College Organization Needs Streamlining

By MARTHA KIRKPATRICK
Brown College President

For several years now people have been wondering just how committed the University is to the faculty. In fact, the college has considered committing itself in terms of dollars and cents. In the men's colleges the lack of financial commitment is obvious. University is going only halfway to provide "something more" in the way of college life, has provided something less in the way of basic facilities—beds, lamps and upholstery.

As we look at women students we have discovered, however, the problem is not just money. The most serious lack of commitment of the college system is the failure to recognize the colleges as having educational value. From the point of view of most members of the faculty and the administration, these colleges are a strange curricular, unspeakably beneath the academic curriculum upon which all learning hinges.

Enhance Learning

Certainly it is undeniable that the curriculum is the basis of a university education, but we must realize that most learning takes place outside the classroom. We must turn our attention to providing an atmosphere which will enhance the learning process. I claim that the colleges have an important place in the total educational system involved.

I do not blame the administration of this University for its lack of commitment; the system as it presently operates insures this development. At the end of six years, however, it is obvious that certain administrative changes must be made if the colleges are to take their place as an integral part of university life.

Amorphous Definition

The idea of a college as an arbitrary administrative category which, through its sheer heterogeneity, is supposed to foster "intellectual, social, and cultural" development outside the classroom, has proved unworkable.

Such an amorphous definition is crippling to the development of any reasonable idea of what a college should be—almost as crippling as the confused hierarchy between the faculty, the associates, supervisors, assistants and food service personnel which rises above the college system.

Streamline System

What is called for is to streamline the system, concentrating on what has worked best in eight years of experience and eliminating what has proved inefficient. Without burden.

The colleges at their best have provided a place for people to get together on an informal basis—to borrow notes, to acquire funds, to write lab reports—in short, the advantages of living with peers.

In addition, they have gained freedom from most of the unproductive restrictions faced by other schools and have been more or less effective in providing programs and speakers to turn the attention of the college student outside himself. We have provided for all those who have desired to participate in self-government, the opportunity to learn by doing.

Integration Fails

At worst, the colleges have failed miserably to integrate more than a handful of off-campus members or faculty associated on a real, despite efforts on both sides. As Walter Lewis has pointed out in this section last week, the needs and interests of the off-campus student are distinct from those of the student.

Faculty associates are linked to the college by the tenuous bond of the Master's appointment and by a nodding acquaintance with a few college members.

I propose streamlining the amorphous idea of a college to a simple, logical and practical model; there is no other way of people living together. In Brown this has been our working definition as we have tried to establish just where the responsibilities of the college centers and ends in sponsoring programs and providing facilities, as well as in matters of discipline.

Living Together

In moments of idealistic moments, I think of this "living together" in the fullest sense—scholarly Gemutlichkeit, if you will. In moments of more realistic insight, I can see that if people can learn to live together they have learned a lot.

Learning to live with one another in close quarters should be considered a valuable education in to the university experience.

At present, much of this educational value is lost because the simple idea of a college has become encumbered by a dais of functions and administrative demands. The colleges over-expend themselves trying to integrate all the members who have come in the system, then also trying to please the numerous people who are "in charge" of the colleges.

Masters Responsible

The colleges should obviously have full responsibility for the colleges, rather than a halfway commitment to their "intellectual, social and cultural" development. A Master's staff should include perhaps an assistant, a secretary and a rest...
Different Statuses Proposed

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dence supervisor to ensure that all aspects of the college routine run smoothly.

Such an administrative reorganization could hardly be more expensive than the present system of over-lapping authorities. It would actually ease the wear and tear on the Masters and save them endless hours in committee meetings.

More Flexibility

If the colleges are to become effective living units, a greater amount of flexibility is required in the present arbitrary method of assigning students to colleges. In keeping with the American tradition of voluntary institutions, I propose the following administrative changes:

1. Three classes of college membership:
   A. Resident — those who choose to live in a college and pay room, board and dues.
   B. Associate — dues-paying members who for personal or financial reasons prefer to live off-campus, but who desire to associate themselves with a particular college. This class would also include interested faculty members, who wished to associate themselves voluntarily (and somewhat more informally) with a particular college (without paying dues).
   C. Affiliate — those who prefer not to be an active member of a college and who pay no dues, but are designated as members of a college for administrative purposes.

2. All freshmen would be arbitrarily assigned to a college according to the present system. At the end of his first year, he would have the opportunity to become a resident, associate or affiliate member of the college of his choice.

Recognizing Factor

This proposal recognizes two human factors which have too long gone unheeded: not everyone fits into the college system and not everyone likes the college to which he is arbitrarily assigned. It assumes, however, the ideal condition that all those who wished to participate in college life would be able to live on campus. The following measures would make this proposal possible:

1. Adequate space on campus for all those who wished to live in a college.
2. Adequate scholarship funds for those who desire to live on campus, but are financially unable to do so.
3. Change in University regulations which would enable women students under 21 to live off-campus after their freshman year.
4. Improvement of the physical facilities in the men's colleges to enable them to compete with the simple luxuries of apartment life.

Two or three years would be necessary before the full advantages of this plan became apparent. The University would have to risk vacancies in housing. Eventually, however, it would make the Colleges more desirable.

Without bordering on the weaknesses of a Greek system, it would encourage each college to make itself attractive, capitalizing on its convenience and its unique contribution to the learning process. Before another residential unit is built it is imperative to improve the present college system.