extent by our science faculty, warrants permitting qualified students to pursue two separate disciplines (sequences) within either of these divisions. It also anticipates that if the college expands other divisions may also grow sufficiently to warrant a similar concentration of student work, which the Faculty Educational Policies Committee may authorize upon recommendation of a division.

educationally for her. Thus, a girl who has devoted herself to chemistry during her freshman and sophomore years might shift to work in physics during her junior year, provided that the change was acceptable to her counseling committee and to other faculty members involved. Similarly, a student who had originally planned to spend one-third of her middle years in history might be permitted to shift her emphasis into philosophy, if it seemed to her counseling committee and to the members of the social science faculty involved that her reasons were valid. The objective is not to prevent reasonable alterations in students' plans but to provide some institutional assurance that they will choose their work deliberately and pursue it long enough to make it meaningful.

The institutional devices the committee proposes to secure this end are described in some detail in the next chapter of this report. Here it needs only to be stressed that the test of any student's decision to continue or to shift a commitment between one year and the next will be the same in all cases--the judgment of the faculty members involved that she has pursued her former studies sufficiently far to make them significant elements of her education--and the committee's plan for review of student programs is designed to make that judgment effective. By the same token, the mechanism for review should also serve to guide students out of one sequence and into another when for some reason the first proves inappropriate.

Under the committee's plan, in short, every sophomore and junior would be asked to maintain a continuous academic program based upon organized courses in three separate disciplines and enhanced by a kind of contact between her and her instructors that is very difficult to manage under our present curricular arrangements. Hence she would have much more opportunity than she now finds to develop her grasp of each of these disciplines to a point at which it becomes a true humanistic asset. A tripartite curriculum for the middle years seems to the committee eminently justified by educational considerations, and might have the additional virtue of combatting sophomore slump by opening the way to intensive work at the beginning of the sophomore year instead of postponing it until the junior year.

But the faculty as well as the student body should benefit from this innovation. Teachers will gain time and energy from a reduction in class size consequent upon reducing most sophomore and junior programs from four to three courses, and from the fact that every course open to sophomores and juniors will consist exclusively of students who have some interest in establishing themselves in the subject. Because frequent conferences between course instructors and their students are an essential part of the new curriculum, moreover, the college must limit the size of classes, a step that will also serve to relieve some members of the faculty of their present extraordinary burdens. (The committee believes that thirty

students is the maximum number a faculty member can be expected to deal with in regularly scheduled conferences arising out of course-work. It also believes that reduction in the size of our largest classes will benefit the students.) If, as the committee also proposes, conferences between instructor and student take the place of most of our present sophomore and junior counseling, there will be additional economies for the faculty.⁹

The committee recognizes that its plan to divide student work into three sequences during the sophomore and junior years may create unusual problems for the science faculty. Given that a good science student may pursue two-thirds of her work in science, however, and also that either of these thirds may be shifted (as, from chemistry to physics) during the middle years of a student's career, the committee feels that the faculty in science can work out a significant program for interested students. Some difficulties may arise in converting present courses into thirds, but the committee feels that they are by no means insuperable. For one thing, many of our intermediate and advanced courses in science already require between fifteen and twenty hours of a student's time; on this basis classroom work and laboratory work together might well constitute a complete third in themselves. Again,

⁹. The committee's recommendations respecting counseling, and certain of the implications of its plan for faculty load, are discussed in the next chapter of this report. Other implications for faculty load are discussed in chapter 5.

the science faculty might divide any third between a natural science and mathematics, or between natural science and reading in the history of science. Indeed, the opportunities for imaginative planning of a science curriculum that will also attract qualified students into the field seem to the committee highly promising. They will be even more promising if, by expanding the science faculty and its facilities, the college attracts a much larger number of potential science majors than it now admits.

2. The Freshman Year

Defining each student's career in terms of a triple emphasis during the sophomore and junior years implies a less drastic redefinition of the freshman year as well. The "thirds" arrangement will permit students to pursue several fields of interest before deciding whether they wish to concentrate in any of them during the senior year, and thus makes possible tentative planning for advanced work at an earlier stage in their college careers—normally by the start of the sophomore year. If the choices students then make among alternative thirds of study are to be informed ones, however, students must spend the freshman year in effective exploration. Fortunately, the college is already committed to encouraging its beginning students to explore widely among the different disciplines before deciding to concentrate in one. Hence all that is required is a relatively minor adjust-

ment of our traditional expectations to meet our new needs.

The committee proposes that each freshman normally begin her college career with five courses, which she may reduce to four courses in the Spring term by expanding her work in those four. It also proposes that these original five courses be widely distributed among the faculty divisions, and that they normally include Language and Literature (or its equivalent) and an introductory course in the natural sciences or mathematics. The major exceptions to this five-course program, in the opinion of the committee, should arise in cases in which a freshman qualifies for advanced placement in one or two disciplines. Such students could be expected to enter directly into the sophomore curriculum in these disciplines, but to take correspondingly fewer courses in other areas.¹⁰

¹⁰. Arithmetically, if every term's work is to be counted as worth 15 points toward graduation, then a third of it counts as five points and a fifth counts as three. Hence a freshman taking one-third of her work in one area (5 points) would take freshman courses in three other areas (9 points; total, 14 points). An unusually capable freshman who took two thirds (10 points) would also be able to handle two freshman courses (6 points; total, 16 points). Freshman counseling might well count for a single point and could be employed to make up apparent arithmetical shortages on the transcript. Similarly, four freshman courses might be weighted at four points apiece in order to give arithmetical validity to a four-course program.

In offering these numerical calculations the committee does not by any means intend an arithmetical view of our curriculum; its numbers are presented only for the sake of those who care about such matters. But its numbers have the virtue of showing not only how freshmen might move into advanced work, but also how more advanced students would be able to make use of the curriculum. For example, transfer students would have the same opportunities as freshmen to enroll in one or even two sophomore sequences, and if they proved to be eligible for

A number of practical considerations support the committee's plan to ask for effective exploration in five courses during at least the first half of the freshman year. Obviously, such exploration will give freshmen an extended base from which to pursue three separate disciplines during the sophomore and junior years. (Composite introductory courses like Six Workshops and From Hobbes to Marx, moreover, will extend the range of freshman experience, as will any beginning courses that run only for a term instead of a year.) Again, a five-course load will make possible the continuation of foreign-language training begun in secondary school, which tends either to be abandoned in the present four-course freshman program, or to be maintained at the expense of desirable breadth.

Still further, the committee feels that a five-course program will help to facilitate the transition from high school to college by gradually introducing freshmen to the intensive demands that college work makes. Many of our first-year students are obviously baffled by the free time they think they have here. They have been used to working simultaneously in five or more subjects every day of the week, not to mention taking part in organized extracurricular

/Footnote 10, continued/

three they would in effect qualify as sophomores. On the other hand, a sophomore or junior who found it necessary to take beginning work in a discipline--mathematics, say, as an accessory to advanced work in physics--would be able to treat her beginning course as a half of one of her thirds.

activities, and it takes time for them to get used to infrequent meetings of classes and to our demand for protracted study of selected texts or problems. On the other hand, those who are immediately ready for intensive work may be permitted to select a four-course program during the Fall term, just as especially qualified students may qualify for advanced placement. The test of any such departure from the norm will be the promise a student gives of making good use of her opportunity, and the degree to which her intended program allows her to explore fields unfamiliar to her. If she is already an accomplished linguist, or if she chooses introductory courses that will give her a broad perspective on the college's offerings, she has less reason than some of her classmates to enroll in five courses.

3. The Senior Year

The sole justification of both the first and the middle two years of the curriculum, it will be remembered, is the separate contributions each makes to a liberal education for every student who graduates from the college. Ideally, the senior year should be both a climax and a commencement in that education, and the committee feels that individuals' needs should chiefly determine the nature and especially the distribution of student work during the senior year. It recommends, however, that every senior be expected to participate in two different enterprises: one, a group tutorial

devoted to developing senior projects in the field in which the student chooses to major; the other, any one of several multidisciplinary seminars or colloquia intended to help seniors to use the disciplines in which they have already established themselves as starting points for exploration of unfamiliar but related fields of inquiry. In addition, it recommends that the college consider sponsoring a carefully planned General Meetings program devoted to problems or methods in scholarly disciplines not normally offered by the college, which seniors would be encouraged but not required to attend.¹¹

The committee proposes this arrangement of the senior year for several reasons. One is its wish so far as possible to ensure that the senior's learning experience is not terminal: that before she leaves college she has been encouraged not only to work intensively in a major field but also to consider how what she already knows can open the way into areas of which she knows relatively little. This is the rationale of the multidisciplinary colloquium, which should involve at least one field unfamiliar to each of its student participants. It is also a reason for permitting qualified students to take the "junior year abroad" during the first term of the senior year, when they will be best prepared to make effective use of the range of new experiences open to them.

11. A further discussion of the proposed General Meetings program will be found in chapter 4.

Again, the committee's proposal that group tutorials handle much of the work on senior projects reflects its hope that seniors may to some extent learn to be independent while they are still in college. It visualizes the project tutorial as an opportunity for each senior to derive what she can from the experience of her equals in years and training, and to depend less strenuously on the advice of her formal mentors.¹² Similarly, the committee urges a revised General Meetings program on the college, not only because there are inevitable gaps in our intellectual offering or because the current program is inadequate, but also because it hopes that the students will benefit as alumnae from having experienced an opportunity to acquaint themselves with some problems or some disciplines without constant faculty supervision. If the General Meetings program is good enough, it should attract the attention of most of the seniors as well as many other members of the student body.

