

GALLEY

A Cry for an Improved Bennington -- A Co-educational Bennington

In the past few days Bennington has begun once again to debate the advantages and disadvantages of co-education. Once again students are saying they came here in spite of its being a girls' school; once again people are expressing their fears that something precious will be lost if Bennington becomes co-educational.

To the concern over lowered academic standards we respond-- However one goes about "proving" that men's perspectives are different from women's, it has been shown that men frequently approach problems from a different view creating more stimulating class discussions. The faculty support for co-education-- and the faculty is at least, if not more so, concerned with the quality of students as we are--indicates the irrationality of the fear of lowered standards. Furthermore, there is no need to use a quota system or a set ratio--only the "qualified" male should be admitted guaranteeing equal standards in reviewing applicants. Perhaps, a co-educational setting would also attract some teachers who admire the Bennington idea but who do not want to teach in a women's college, making it easier to fill literature, anthropology, science, etc. vacancies.

To the question "can Bennington offer what men want?" we respond-- Men are heterogeneous. As for those preparing for graduate school or the professions, while a Bennington degree may not be the best credential for the General Motors executive (thank goodness!), why can't we prepare the future politics professor, writer, doctor, artist, lawyer, free-thinker...? Liberal arts colleges are liberal artsy; it is the graduate school which "trains".

Lastly, a co-educational Bennington would help to make a healthier community. There would be less need for week-end escapism whether it takes the form of trips to N.Y.C. or all-day studying. There would be less tendency to react adversely to men as is too often the case with Bennington students who see some of the less mature specimens who weekly invade the campus. There would be greater potentiality for complete, meaningful relationships with men as opposed to flighty, physical ones. Also, there would be fewer intense physical relations between women. And, because men do think differently than women-- because they often tend to be activists as opposed to theorists-- there would be a greater range of political, social, and extra-curricular activity in addition to more exciting extra-class conversations.

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