Within these limits, the committee feels that seniors should be encouraged to develop plans for the final year that

12. In making this recommendation the committee recognizes that senior work in the natural sciences will in all likelihood consist of group tutorials not devoted to senior projects. It also recognizes that much of the work in the arts will involve individual conferences between instructor and student, and that written projects in literature and the social sciences will also require individual conferences to supplement tutorial discussions. Nevertheless, it has presented its proposal in these elementary terms in order to call attention to the possibilities it offers for freeing senior students from the constant and sometimes oversolicitous attention of their tutors, which is almost inevitable as the senior project is presently visualized.

accommodate themselves generously to individual needs. Some seniors may wish to divide their time equally among project tutorial, interdisciplinary colloquium, and General Meetings program. Others, particularly those in the performing arts, will probably spend half or even two-thirds of their time in preparing projects for public performance, limiting their participation in a colloquium and in the General Meetings program to a decent minimum. Others might well devote part of the senior year to teaching in the rural schools, or even--in extraordinary cases--to helping to teach our own freshmen. Still others, especially those who intend to go to graduate school, might use some of their time in formal course-work in an area or a discipline they have not previously encountered. Finally, some seniors might audit courses they would like to have had time for when they were sophomores or juniors. The committee believes that all these and other possibilities should be open to seniors, provided only that students who spend both terms in residence work intensively in a familiar discipline and participate in an exploratory colloquium. It also feels that seniors who qualify for a term abroad should fulfill similar if not identical expectations.

These are the key elements of the committee's plan to revise the curriculum of Bennington College, intended to strengthen our claim to be a first-rate institution. As the committee sees it, the plan maintains the indispensable

elements of Bennington's educational method while revising its techniques. It invites the student's eager participation in planning her own education. It supports and extends her academic interests by bringing her into frequent contact with professionals and scholars in the fields to which she commits herself. It encourages every student to become so far as possible an independent practitioner of her craft or discipline in her own right. By the same token, it insists that a student treat each of her activities with the seriousness if not the sophistication that a professional would bring to it, and it repudiates both the undifferentiated quest for "background" and the general-education orientation that usually accompanies it. In short, the committee sees the Bennington College degree as standing for excellence, which it proposes to serve by treating each academic enterprise and each artistic endeavor as intrinsically important and intrinsically rewarding. The means it proposes are intended only to make sure that these definitions are observed in practice as well as in conversation.

III. COUNSELING AND PANELS

Clearly, the effectiveness of any new program will depend upon the sympathetic support of members of the faculty, individually and collectively. Their support will be particularly important because of the extent to which student participation in the revised curriculum will continue to be shaped by faculty members in their roles as counselors and as members of educational counseling committees.

1. Counseling

As has already been suggested, the committee visualizes a somewhat altered plan of counseling that will provide necessary intellectual and emotional support for beginning students but will gradually diminish both kinds of support as they move through college. Hence the committee proposes that the college continue freshman counseling much as it is now; that it encourage sophomores and juniors to employ frequent conferences with their three course instructors as the chief vehicle of counseling during the middle years; and that it define senior counseling in terms of the demands that arise in a master-apprentice relationship between senior tutors and their students.

Under the proposed plan, every freshman is to be assigned a counselor as she is now. In general, moreover, each freshman counselor will have the same responsibilities that he does now: he will aid the student in making the transition from high

school to college; he will direct her attention to the intellectual and aesthetic resources of the college; and he will assist her in making plans both for her work while in residence and for the Non-Resident Term. The committee anticipates that a five-course load will in all probability diminish the role that academic counseling has played in the lives of freshman students, but it believes that there will still be ample time in a five-course program for the degree of personal contact and guidance that are necessary during the freshman year. In addition, students who arrive with developed interests or who can make effective use of academic counseling during the Fall term will be eligible to follow a four-course program augmented by work with their counselors, and all freshmen will be eligible to employ the second half of the freshman year in this fashion.

While freshman counseling will remain substantially unchanged, however, in some respects it should gain focus and significance. For one thing, a college-wide commitment to the exploratory freshman year will help to reduce the responsibility that sometimes falls on a counselor nowadays for making up the deficiencies in a poorly chosen program; his work will be directed to specific problems as they reveal themselves rather than to the whole range of a student's educational experience. Furthermore, he will find himself depending less upon his own preconceptions as to what is "necessary" or "good" for freshmen, and more upon objectively stated alternatives,

which he will be in a position to communicate rather than having to improvise them in dealing with each student. Similarly, his purpose will be to make sure that freshman counselees understand the expectations that the college has established, but not to cajole them into sympathizing with them. As a student nears the end of the freshman year, moreover, the counselor will share responsibility for her program planning with the members of the faculty under whom she proposes to work during the sophomore year, and will not be expected either to explore the whole issue of a suitable education in a vacuum or to direct each student into safe educational paths lest a panel of faculty members object to her program on general educational grounds. Hence in all of his contact with a student he will play the role of a helpful adviser but not a monitor or a judge or a lawyer, and counseling will represent the student's freedom as a choice between legitimate alternatives rather than as a personal ability to manipulate circumstance.

Within such a context, on the other hand, a counselor can be a student's confidant and advocate with far greater impunity than at present. Because his approval of her program will not constitute the major test of its worth, he will be in a better position to appeal in her behalf against the normal expectations of the institution. His views will be critically important in some areas but not of equal importance in all, and he may urge exceptions to established standards knowing

that they are exceptions and that there is a case he should make for them. In short, the counselor will be able to help each student confront and deal with the demands that the college makes, primarily by explaining those demands to her so that she cannot mistake her alternatives, but also when necessary by becoming her admitted advocate against clearly-defined expectations. Yet he will avoid confusing these two roles in her mind or in his.

Because of the presumption that a student will choose her three areas of concentration by the end of the freshman year, her counselor will necessarily devote part of their time together to working out prospective alternatives. The committee feels that a genuinely exploratory freshman program will make choice of three fields possible for most students at the end of the freshman year, but it also recognizes that freshman counselors will bear a heavy responsibility for helping students to choose their three fields wisely. The committee hopes that removing some of the ambiguities from the relationship between student and counselor will facilitate thoughtful discussion of possible alternatives. It also wonders, however, whether steps could not be taken to improve the orientation of freshmen to the college, with the possible effect of reducing the need to devote individual conferences to the mechanics of college life. At present the college relies almost exclusively on officers of the student government to conduct such orientation during the first week of the term, with predictable

results: formal orientation is ineffective, and the informal devices contribute little to maintaining ordinary standards of behavior. (For example, freshmen are notoriously noisy in the dormitories, while a number of them apparently get into trouble academically or otherwise simply because they don't know any better.) Possibly a scheduled series of freshman gatherings, conducted by various college authorities, would help to start freshmen out in the right direction and also help to spare freshman counseling time for matters of direct academic significance.

In the opinion of the committee, the alternatives to this kind of reinforcement and reshaping of freshman counseling are unacceptable. On the one hand, it would be possible to assign most freshmen to professional counselors who are not members of the teaching faculty. Undoubtedly, such counselors might deal effectively with many of the problems freshmen must confront, but at the same time they would be incapable of the academic discussions and planning that are a major responsibility in our present counseling apparatus. In addition, professional counselors could be added to the staff of the college only at the expense of prospective additions to the teaching faculty. The committee concludes that while the college must continue to make psychiatric counseling available to students who stand in need of it, professional counseling will not as a general rule serve our educational purposes wisely or efficiently.

On the other hand, all the problems that attach to freshman counseling--and indeed to counseling generally--might also be solved by leaving it exactly as it stands today, but depending upon a few unusually capable faculty members to act as counselors to a large number of students. Assuming that these faculty members would be willing to accept the role, however, the committee feels that it would do great harm to the college enterprise as a whole. The committee sees much greater promise in its attempt to bolster counseling on the part of the whole faculty, which can be achieved by limiting and focussing the demands that are normally made of the counselor by the institution.

During her second and third years the student will meet at regular intervals with each of three instructors. If each of those instructors meets with her for an average of one hour every third week, the time both students and instructors spend in conference will be equal to what is now spent in sophomore and junior counseling. Nevertheless, meetings on this particular schedule can be no more than an approximate college norm, inasmuch as individual students and individual faculty members will undoubtedly prefer to divide their time differently during all or part of each term. (For example, twenty minutes every week, or forty minutes every other week, are numerically equivalent to one hour every third week, and it is quite possible that some faculty members will find thirty minutes every other week

adequate for their purposes just as they now find forty-five minutes adequate for weekly counseling.) Indeed, the possibility that both students and faculty members may rearrange their scheduled meetings to fit needs that develop in sophomore and junior courses is in the view of the committee one of the attractions of its plan.

In proposing that each sophomore and junior meet frequently with her three instructors rather than counsel with a faculty member who may not be her instructor, the committee has no intention of abandoning traditional counseling entirely. It proposes that one of the student's three instructors be appointed as her counselor in the traditional sense, and that he be chosen as he is now. The only limitation the committee's plan imposes on the counselor is an understanding that he cannot expect either to govern her program as a whole or to preempt a disproportionate amount of her time. The committee's plan for review of student work will help to forestall any such tendency, which the committee takes to have been a weakness in our present counseling system. Here too it anticipates that a refocussing and redefinition of the counseling function will serve valid educational purposes.

The senior year the committee has proposed makes possible a continuation of counseling under the aegis of the project tutorial, but suggests that nonacademic counseling by faculty members be still further diminished and that seniors be encouraged so far as possible to deal with their respon-

sibilities as adults and as independent scholars. Because of the wide variety of demands that projects will make of seniors in different fields of study, the committee has no means of establishing a norm for senior counseling time, but it supposes that individual conferences will be scheduled only as needed by the student to supplement the meetings of the group tutorial in which she is enrolled. Hopefully, meetings with seniors in group tutorials and individual conferences together will take no more time than half an hour per week per student in literature or the social sciences, an allowance that makes possible an hour's meeting of the tutorial and nearly an hour of conference with each student every other week.

Beside the advantages that should accrue to our students from this rearrangement of the counseling function, there will be advantages for the faculty as well. In particular, counseling relationships after the freshman year will by definition hinge upon active academic interests. Hence the proposed arrangement should enhance both counseling and course-work by integrating them more satisfactorily than at present, yet without adding any burden of increased hours or additional work in conferences. To the extent that office hours and conferences with course-students are presently superimposed upon counseling obligations, in fact, the proposed system should considerably lighten the burden on the faculty, while helping during the sophomore and junior years to establish

an effective personal relationship between a faculty member and his course-students that is often difficult to achieve under our present arrangements.

But the proposed plan also makes possible a more effective use of faculty time in still another sense. At present, counseling tends to be a responsibility that some members of the faculty assume, or largely assume, in behalf of the faculty as a whole. In the judgment of the committee, this disproportionate sharing of the responsibility for counseling makes for an artificial distinction between counseling and course-work, and also deprives certain students of an equal opportunity to confer with experts in the fields in which they are most interested. By contrast, the committee's plan invites students to make use of faculty members in their roles as experts, while it also has the effect of redistributing counseling obligations more equitably among the faculty as a whole. Here too the educational innovations the committee proposes work to relieve the faculty of some of their burdens.¹³

¹³. The committee recognizes that an exact equalization of counseling load will not be possible because various disciplines require varying commitments of faculty time. Its plan makes allowance for such differences, however. Under the plan, all faculty members can be expected to confer regularly with the sophomores and juniors enrolled in their courses, who will in no case number more than 30 students and who can be expected to average fewer than 20. They may also be expected to have some responsibility for senior projects and/or for senior colloquia. Differences in faculty load can be made up in the assignment of freshman counselees just as they are now made up in the assignment of freshman and sophomore counselees, while the rearrangement of other counseling should help to

2. The Educational Counseling Committees

Proposing changes in the structure and definition of counseling, the committee also recommends that faculty review of student programs be restructured and redefined to fit the proposed division of the curriculum into an introductory year of exploration, two years of intensive study, and a senior year devoted to laying the groundwork for continuing self-education as well as completing work for the degree. More specifically, it proposes the creation of a Freshman Committee to supervise freshman programs and to pass on Tentative Plans for Advanced Work, ad hoc educational counseling committees to oversee sophomore and junior programs, and a Senior Committee to confirm Senior Plans for Advanced Work and to make recommendations for graduation.

The Freshman Committee is to review freshman programs in the Fall, review freshman performance Fall or Spring or upon recommendation of the counselor, and review plans for second- and third-year work after they have been considered by the student's intended instructors in consultation with their respective divisions. Its chief duties will be to make sure that freshman programs allow for sufficient exploration among the disciplines, and to pass on freshman requests for exemption from the normal requirements of the freshman year;

[Footnote 13, continued]
make available additional faculty members as freshman counselors.

A detailed projection of faculty loads according to the proposed plan will be found in chapter 5 of this report.

to make sure that Tentative Plans meet the college's stated expectations for the two middle years, and that they have received the necessary approval of divisions and instructors; and generally to offer guidance and advice to freshmen and their counselors in preparing plans for advanced work.¹⁴ In addition, it will have some role in guiding freshmen to the most effective use of their first Non-Resident Term, and generally it will make sure that the freshman year is well spent in preparation for more advanced work.

In the event that a freshman cannot present convincing evidence of capacity for advanced work in three disciplines, the committee proposes that the Freshman Committee be authorized either to dismiss her from the college or to permit her to stay an additional term or year (but no longer than an additional year) as a freshman. No freshman is to be kept in college for an additional period unless she gives promise of being able to cope with the demands of the sophomore and junior years at the end of that additional period, however; and no freshman is to be awarded sophomore standing until she has presented convincing evidence of ability to make good use of three sophomore-junior sequences.¹⁵

14. The committee proposes that each of the divisions in which a student plans to spend her sophomore and junior years endorse its share of her plan. It anticipates, however, that some divisions may delegate this responsibility to subcommittees or to individual faculty members much as they do now.

15. It is the intention of the committee that a student who spends two years in freshman work will be expected none the

The committee proposes this plan for regulating student promotion from the freshman to the sophomore year for a number of reasons. First, the committee believes that in most cases the college should accept the responsibility for deciding after a single year whether a student has sufficient ability to complete her college work satisfactorily, and it regrets the extent to which our present techniques for review of student progress postpone that responsibility unnecessarily. By posing the question automatically at the end of the first year of college, the committee's plan should encourage prompt decisions about most students. Yet, without subjecting our sophomore-junior courses and conferences to the debilitating impact of uncommitted or untrained participants, the same plan will also allow extra time to students who are slow to find themselves in college or slow to work out their prospective fields of interest. Hence its overall effect should be to raise our academic standards without penalizing worthy students who meet with difficulties during the freshman year. If the plan also works to discourage students who have no intention of finishing college from occupying our time beyond a first exploratory year, as the committee believes it will, it should make still another contribution to our success as a college.

/footnote 15, continued/

less to spend two additional years in sophomore-junior sequences and a final year in project tutorial and colloquium.

The chief novelties in the operation of the Freshman Committee will lie in its review of Tentative Plans at the end of the freshman year, and in an increased dependence upon the views of prospective instructors in determining whether a student is prepared for more advanced work. By contrast with our present sprawling committee, however, the new committee will be a single standing committee, meeting throughout the year, and continuing (by means of staggered terms of office) from one year to the next. Hence it can be expected to develop an informed perspective on the experience of the freshman year, and it will be in an admirable position to recommend as well as administer changes in college policy affecting freshmen. Yet the burden it puts upon the faculty will certainly be no greater than the burden that is now placed upon members of the Educational Counseling Committee, who find themselves considering freshman programs and sophomore plans along with junior programs and senior confirmations of plan without being able to acquire the degree of familiarity with any of them that is necessary to judge it efficiently and well.¹⁶ To the extent that the criteria of

16. Conceivably, in a college of 340 students (perhaps 120 or 125 freshmen) a Freshman Committee might consist of no more than three faculty members serving staggered three-year terms. The responsibility for so many students might well prove too much for such a small group, however, and it would obviously increase if the college were to expand. Yet the committee might consist of four faculty members serving two-year terms, or six serving three-year terms, if it became necessary to divide that responsibility, without reducing it to the straits in which the present counseling committee finds itself. And

the college are more sharply defined under the new plan, of course, they too will help to simplify these deliberations still further, whether the committee is only enforcing them or is considering exempting a student from them.

At the other end of the student's career, the Senior Committee will likewise operate in a relatively familiar and clearly economical manner. Its main responsibility will be to pass upon each junior's plans for the final year, judging both her ability and her intention to meet the requirement of the college that every graduate bear away with her both technical capability in a chosen discipline and the tools of a liberal education arising out of her special capabilities and interests. It will also be in a position to evaluate the student's eligibility for graduation in June according to the effectiveness with which she has carried out the several elements of her Senior Plan. Yet it too will be a standing committee, prepared by its experience both to enforce the requirements of the college wisely and to exempt students from them for good cause, without involving itself in the discontinuous and inconsistent judgments that the present committee falls victim to because of its structure and its undifferentiated authority. In every respect the Senior Committee should function more effectively yet not less sensitively than the Educational Counseling Committee.

[footnote 16, continued]

this is to say nothing of what would happen to the present counseling committee if it were to be responsible for still more students.

The very continuity and consistency in educational planning made possible by the existence of separate Freshman and Senior Committees makes possible in turn what seems to the committee a very promising reorganization of the work of the Educational Counseling Committee during the sophomore and junior years. We grant that some kind of supervision is necessary during the middle years, and recognize that our present E.C.C. fills gaps left by the Junior and Senior Division Committees in former years. We are convinced, however, that two years of intensive work in three disciplines call for a different kind of supervision from that suggested by a definition of the freshman and senior years in terms of a broadly conceived college interest.

The committee proposes, therefore, that the work of each sophomore and junior be supervised by the three members of the faculty with whom she holds regular individual conferences, who will meet when necessary to discuss her plans and her achievements. These three faculty members will be well equipped to evaluate her progress in her three fields of study, and they will also be able to deal directly and knowledgeably with conflicts that arise among their respective demands upon the student's time, or with any request that she presents to change the definition of one or more of her sequences. By the same token they will also be well equipped to judge when she is ready to make effective use of the kind of senior year the committee has proposed, and will be in a

position to recommend her plan for senior work to the Senior Committee.

In the judgment of the committee on the future, this technique for evaluating sophomore and junior performance will improve the quality of such review and also reduce the burden it now places upon the faculty as they serve in turn on the E.C.C. Every panel member will always be familiar with a student's performance, and no faculty member will be required to sit in judgment on students whom he does not know and whom he may never see. Furthermore, it should be possible to reduce the reading of student folders in preparation for panel meetings to a minimum, inasmuch as the members of the panel will probably know at least as much about a student as can now be found in her folder.

Still more important, review of students' work will be more closely related to their performance than at present. Instead of constituting a routine review of student work considered in the abstract, the activity of panels will be a directly relevant discussion of each student's difficulties and achievements, and the recommendations that are reached will feed back immediately into her educational career. Finally, there will be a greater degree of continuity in the deliberation of these panels than is true of present panels. Although the membership of each ad hoc panel will change from year to year or from term to term as a student works with different members of the faculty, there is every likelihood

that at least one of the three faculty members will carry over from term to term or from year to year.

Nevertheless, many members of the faculty who are convinced that the E.C.C. would benefit from reorganization are also convinced that the system of ad hoc panels the committee proposes would lead either to anarchy or to an impossibly complicated schedule of panel meetings. The committee believes that neither calamity threatens us. On the one hand, it feels that the division of sophomore and junior work into thirds more than justifies authorizing instructors in those thirds to supervise student work during the middle years. Still, provision may be easily made for appeals from the decisions of such a panel meeting to another meeting presided over by the Dean, who may also convene individual panels on his own initiative.

On the other hand, except where conflicts arise or where the Dean requests a meeting of this sort, the three faculty members who constitute a given student's panel will be able to meet informally at their convenience to discuss her work. In many cases, in fact, the committee anticipates that the panel need not meet at all, if the counselor satisfies himself by telephone or informal conversation that a student is progressing as planned in all three areas of her work. (It is to be remembered that the counselor himself will speak for one, but for only one, of these three areas.) In any event, there is nothing in the plan the committee proposes that precludes

scheduling panel meetings much as they are scheduled now, so as to bring together at one time a group of perhaps six or seven faculty members who have a large number of students in common.

Finally, the committee suggests that the faculty or the Dean may wish to create a single standing committee to consult with the Dean on problematical issues raised by the recommendations of separate panels of faculty members. A major function of such a committee might be to act as a final board of review in all cases in which there was serious doubt that a sophomore or junior was effectively meeting the demands of the college. The approval of such a committee might be necessary to authorize a student to change one or more of the disciplines to which she had committed herself in her Tentative Plan, or to dismiss a student from the college if she proved unable to keep up her work in one or more of them. The committee on the future is not convinced that such a supervisory committee would in fact be necessary for the middle years, however, and in the interest of saving the faculty time it recommends putting its plan for review of student work into operation without providing for such a committee. Later, if a supervisory committee proves necessary, it will be a simple matter to establish it.

The committee believes that its general plan for the review of student work will both improve our educational effectiveness and make better use of the faculty's time--in some cases by saving actual hours, in others by making sure that the hours spent on college business are more effectively spent

than many of them now are. Through their counselors, freshmen will confront a single predictable committee, operating according to known rules to ensure effective preparation for advanced work, but empowered at the same time to permit any reasonable variations in freshman programs when a case is made for them. Sophomores and juniors will answer to panels of faculty members who know them well and who can use that knowledge to evolve an effective educational program for each student, yet who will also be guided in turn by the Dean or even by an over-all supervisory committee if their judgments threaten the student's well being. For their part, seniors will again be responsible to a single supervisory committee, one aided in its deliberations (as at present) by the judgment of faculty divisions, but one also empowered to sanction and defend any program of senior work that points toward further education. And, far more than at present, progress of each student from one step in her career to the next will depend upon her ability to convince authorities who know her well, or who have been able to evaluate her performance wisely, that she is ready for the next stage in her education. In the opinion of the committee, all of these influences should help not only to consolidate our principles but also to make them more nearly self-enforcing, an achievement that could well be taken as a standard for all our supervisory activities.

IV. NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The changes the committee proposes in the curriculum, counseling, and committees should go far toward making the college more effective as an educational institution. Nevertheless, there are important areas in the life of the college that the recommendations it has made thus far cannot be expected to reach. Broadly speaking, these are the extra-curricular or non-academic areas like the Non-Resident Term and student social life, which the college must also deal with wisely if it is to be truly effective. While the committee feels less prepared to make firm recommendations affecting these areas, therefore, it has every wish to discuss them more or less tentatively.

1. The Non-Resident Term

The committee feels least tentative in its recommendations respecting the Non-Resident Term. It has explored many alternatives to the present Non-Resident Term expectation, including abolition of the winter term and, as a less drastic change, the institution of three terms in residence for freshmen and seniors as compared with two terms in residence and one term off campus for sophomores and juniors. After much deliberation, however, it has concluded that a non-resident winter term is indispensable to the college. Clearly, it

helps us to attract and to keep an excellent faculty. Particularly in the arts, it makes possible a faculty of active practitioners who would in all likelihood be unavailable to us if they were unable to spend their winters as pianists or painters or poets or dancers or dramatists or stage designers. But the winter period is also invaluable to faculty members in the traditional academic disciplines, whose winters are more often than not devoted to reading and research and writing that would be very nearly impossible if a block of time were not provided for them. Because the college depends upon active practitioners in every field of study, it cannot abandon the Non-Resident Term without abandoning many of its most successful educational techniques.¹⁷

Even were no faculty members to pursue professional interests during the winter period, however, it would still be indispensable to the college. No one who has taught at Bennington--and few who have attended it as students--would be likely to deny the intensity of its academic life even if he were critical of it on other grounds. In the opinion of the committee, that intensity is one of our most valuable assets, and it can be maintained for two academic terms a

17. Of course it might be possible to offer faculty members and students one term off each year while rearranging their schedules so as to keep the same number of each in residence at all times. The committee has found no practical means of carrying out this possibility consonant with Bennington's educational aims.

year only if there is a break between them. Certainly, even if a Fall term and a Spring term were well spent, a Winter term in residence sandwiched between them would not be.

Beyond these considerations the committee kept in view the unmistakable advantages the N.R.T. offers students. A good job is a thoroughly rewarding experience; and a good job in New York or Boston provides a student with cultural and social opportunities that Bennington cannot afford her. Similarly, a winter period spent on research for a senior project extends and indeed multiplies the academic opportunities of the college, which cannot provide all the necessary aids to advanced study in every field it teaches. Again, the winter period may be used profitably to gain some experience of fields of study we do not offer, or to make up deficiencies that a student has discovered in her training without encroaching on her primary commitments.

By itself or as an adjunct of a Fall term in absentia during the senior year, moreover, the N.R.T. amplifies our students' opportunities for serious travel abroad, which we must otherwise sponsor at the expense of their time in residence. Furthermore, to some members of the committee it seemed that even the financial opportunities the winter period offers students are an educational asset. The college's present expectation that each student receiving financial aid will save \$250 or \$300 from winter earnings undoubtedly works hardships in individual cases. But to the extent that any

student may wish to help herself through college, or simply to support herself away from home, the winter period is thoroughly beneficial. And the committee can hardly ignore the extent to which student views of the Non-Resident Term support many of its conclusions.¹⁸

In the light of such considerations, the committee recommends that the college hold to its present calendar of two fourteen-week academic terms separated by a non-resident term, but that it also make a concerted effort to eliminate the weaknesses in the winter program. First--and with an eye to the possible expansion of the college--it recommends increasing the staff and the budget of the Non-Resident Term Office so as to make possible much more effective assistance to students seeking jobs. Quite possibly an assistant director of the office might devote all of her time to helping freshman applicants for jobs, who would number one-third of the student body. More experienced students might be expected to rely more largely upon themselves, but to seek the director's help where it was necessary.

Second, the committee proposes that the college adopt a clearly educational test of the Non-Resident Term, defining "education" to include the whole range of experiences and activities that help to broaden or to deepen our students' understanding of themselves and of the world in which they live:

¹⁸. A discussion of student opinion of the Non-Resident Term will be found in Appendix I.

travel, study, field experience, or work. The committee anticipates that many students will profit educationally from seeking and holding winter jobs, especially if the income from jobs permits them to live away from home. Therefore it is inclined to think of two jobs as a norm, but fundamentally it proposes that each student's winter term be an individual matter to be worked out each year between her and her counselor under the general supervision of the Non-Resident Term Office and the appropriate educational counseling committee.

Third, the committee recommends exempting students who receive financial aid from the savings requirement during at least two of their winter terms. It proposes instead that the Non-Resident Term Office automatically inform the Financial Aid Committee of what savings a scholarship student may legitimately be expected to contribute to the cost of her education in any given year, and that the Financial Aid Committee make provision for increasing that student's financial award retroactively to make up the requisite \$250 or \$300 when she has not been able to save during the winter. Such an arrangement for increases after the fact is made necessary by the circumstance that students budget their financial needs eight or nine months in advance of the Non-Resident Term and cannot accurately anticipate their income so far ahead of time.

Fourth, the committee feels that the faculty should be expected to support the Non-Resident Term more effectively once these changes have been made. Therefore the committee

proposes that student performance during the winter period be formally weighed as part of the requirement for graduation, and that no senior be permitted to graduate who has not had at least two clearly satisfactory winter periods. The committee also recommends that the Non-Resident Term Office be authorized to deny students recognition for a Non-Resident Term when they have performed badly on a job or when they have dealt unfairly with an employer. It makes this stringent proposal for two reasons. On the one hand, stricter regulation of the Non-Resident Term is necessary to safeguard the interests of future students who may be barred from good jobs because former students have behaved irresponsibly. On the other hand, the educational significance of the N.R.T. will be diminished if students are permitted to treat freely chosen winter jobs as cavalierly as some of them now treat jobs they must take.

To provide ample supervision of the N.R.T. , and to remove ambiguities in the definition of a "satisfactory" N.R.T., the committee further proposes that the director (or the assistant director) of the N.R.T. Office be authorized to participate as a full-fledged member of both the Freshman and the Senior Committees--the Freshman Committee because it reviews student plans for the sophomore and junior years in the light of freshman performance, the Senior Committee because it reviews plans culminating in graduation. The committee assumes that the counselors of sophomores and juniors,

meeting in ad hoc panels, will continue as at present to consult with the Non-Resident Term Office on their students' winter plans.¹⁹

2. Student Social Life

One of the reasons the committee supports a continuation of the Non-Resident Term in substantially its present form is its belief that the winter period helps us to compensate for the fact that Bennington College is a women's college. The committee briefly explored the possibility that Bennington might open its doors to men students, but concluded on the basis of such evidence as it could muster that a coeducational college would present so many unfamiliar problems as to defy thoughtful anticipation of the necessary changes. In addition, it had some sense that many of these changes might work against the principles we value, if only because good men students are probably less likely than good women students to take a chance on an unfamiliar program leading to the degree. Therefore the committee proposes that the college keep open the possibility of admitting qualified men students if they apply, but that it continue to operate as a women's college until and unless they do. The committee's obvious equivocation on this point leaves the problem where in the view of the

¹⁹. The committee also assumes that the Bulletin of the college will be rewritten, and anticipates that its description of the Non-Resident Term will be radically revised.

committee it properly belongs, in the area of future circumstance rather than deliberate or dogmatic planning.

Postponing consideration of coeducation also postpones one possible solution to the problem of student social life at the college, however. (Of course it is quite possible that coeducation would present even graver problems than we now experience, but it might conceivably promote resolution of the familiar ones.) While the committee recognizes that problems of this sort exist, however, it has been unwilling on the basis of our present knowledge to recommend drastic changes in our social policies. It believes that the college must maintain and should probably expand psychiatric counseling in order to help students cope with their most pressing personal problems. It recognizes that the Student Personnel Office is a most sensitive agency of the college, and urges that its needs be met generously and unequivocally. And it sees some hope for student self-government in the new constitution of the community, which treats the houses as semi-autonomous republics where decisions made or forgone are felt directly and immediately by those most concerned.

Assuming these improvements, the committee senses (rightly or not) that there are great virtues in our present ways of helping students to function as social beings, and it repudiates the idea of imposing regulations on them that might well encourage them to become less rather than more mature. Hence it is clearly disinclined to suggest such

obvious innovations in campus policy as installing house-mothers in the faculty apartments, or otherwise guarding the students' social life for them. Instead, it proposes that the college sponsor a thoughtful examination of the needs and problems of girls in late adolescence and early maturity, which should not only identify the problems we must live with as a college but also give us some perspective on how to deal with them. Pending a successful completion of that study, it is inclined to urge leaving well enough alone.²⁰

3. General Meetings

So far as General Meetings are concerned, the committee intends only to describe the sort of program that would fit the college's intellectual needs, putting aside any consideration of the role that General Meetings or other college-wide activities may play in providing recreation for the student body.

The chief charge against the present General Meetings program is that it is ineffective in stimulating student interest in problems that should invite the attention of almost any civilized inhabitant of the modern world. Undoubtedly, its failure to attract students' interest is very largely a reflection of their own complacency, and incidentally a reflection of the faculty's demands as counselors and instructors.

²⁰. Nevertheless, the committee urges that such a study be undertaken as soon as possible because of the light it may cast on plans for building new student houses.

Hence there may be no plausible way to revitalize the program. But the committee senses that the General Meetings program also lacks support because it is not in any true sense a program: because it leads nowhere and develops no questions to a point of lasting significance. Therefore the committee recommends that the college consider reorganizing the whole program by authorizing one or perhaps two faculty divisions each term to plan a series of lectures and workshops for the college community at large.

In the opinion of the committee, each of these divisions should be asked to designate one of its members to carry the planning and administration of its program through from beginning to end, and the college should relieve him of counseling assignments and committee work during the period of his service.²¹ Each series of lectures should be organized around a specific theme or problem that the college cannot normally deal with (e.g. non-Western music, demography as a tool of social analysis), and the sponsoring division should be expected to invite experts in the field to visit the college for two- or three-day periods during which they would both deliver a formal lecture and meet informally with seniors and other interested

²¹. As another alternative, the committee visualizes appointment to the faculty of a full-time director of general meetings or--conceivably--a director of extra-curricular study who would oversee not only General Meetings but also terms abroad and Non-Resident Terms spent in study or research. Such a person might also maintain some of the educational services for alumnae of the college that have been suggested but not established in the past.

students, and with faculty members. Above all each series should be consecutive and should evolve as a significant intellectual experience.

V. EXPANSION OF THE COLLEGE

The improvements the committee has proposed for the college call for an expansion of faculty and staff and an increase in annual budget in almost every department of the institution.

Guided by its discussions with the several divisions and by its own best judgment, the committee proposes the following additions to the faculty. To make our faculty in the sciences and mathematics fully effective, we should add four members to the division: probably a biologist, a chemist, a physicist, and a mathematician. To make our faculty in languages fully effective we should appoint at least one person to teach each foreign language we offer.²² To make our faculty in the social sciences fully effective we should appoint at least two additional members, probably a political economist and a social psychologist. And to meet the numerical pressures that we can reasonably anticipate in other areas, we must be prepared to add personnel in other divisions too. In each case the committee anticipates that the president will be guided by the Faculty Educational Policies Committee and by the appropriate faculty division in making additions to the faculty; but the additions the committee has specified strike it as clearly called for on educational grounds.

²². Since the committee first formulated this proposal, the college has added one member to the language faculty. We now have one faculty member for each language we offer.

Our needs do not stop with additions to the faculty. The committee has recommended an expansion of the Non-Resident Term Office; it suggests expanding the psychiatric counseling service, and quite possibly the Student Personnel Office; it contemplates the appointment of a director for the General Meetings program; and it urges that the college award more financial aid to needy students in order to support an improved Non-Resident Term. Virtually the only change the committee has not proposed is an expansion of the president's office--but it has made up for this oversight by recommending expansion of our physical plant (laboratories, studios, theater, and dormitories) to the point at which it will accommodate our present student body.

Within certain limits, buildings and scholarship funds are more feasible for colleges to acquire and maintain than faculties or administrative officers. (Donors can often be found to provide both buildings and scholarships, and dormitories can be made to pay for themselves over a period of time.) Moreover, the board of trustees has appointed a capital planning committee, which is considering both our present and our prospective needs; hence the committee on the future has had no reason to undertake a consideration of our physical requirements. But it cannot ignore the financial consequences of its recommendations for expansion of faculty and administration, which will work against increasing faculty salaries by diverting such new income as we may find to new recipients.

For this reason, the college cannot afford to increase its faculty in undermanned fields unless it also increases the student body proportionately. (Increasing the faculty without increasing income from student fees is inconceivable in the present circumstances of the college, and increasing student fees is almost equally inconceivable at the present time.) On this basis, adding four faculty members in the sciences, two in literature and languages, two in the social sciences, and three in other divisions, would necessitate a college of some 400 students. At the same time, increasing the student body to 400 might also provide us with sufficient additional income to cover the costs of a disproportionately large increase in some administrative offices (e.g. the Non-Resident Term Office, the counseling service, and the Student Personnel Office) because not all administrative offices would find it necessary to expand as rapidly as the student body. We would still lose money as a result of this kind of expansion, however, because every student we admit costs us several hundred dollars more than the fees she pays, and the endowment income and gifts the college now relies upon to meet this deficit would be spread more thinly.

Under such circumstances we might indeed survive, but we would have done nothing to raise faculty salaries. Given its premises, the committee to explore the future of the college might conclude that it had discharged its responsibility for educational planning and that it could not assume a

responsibility for increasing the college's income. But though the committee almost never accepted financial stringency as a test of its educational planning, it has been both surprised and relieved to discover that a necessary expansion of the faculty and administration may be more than compensated for by expansion of the student body. The curricular plan the committee has devised on educational grounds makes possible unanticipated economies in the academic operations of the college, which make possible in turn an increase in the student-faculty ratio that will do no harm either to students or to the faculty.

These economies come from redefinition of the sophomore and junior years in terms of three courses rather than four, and from redefinition of the senior year to emphasize semi-independent study in colloquia and group tutorials. They are somewhat offset by the increased burden that a normal freshman program of five courses will place on the faculty, but the overall effect should be to save faculty time without increasing the size of classes and without diminishing contact between faculty and students during the students' first three years in college. (Indeed, the committee has offered reasons for thinking that contact will be more effective and hence more useful to the students.) In short, a better fulfillment of the aims of the college leads directly to an expansion of the student body; and an expansion of the student body will gradually make possible a substantial increase in faculty salaries.

Obviously, various degrees of increase in the student body would make possible roughly comparable increases in faculty salaries. (Only roughly comparable, however, because it is impossible to add fractional personnel to most divisions or offices of the college.) On the basis of its educational recommendations, bolstered by a study of student enrollments in the Fall of 1959, the committee believes that a ratio of nine students to one faculty member is the maximum feasible ratio consonant with our educational principles, as compared with a present ratio of somewhat less than seven to one. This increased ratio can be achieved, moreover, only if the college meets certain conditions that will be described in succeeding pages of this report; and it depends in the first instance upon faculty acceptance of the following teaching responsibilities, stated as average load per faculty member in all divisions except the performing arts, in which the assignment of students to different ensembles and sections according to their degrees of skill makes other categories necessary:

1. One course of reasonable size for freshmen. (The average number varies somewhat among the divisions, for reasons that will appear during the course of this chapter.)
2. Counseling three freshmen.
3. One course for sophomores and juniors.
4. Conferences with these sophomores and juniors (five and one-half hours per instructor per week).
5. Limited participation in a senior project tutorial and/or a senior colloquium. (The average number of seniors to whom a faculty member would have teaching responsibilities would be five.)

In the tables that appear following page 91, the committee has worked out projected student enrollments and conferences for a college of 603 students and 67 faculty members: 62 members of the faculty in residence, 5 on sabbatical each term, making an overall ratio of one faculty member for nine students. In one sense, the projections in these tables are wholly hypothetical, and the committee employs them only because they illustrate the extreme range of possibilities within which any expansion of the college to 600 students would be likely to fall. (Even the figure 603 is hypothetical; but the practical reasons for it will appear below.) Table I shows what would happen in a college of 603 students if their choices of courses duplicated exactly the choices made by students who were enrolled in the college in the Fall of 1959. On the other hand, Table II shows what would happen if their choices followed an "ideal" pattern the committee has assumed: (a) All freshmen enrolled in Language and Literature or an advanced third in literature in its stead; (b) All freshmen took a course (or a third) in science or mathematics; (c) In other respects, freshmen choices duplicated the choices made by freshmen in the Fall of 1959; (d) Enrollments in advanced work were distributed proportionally among the divisions according to the size of the faculty in each (Music and Dance excepted). Presumably, during a period of transition the college might move from the projections indicated in Table I to those indicated in Table II.

But in another sense our projections in Table II are not hypothetical. The assumption that all freshmen would take both Language and Literature and a course in natural science or mathematics, for example, is a practical application of the committee's proposals; and for every freshman whom the Freshman Committee exempted from one of these expectations there might well be another who took two courses in literature or in science, so that the numbers may be very significant indeed. Again, a faculty of seven scientists and two mathematicians is called for in the committee's proposals; what is hypothetical about the projections in Table II is our ability to enroll the requisite number of students in the sciences to support expansion of the science faculty--but not the need to enroll them if we are in fact to offer more science. Conversely, the expansion of faculty in literature indicated in both tables reflects increased demands that are likely to be made of Language and Literature and the probability that a great majority of sophomores and juniors will wish under the proposed plan to make literature one of their three sequences. Even the number 603 gains plausibility in this context: it is a reasonable approximation of the number of students necessary to make possible the adjustments in faculty and curriculum that the committee proposes.²³

23. Table III shows that 62 faculty members and 558 students are the minimum number that can achieve the academic purposes assumed in Tables I and II. These numbers were arrived at by charging sabbaticals for four faculty members each term against

Nevertheless, the committee has no intention of recommending that the faculty automatically adopt either a college of 603 students or a faculty distributed among the divisions as the figures in Tables I and II indicate. For one thing, it realizes that the projections are inaccurate as specific predictions of freshman enrollments under either plan, while the distribution of sophomores and juniors envisaged in Table II might never take place. For another thing, the tables represent a faculty in residence and a faculty on sabbatical leave in two different categories--a device that is useful in projecting our overall needs but that cannot illuminate specific divisional requirements. Even without taking sabbaticals into account, moreover, the needs of the divisions might well deviate from these projections, which can be stated here only in hypothetical and approximate terms. All the committee can propose with any assurance is the ultimate goal of a 9:1 student-faculty ratio, and the main merit of its projections lies in the manner in which they identify certain conditions that must be met if the college is to reach that ultimate goal.

If the 9:1 ratio and the techniques that are generally indicated by it are adopted by the faculty, variations in detail can well be left to experience. Even the ultimate

Footnote 23, continued
the number of faculty appointments in the college, instead of adding five sabbaticals per term to this number. However, changing the method of calculation does not affect the ratio between students and faculty, nor its implications.

size of the college is probably best left open to reconsideration as expansion progresses from year to year, although some clear-cut decisions will have to be reached on the size of new buildings. (Obviously it would have been desirable to reach such a decision before the new Library was built.) But the committee would emphasize that in voting on its plan for the future of the college the faculty keep in mind that it has only two real alternatives. One is to continue as we are, accepting the probability of the college's decline through the gradual disappearance of many of our best faculty members and the disappearance--more gradual but no less debilitating--of many of our best students when they find that Bennington College has become a second-rate institution. The other is to make long-overdue adjustments in our curriculum and our faculty and our administration, finding means to finance our improvements in an increased student-faculty ratio. Merely expanding, or expanding without full acceptance of the principle of a higher student-faculty ratio, is almost sure to be fatal.

Notes on Tables I and II

In both tables, attrition of students has been arbitrarily set at two-thirds of what it appeared to be in the Fall of 1959. If attrition were to remain the same, freshman classes and counseling loads would be larger, other courses and conference loads smaller. Further study of attrition is clearly indicated, as chapter 6 of this report suggests.

Reading from left to right in either table, the number of faculty members projected for each division (or for each part of a present division) is followed by:

1. The number and average size of freshman classes projected for that division;
2. The total number of freshman enrollments in those classes, and the percentage of freshmen these figures represent;
3. The number of freshman counselees assigned the division;
4. The number and average size of sophomore-junior classes projected for that division;
5. The total number of enrollments in those classes, including freshmen admitted to advanced work, and the percentage of sophomores and juniors enrolled in these same classes;
6. The average hours of conference time per faculty member per week indicated by these enrollments in advanced work;
7. The number of senior projects in each division.

In addition, the subsidiary figures for freshman enrollments indicate the number and percentage of freshmen enrolled in advanced courses instead of introductory courses in each area.

Neither Table I nor Table II makes allowance for sophomores or juniors who might enroll in more than one course in a third of their work, nor does either make allowance for seniors who might enroll in formal work outside the project tutorial. Nevertheless, the committee feels that its projections are reasonably informative because students who enrolled in two courses in a single third would by definition make only slight demands on conference time; hence load on the faculty

would tend to balance out. Again, the relatively small size of classes projected in both tables leaves some room for additional course enrollments at both the freshman and the more advanced level, especially when consideration is given to the probability that not all freshmen would carry a full five-course program.

Certain figures in the tables are obviously implausible, but they have been left as they stand because they conform to assumptions that had to be made in drawing up any sort of formal projections. In Table I, for example, sophomore and junior enrollments in French literature, and the conferences that accompany them, are ridiculously high. They reflect the fact that in the Fall of 1959 Mr. Fowlie offered two courses to advanced students (Baudelaire and Dante) in place of the normal one.²⁴ In Table II, by contrast, enrollments in French literature are ridiculously low because the projections distribute enrollments in advanced work equally among the whole faculty (Music and Dance excepted). In any practical implementation of the committee's plan, enrollments would probably fall somewhere between these extremes.

Similarly, the figures for Dance are misleading because (for statistical purposes only) the committee was forced to assign freshman dancers either to freshman courses or to sophomore-junior thirds. (During the Fall of 1959, many freshmen apparently took part in both beginning and intermediate techniques classes in dance.) In practice, however, dance techniques would be offered as needed, and the projected load would be more equitably distributed between the freshman and other years. On the other hand, the figures for freshman enrollments in the social sciences projected in Table II are predictably inaccurate. Table II assumes that all freshmen will take Language and Literature and a natural science or mathematics, but distributes the remaining freshman enrollments according to the proportions they followed in the Fall of 1959. But Table I shows that if they are given a chance freshmen are more likely to elect work in the social sciences than in any other area. Hence larger freshman enrollments can safely be anticipated in practice even under the assumptions made in Table II. It is for reasons like this that the committee insists that details of the plan must be worked out pragmatically and cannot be fully anticipated here. Meanwhile it is worth noting that Table I shows 11 faculty members in literature and 14 in the social sciences, whereas Table II shows 12 and 13, respectively. The difference emphasizes how expansion in certain areas must depend finally upon actual enrollments.

24. The committee is aware that Dante wrote in Italian.

Even if details vary, however, the figures show unmistakably that the college's greatest difficulty will lie in attempting to enroll sophomores and juniors in the sciences. Table I shows how few would enroll if they behaved just like students in the Fall of 1959, which was admittedly a bad year for science. Table II indicates, none the less, that 49% of sophomores and juniors would have to enroll in science or mathematics if exact parity of enrollments were to be achieved. Parity would also be achieved if 25% of sophomores and juniors were to elect two sequences in science, or if some sophomores and juniors (say 16%) were to elect two sequences and others (say 17%) were to elect a single sequence (16% times 2 plus 17% times 1 would amount to 49%).

Obviously, a science curriculum calling for two courses in every third would increase the demands placed upon the science faculty and diminish the number of students they could handle, with the further consequence of increasing the load placed upon other faculty members. On a strict numerical basis, without making allowances for probable variations in practice, if the faculty in science were to teach only 25% of sophomores and juniors in single sequences, it would be necessary to find room for the other 24%--66 enrollments and 22 hours of conference a week--with the rest of the faculty.

In order to compensate the science faculty for time spent in laboratory (in the natural sciences) and for unusually large freshman enrollments (especially in mathematics), no freshman counselees are assigned to them in the projections in Table II. (A comparable adjustment has been made for the faculty in languages.) The committee recognizes that exemption from freshman counseling may not fully compensate the science faculty for its extra burdens, but it also anticipates that most sophomore and junior conferences will take place during laboratory hours. Hence it believes its projections represent substantial justice, both to the faculty in science and to the rest of the faculty. Anticipating that most conferences in the visual and performing arts will also take place during periods of practical instruction, the committee also believes that its projections in those areas represent an equitable distribution of faculty load.

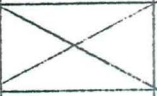


In both tables, a limited amount of freshman counseling is assigned to non-divisional faculty members or to assistants who do not have faculty status, as it was in the Fall of 1959. Similarly, the projections assume that the college--rather than the faculty--will bear the cost of two sabbaticals per year, as has been customary for several years past. If these two additional sabbaticals are incorporated into the committee's projections, which provide for ten sabbaticals a year,

ample provision has been made for maintaining our present sabbatical policy.

In these projections, the expenses of General Meetings are assigned to the administrative rather than the faculty budget. The committee assumes that expansion of the college to 603 students would provide amply for this and for all other additional administrative expenses created by adoption of the committee's plan.

Figures have been rounded throughout.

Table 1. Enrollments for 603 Students Extrapolated from Fall 1959

STUDENTS:	200 Freshmen: 832 freshman courses + 84 advanced thirds			150 Sophomores) 127 Juniors) 831 thirds plus 84 freshman thirds			126 Seniors
FACULTY	Classes Aver. # size	Enrollments # % ^a	Coun- sel- ees	Classes Aver. # size	Enrollments # % ^b	Confer- ence hrs. (aver.)	Projects per division
7 science	7 @ 14	115 +10 125 58% ^a +5% 63%	21	7 @ 5	35 12% ^b		6
2 mathe- matics	2 @ 9	125	6	2 @ 7	14 3% ^b	2.3	
11 litera- ture in English	11 @ 15	166 + 6 172 83% ^a +3% 86%	33	11 @ 16	175 60% ^b	5.3	33
1 French litera- ture	1 @ 45	45 +10 55 23% ^a +5% 28%	3	2 @ 40	79 25% ^b	26.3	2
3 foreign language	4 @ 15	61 +6 67 31% ^a +3% 34%	9	5 @ 6	28 8% ^b	3.1	4
14 social science	13 @ 18	230 + 9 239 115% ^a + 5% 120%	42	15 @ 17	252 88% ^b	6.0	27
6 visual art	6 @ 15	91 +10 101 46% ^a +5% 51%	18	studios	146 49% ^b		14
1 art his- tory	none	101	3	history	27 10% ^b	9.0	
10 music	3 @ 15	44 +1 45 22% ^a +1% 23%	30	technics	39 14% ^b		16
4 dance	technics	33 +30 63 17% ^a +15% 32%	12	technics	82 19% ^b		
3 drama	2 @ 24	47 +1 48 24% ^a +1% 24%	9	technics	37 13% ^b	4.1	11
TOTALS		832 fifths + 83 thirds	186		914 thirds (includes freshmen)		126 projects

^a Percentage of 200 freshmen.^b Percentage of 277 sophomores and juniors.

Table 11. "Ideal" Enrollments (All freshmen take Lang. & Lit. and a science.
(Advanced enrollments are equally distributed.)

STUDENTS:	200 Freshmen: 832 freshman courses +84 advanced thirds.				150 Sophomores) 127 Juniors) 831 thirds plus 84 freshman thirds				126 Seniors
FACULTY	Classes	Enrollments		Coun- sel- ees	Classes	Enrollments		Confer- ence hrs. (aver.)	Projects per division
	Aver. # size	#	% ^a		Aver. # size	#	% ^b		
7 science	7 @ 20	190 +10 200	95% ^a +5% 100%	none	7 @ 16	114	40% ^b	5.5	23
2 mathe- matics	2 @ 25			none	2 @ 16	33	9% ^b		
12 litera- ture in English	12 @ 16	194 +6 200	97% ^a +3% 100%	42	12 @ 16	196	69% ^b	5.4	30
1 French litera- ture	1 @ 37	37 +10 47	19% ^a +5% 24%	none	1 @ 16	16	2% ^b	5.3	2
3 foreign language	4 @ 13	50 +6 56	25% ^a +3% 28%	none	5 @ 10	49	16% ^b	5.4	8
13 social science	12 @ 16	187 + 9 196	94% ^a +5% 98%	49	14 @ 16	228	79% ^b	5.4	33
6 visual art	6 @ 13	74 +10 84	37% ^a +5% 42%	27	studios	98	32% ^b	5.3	15
1 art his- tory	none			4	history	16	6% ^b		
10 music	3 @ 12	35 +1 36	18% ^a +1% 18%	37	technics	53	19% ^b	5.4	4
4 dance	technics	27 +30 57	14% ^a +15% 29%	15	technics	62	12% ^b		
3 drama	2 @ 19	38 +1 39	19% ^a +1% 20%	11	technics	49	17% ^b	5.4	8
TOTALS		832 fifths + 83 thirds		185		914 thirds (including freshmen)			127 projects

^a Percentage of 200 freshmen.

^b Percentage of 277 sophomores and juniors.

TABLE III. Expansion to 62 Faculty Members,
Charging Sabbaticals Against Appointments

Notes to Table III

Table III assumes that in a period of five and one-half years, eight out of nine faculty members will take sabbatical leave. It also assumes that the faculty not on leave will take the place of four of their number each term, and that the college will replace one faculty member each term.

The table represents the number of faculty appointments in each division, followed by the average number replaced by the faculty itself each term, the absolute number replaced by the college when a sabbatical is due, and the average number of faculty members available for teaching in any one term.

Division	Number of Faculty Appointmts	Replacemts by faculty (average)	Replacemts by college	Total Available Faculty
Sciences	9	0.7	---	8.3
Literature	12	0.9	---	11.1
French Literature	1	---	1	1.0
Languages	3	---	3	3.0
Social Sciences	13	1.0	---	12.0
Visual Arts	6	0.5	---	5.5
Art History	1	0.1	---	.9
Music	10	0.7	1	9.3
Dance	4	0.1	3	3.9
Drama	3	---	3	3.0
	62	4.0	1 per term	58.0

VI. UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

The committee cannot pretend that its plan will solve all of the problems that confront the college. Some of them have not even been stated in this report, and others have been no more than touched upon and reserved for further study if the faculty adopts the committee's plan in principle. A brief discussion of some of these problems and some of the studies they suggest completes the report of the committee.

Perhaps the most crucial problem the college faces is student attrition, which undermines our effectiveness and adds immeasurably to our burdens as teachers and counselors. (Because half of the freshman class leaves college before graduating, the college is forced to admit--and to teach and counsel--over fifty percent more beginning students than it would have to if there were no attrition.) The committee hoped at one time that it would be able to complete an exhaustive inquiry into student attrition, which has been examined only superficially until now, but lack of personnel and the pressure of other matters have postponed any full-fledged examination of attrition until after the committee must make its report. Nevertheless, any attempt to implement its recommendations will require far better knowledge than we now possess of which girls are most likely to leave college prematurely, and why. Hence the committee's only recommendation bearing upon attrition is that the studies it originated be carried

to completion by trained investigators. To these prospective investigators it bequeaths its records of protracted interviews and other kinds of material on the sophomore class of 1959--1960. These same records may also be of use in the study of student social life and typical personal problems that the committee has also recommended.

Obviously, any lessons that may be learned about student attrition will be of prime importance in helping us to reshape our admissions policies. Here too the committee has made certain preliminary inquiries, the main effect of which is to sanction much more elaborate analysis of the admissions process than the committee was able to undertake. Such an analysis would be invaluable even if there were no question of expanding the college or of increasing the student-faculty ratio; but making either or both of these changes will obviously put additional pressures on admissions. We must experience a significant continuous increase in the number of qualified applicants in order to make possible an annual increase of the freshman class by as few as ten students per year without lowering our present standards.²⁵ We must experience an even

25. An increase of ten freshmen per year would, at a rate of attrition two-thirds of what it was in the Fall of 1959, increase the college from 340 to 553 students in ten years' time, and to 614 in twelve years. (By contrast, an increase of ten freshmen per year at a rate of attrition equal to that of the Fall of 1959 would require eleven years to reach 557, and thirteen years to reach 611.) But an increase of ten freshmen would necessitate tendering seventeen acceptances in order to compensate for the fact that prospective college students commonly submit applications to several colleges, any one of which may be their first choice.

greater increase if we are to enroll a disproportionately greater number of potential science majors or students seriously interested in science. And we must experience an extraordinary annual increase if we are to admit only those applicants who offer convincing evidence that they are willing and able to finish college.

Even if admissions and attrition were to present no problems, however, the committee's proposals would still leave a good deal undone. Planning for expansion requires not only assurance that we can attract and keep the requisite number of students, but also a meticulous projection of our physical needs. Some consequences of expansion are easy to anticipate: we need additional student housing, and an increase in the facilities of the dining halls and the infirmary, not to mention the Library, classroom space, laboratories, and studios. On the other hand, some consequences of expansion must remain in doubt until almost the last minute; hence planning must keep open as many alternatives as possible. (For example, it may be necessary to design a new science building--which is needed immediately--in such a fashion that it will accommodate classes in other disciplines if science enrollments fail to rise.) Furthermore, planning for our ultimate needs must also take into account the particular new needs we will confront every year or every term; it includes phasing as well as projecting our future. The committee therefore recommends the creation of a new faculty committee to work with the trustees'

capital planning committee on the details of physical expansion.

Again, the committee recognizes that many details of its educational plan will remain to be worked out even if the plan is adopted in principle by the faculty. It has already pointed out that some of these details must be worked out at the divisional level, but it also urges that the Educational Policies Committee be specifically invited to oversee such divisional planning. Its advice will be particularly valuable, the committee believes, in helping divisions to plan expansion of their faculties (where expansion is called for), and in maintaining a college perspective on the recruiting process.

Another problem the college must deal with is the college Bulletin. Obviously, any revision of our curriculum will necessitate restatement of many paragraphs of information for prospective students, but the problem and the need go much deeper. In the opinion of the committee, the present Bulletin diminishes the stature of the college by seeming to deprecate scholarship and by treating the bachelor's degree as if it were largely a reward for personal adjustment. The new Bulletin must give us our due--the more so if it is an important vehicle of communication to prospective students and their parents.

Finally, the records the college keeps must be systematized and refined if they are to be of service to us in the future in revealing significant problems or measuring the impact of specific changes in the curriculum or elsewhere. (One of the many reasons the committee on the future has com-

pleted so few studies successfully is that the data it needed for each usually had to be dug out of student folders one fact at a time.) Under any circumstances, efficiency in administration would seem to dictate much better records than we now keep, but if any attempt is to be made to treat the committee's plan as an experiment and to evaluate it after a period of years, a records system must be devised and put into effect immediately in order to make careful evaluation possible. The committee on the future (retired) stands ready, as its final public act, to help the college devise such a records system.

APPENDIX

The Non-Resident Term Questionnaire

Immediately after returning to college in the Spring of 1960, students were asked by the Non-Resident Term Office to fill out an extended questionnaire soliciting their reactions to the Non-Resident Term. Most of them complied, in time, and over half of them (109 freshmen and sophomores, 75 juniors and seniors) complied in such a fashion that their responses could be tabulated by the committee. Table IV on the next page shows the percentage of students in the two groups who saw "considerable potential value" in various aspects of the N.R.T. listed by the questionnaire. Table V shows the percentages who indicated that the N.R.T. just completed had had "considerable actual value" for them in these same areas. In both tables, the aspects of the N.R.T. listed by the questionnaire have been reordered according to the percentage of students of all classes who assigned potential value to them.

As these tables clearly show, students actually realized the potential values they saw in the Non-Resident Term less often than they wished, although certain areas of their experience seem to have been surprisingly successful. Further breakdown of their responses in Table VI (on the following page) shows that in general juniors and seniors fared little better than freshmen and sophomores in realizing the potential values they assigned to the winter period. Both groups had

TABLE IV. Potential Values Assigned the N.R.T.

	By freshmen & sophomores	By juniors & seniors
"Opportunity to explore field of major interest"	87%	82%
"Experience of working, discipline, etc."	85	73
"Opportunity to meet and know different people"	88	69
"Opportunity to explore a professional or vocational field"	86	70
"Opportunity to live in a different city or part of the country"	73	64
"Experience of being self-supporting"	67	65
"Opportunity to visit galleries, go to concerts, theater"	63	62
"Opportunity to live away from home"	50	57
"Learning how to budget, cook, keep house, etc."	49	44
"Opportunity to save money"	52	35
"Opportunity for social life"	29	32

TABLE V. Actual Values of the N.R.T. in 1960

	For freshmen & sophomores	For juniors & seniors
"Opportunity to explore a field of major interest"	45%	55%
"Experience of working, discipline, etc."	67	53
"Opportunity to meet and know different people"	76	63
"Opportunity to explore a professional or vocational field"	50	59
"Opportunity to live in a different city or part of the country"	41	39
"Experience of being self-supporting"	36	44
"Opportunity to visit galleries, go to concerts, theater"	39	41
"Opportunity to live away from home"	38	51
"Learning how to budget, cook, keep house, etc."	15	24
"Opportunity to save money"	41	25
"Opportunity for social life"	27	31
Other values specified by students*	13	12

*Chiefly opportunity for reflection, for developing perspective on one's values, or for personal development.

TABLE VI.

Realization of Potential Values Assigned to the N.R.T.
(Percentages of Students Who Had Realized Values They Assigned)

	<u>Freshmen & Sophomores</u>	<u>Juniors & Seniors</u>
"Opportunity for social life"	91%	92%
"Opportunity to meet and know different people"	86	88
"Opportunity to live away from home"	76	86
"Experience of working, discipline, etc."	78	69
"Opportunity to save money"	79	63
"Opportunity to explore a professional or vocational field"	58	80
"Opportunity to visit galleries, go to concerts, theater"	62	64
"Opportunity to live in a different city or part of the country"	57	63
"Experience of being self-supporting"	53	66
"Opportunity to explore a field of major interest"	51	66
"Learning how to budget, cook, keep house, etc."	30	52

succeeded least well in learning to budget, cook, and keep house, and best in meeting people and finding opportunity for social life. On the other hand, juniors and seniors reported success in exploring a professional or vocational or major field far more often than freshmen and sophomores, whereas freshmen and sophomores had saved money more successfully than juniors and seniors. Understandably, moreover, juniors and seniors had been more successful than their younger counterparts in living

away from home, supporting themselves, and learning to keep house. Other discrepancies between the two groups' experience were less striking.

Students were also asked whether the Non-Resident Term just completed had affected their academic orientation, vocational or professional interests, plans for graduate school, or plans for marriage. Some 77% of 90 freshmen and sophomores, and 59% of 71 juniors and seniors, reported changes in their vocational plans as a result of the winter's experience--most in favor of potential vocations, but some against. (Freshmen and sophomores were far more likely to have "discovered" a specific career than upperclassmen, who usually identified areas of vocational interest rather than specific jobs.) As might have been expected, moreover, 58% of freshmen and sophomores, but only 34% of juniors and seniors, reported changes in academic orientation (e.g. new perspectives on their college education, different attitudes about majoring), although 44% of juniors and seniors (as against 19% of freshmen and sophomores) reported that they had gained new perspectives on graduate training.

Finally, students were asked to make recommendations for improvement of the Non-Resident Term on the basis of their recent experiences. Both upper- and underclassmen volunteered in large numbers (42% of 120 freshmen and sophomores, 62% of 73 juniors and seniors) that they would have benefitted from jobs oriented more closely to their academic interests, while

38% of freshmen and sophomores also felt that they would have gained from an opportunity to be away from home or to live in an unfamiliar location.* (Twenty percent of upperclassmen said the same thing.) Both groups also suggested (16% and 20%) that greater self-discipline or greater knowledge of the job would have aided them, and there was a scattering of other responses.

On the other hand, in a section of the questionnaire directed exclusively to them, many juniors and seniors (46%) suggested requiring all students to hold a dull office job during the freshman year, while a lesser number (21%) stipulated that every student should be required to live away from home for at least one winter, preferably during the freshman year. In other respects, both underclassmen and upperclassmen apparently preferred to leave the basic structure and expectations of the N.R.T. alone. Those who recommended changes in the number of non-resident terms (21%) or in their duration (14%) clearly favored two terms, of longer duration; in both cases, juniors and seniors were more enthusiastic than freshmen or sophomores for the change. Otherwise, the chief recommenda-

* Nevertheless, it should be noted that a significant number who volunteered that they would have benefitted from jobs related to their major fields of interest had in fact held what might be considered jobs in those fields. Apparently the jobs these students had held either did not coincide with their particular interests or were so menial that they offered students no opportunity to extend their intellectual interests.

It might also be noted that only 31% of freshmen, as against 54% of the other three classes, had lived away from home during the N.R.T. on which they were reporting.

tions students made were that there be better jobs, better paid, for all students; and that the college apply more rigorous standards to student work during the winter period--holding them responsible for doing the jobs well, assigning them additional projects, and asking them to keep journals, for example.*

* The questionnaire made no provision for students who had spent or who wished to spend the winter in research, study, or travel. Eight freshmen and sophomores recommended organized travel programs, and a lesser number of juniors and seniors recommended that study be permitted on or off campus during the winter.

INDEX

- Ad hoc committees (for sophomores and juniors), 67-70
- Admissions, 28-29
 - and attrition, 99-101
- Appendix, N.R.T. Study, 104-108
- Arts, lack of facilities in, 31-32
- Attrition, 99-101
- Auditing, 37-38
- Bulletin, 23; 78n, 102
- Capital Planning Committee (Trustees'), 84; 102
- Coeducation, 78
- Colloquia (Senior Year), 49; 51
- Committees, (see Educational Counseling Committees)
- Composite Courses, 47
- Counseling, 18-22; 53-61
 - Under the current system, 18-22
 - difficulties of, 18-20
 - and E.C.C., 20-21
 - and student independence, 19-20
 - role of, 18-19
 - Under the proposed plan, 53-61
 - and faculty load, 58-59; 60-61
 - for freshman, 53-58
 - for sophomores and juniors, 58-59
 - for seniors, 59-61
 - professional, 57
- Credits (for transfer), 46-47n
- Divisions, average work load for, 96-98
- Educational Counseling Committees, 13; 20-22; 62-71
 - Under the current system, 13; 20-22
 - and the counselor, 21-22
 - and junior-senior divisions, 20
 - problems of, 21-22
 - Under the proposed plan, 62-71
 - ad hoc committees (for sophomores and juniors), 67-70
 - freshman committee, 62-66
 - role of the Dean in, 69-70
 - role of the N.R.T. Director in, 77-78
 - senior committee, 66-67
 - supervisory committee, 70
- Education, (see Liberal education and Progressive education)
- Expansion, 3; 83-98; 101-102
 - of facilities, 84
 - of faculty and administration, 83-84
 - planning for, 101-102
 - of student body, 85
 - student-faculty ratio, 87
 - tables showing, 96-98
 - (explanation of, 92-95; 98)

- Facilities, 31-32; 84
 - expansion of, 84
 - lack of in science and arts, 31-32
- Faculty Educational Policies Committee, 41n; 83; 102
- Faculty load
 - and counseling, 60-61
 - average, 87
 - tables showing, 96-98
 - under proposed plan, description of, 43-44
- Faculty salaries, 1-2; 84-85; 86-87
- Faculty size, 32; 83-84; 96-98
- Freshman Committee, 62-66
- Freshman year, under proposed plan, 45-48; 53-58; 62-66
 - composite courses in, 47
 - counseling in, 53-58
 - credits in, 46-47n
 - for exploration, 45-46; 56
 - five courses in, 46
 - and freshman committee, 62-66
 - language continuation in, 47
 - and orientation, 57
 - promotion from, 63-64
 - requirements in, 46
 - as transition, 47-48
- General Meetings
 - criticisms of, 27-28
 - director for, 84
 - in the senior year, 50
 - under the proposed plan, description of, 80-82
- Housing, (see Student living conditions)
- Job requirement, (see Non-Resident Term)
- Junior and Senior Divisions, 20
- Language continuation, 47
- Liberal education
 - achievement of, 4; 6-7
 - educational goals of, 6-8; 51-52
 - and free choice of courses, 17-18
 - institutional criteria for, 14-15; 18
 - philosophical considerations for, 4-9
 - standards for, 5; 6-9; 33-34
- Non-Resident Term (and N.R.T. Office) 22-26; 72-78; 104-108
 - Under the current system, 22-26
 - and financial aid, 24-25
 - lack of faculty interest in, 25
 - lack of funds for, 25-26
 - N.R.T. Study, Appendix, 104-108
 - Under the proposed plan, 72-78; 104-108
 - faculty participation in, 76
 - and financial aid, 74-75; 76
 - increase staff of, 75; 84
 - job requirement for, 75-76
 - requirement for graduation, 77

- Panels, (see Educational Counseling Committees)
- Progressive education, 4-5 (see also Liberal education)
- Psychiatric counseling, 79; 84
- Records, recommendations for, 102-103
- Science
 - expansion of faculty in, 83; 94
 - facilities in, 31
 - freshman enrollments in, 16; 94
 - neglect of, 15-16; 30-31
 - in sophomore-junior sequences, 44-45
- Senior Committee, 66-67
- Senior year, under the proposed plan, 48-51; 66-67
 - and colloquia, 49
 - and counseling, 59-60
 - and General Meetings, 50
 - projects in, 50
 - rationale for, 49-50
 - requirements of, 48-49; 51
 - and senior committee, 66-67
- Sequences, (see Sophomore-Junior years)
- "Sophomore slump," 29-30
- Sophomore-Junior years, under the proposed plan, 35-45; 58-59; 67-70
 - and ad hoc committees (for sophomores and juniors), 67-70
 - advantages of, 39-41
 - auditing in, 37-38
 - and counseling, 58-59
 - course sequence in, 35-36
 - enhancement of course work in, 37-39
 - faculty load in, 43-44
 - flexibility of, 41-42; 44-45
 - science in, 44-45
 - student work load in, 36-37
- Standards, (see Liberal education)
- Student-faculty ratio, 87; 96-98
- Student living conditions, 26-27
- Student orientation, 56-57
- Student Personnel Office, 79; 84
- Student Programs
 - of "average" students, 12-13
 - balance of, 18
 - of "excellent" students, 11-12
 - in science, 15-16; 30-31
 - under the proposed plan, 34-35
 - and work load, 36-37
- Student social life, 26; 78-80
 - and coeducation, 78
 - and the psychiatric counseling service, 79
- Supervisory committee, 70
- Tables, 96-98; 105-106
- Transfer, 46-47n
- Work in absentia, 49; 74
- Year abroad, (see Work in absentia)

