

CHAPTER 14

SCHOLARSHIP AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES

WHILE the whole institution is maintained for the students and, therefore, everything relates to them, there are some matters peculiarly the students' which concern trustees.

Scholarship

There is much talk around every college, and it is sometimes heard from trustees, to the effect that good grades are unimportant, mean little; that student activities, athletics, and fraternities are the more important in the student's life. This is exactly the same as saying to an employee of any large industry, that how he does his work is unimportant; that the important thing to him is to play good golf, be active socially, and belong to the right club. Mastering their studies is the job of college students, and such mastery earns high grades. When this is done student activities are a grand recreation, but they are no more the real job than good golf is the main job for an employee in industry.

Trustees should be very clear about this. If their institution is to be of value as a college or university it must stand squarely for high scholarship and for the high character which leads students to do their work to the best of their ability. All of this is the business and responsibility of the faculty, and they can usually be relied upon to cherish scholarly ability and maintain standards. It does help enormously, however, if the trustees appreciate scholarship and high intellectual attainment in the students, and give their full support to keeping first things first, and athletics and student activities in their proper place.

There is ample evidence that the students who rank among the highest 10 per cent in their classes in scholarship send more men on to distinguished success than any other 10 per cent of their classmates and often more than the remaining 90 per cent. Of course, many succeed who do not make high grades, but the percentage who succeed is far higher among those who do their college work with distinction.

In an extensive study of students' grades it is surprising to find that most students pursue throughout their course a certain level of attainment. Usually the student remains excellent, average, or inferior all through his four years. Also, those who are excellent in high school are usually excellent in college. By the same token, those who have the ability, persistence, and sense of duty to lead them to do excellent work in high school and college usually do excellently well whatever they attempt on leaving college. Success in football, unsupported by high grades, is more likely to lead to success in professional football than to success in law, medicine, or business.

Student Activities

While success in scholarly attainment comes first, student contacts and student activities do come second among the educational agencies of the college. Much is learned of life and men on the play field and in student discussion of student affairs.

Here each student can show his own initiative; can compete in a field of his own choosing with his classmates. Student activities belong to the students and can be left largely in the students' hands. It is the responsibility of the institution to know that its student affairs are wholesome, fairly run, and are a credit to the institution.

College Publications

It is most undesirable to censor the student publications. In the opinion of the writer, the administration should insure

the selection of editors who are honest, capable students of good judgment, and then leave the editing to them. If an irresponsible, fanatical, or wildly radical student is made editor, he can do the college much harm and be a constant source of irritation to administration, faculty, and alumni without accomplishing any good. It seems wise and reasonable to have a professor or committee pass on nominations for the editorship sufficiently to insure that only men and women are nominated who are capable and of such stability of character as to be worthy to represent the college in this capacity.

Auditing Accounts of Student Activities

While it is desirable that students manage their own affairs, the institution does have a real responsibility for the integrity of all money transactions. Otherwise, many students will develop ideas and habits of graft and loose business methods greatly to their injury. Probably most colleges of 500 students have 50 student organizations, and the larger institutions usually maintain well over 200. Each has a student treasurer, business manager, or steward who should keep careful and intelligible accounts. However, they are not usually appointed or elected on account of their business ability or their knowledge of business methods, but rather because of their popularity with their group.

Anyone who has had occasion to attempt to audit accounts kept by unsupervised students has certainly been surprised at the number of different mistakes that can be made and the amount of neglect that can develop. The total funds thus handled annually by students, including fraternity, sorority, and boarding club funds, can easily amount to several hundred thousand dollars in any large institution.

Certainly it devolves on the administration to see that this money is handled honestly, free from any graft, and that exact and complete accounts are rendered. This can be done only

through a competent, patient, and sympathetic auditor of student activities, who provides or approves accounting forms, systems, and procedures, and whose approval each student financial officer must secure.

While the installation of such a system usually meets with opposition, after it is installed its services are very generally appreciated. A student rarely wants to be a grafter, to end his term with a deficit, or to turn over to his successor faulty accounts. The trouble is that usually he has no experience in business matters and finds bookkeeping and collecting rather a bore. With suitable books provided and some directions, and with the necessity of having his accounts audited at frequent intervals, he finds satisfaction in correct work.

In an institution where such a system of auditing student activity accounts has been in effect a few years, deficits become exceptional, and most organizations operate with a surplus.

Where this system is carried out with the largest control, all money is deposited in a student activity account with the college treasurer, and all checks are countersigned by some one in the college office who knows that the organization has a balance to cover the check.

The effect of such a system has great educational value. Each treasurer learns how to keep a good set of books accurately. He or she becomes accustomed to sound business methods. The idea that any one can use public funds for private purposes, and the word "graft" are banished from the campus.

Financial Aid to Students

As it is the ambition of every institution to enroll as many able students as possible, and as most of the ablest students come from families of limited means, practically every college and university helps finance the education of promising stu-

dents who need assistance. Ordinarily, this financial assistance is given in four different ways.

1. *Scholarships* won by high intellectual attainment. These may be presented to students who have made a high record in the secondary school, or they may be granted as a result of competitive examinations. In all cases, they are a recognition of high scholarly attainment, and in the great majority of cases are equivalent to a part or all the tuition charged. Stated another way scholarships are a reduction of tuition to students of high promise. In some of our richer institutions, having large endowments for scholarships, the total scholarships granted amount to the total tuition due.

2. *Grants in Aid* differ from scholarships in that they are given to assist needy students, but are not a reward of high scholarship. While they are rarely given to students with inferior records, they are usually given to needy students of average ability, who promise to make a creditable, but not a brilliant college record.

3. *Loans*. It is increasingly the practice to maintain funds from which loans are made to needy students with good college records. Usually the loans are only available to upper class students who are well known as to their college work and trustworthiness. These loans are rarely in excess of \$200 or \$250 a year, with a limit of \$400 to \$800 loaned to any one student. The interest rate while in college varies from nothing to 6 per cent. Such loans are usually repaid in monthly installments of \$10 or some multiple of \$5. As most college graduates secure employment on graduation at rates of from \$80 to \$125 per month, these loans are generally repaid promptly.

Where every reasonable precaution is taken to select trustworthy students, and where collection is carefully followed up, nearly all loans are repaid. At one institution now loaning \$50,000 annually, a student in order to secure a loan must have a general average in scholarship slightly above that

required for graduation; he must have three men who know him well vouch for his honesty; and he must take out \$500 life insurance and assign it to the Loan Fund as security in case of death. At that institution the total losses since loans began in 1912 have amounted to only \$3,000.

4. *Employment.* Every institution employs a considerable number of students in various kinds of work: janitor work, assistance in the library, care of grounds, assisting in laboratories, stenographic work, waiting tables, etc. Under the recent federal N.Y.A., an astonishing amount of work has been found for college students. Such work is usually paid for at from 20 to 50 cents per hour, the prevailing rate being 30 to 40 cents.

In addition to work on the campus, more or less work for students is always available in the town. National studies show that about 60 per cent of all college students must have financial help to attend college.

In spite of all that is being done to aid worthy and capable students, many thousands who would greatly profit from college training are still excluded by lack of money. Also many able students, in struggling to support themselves in college, are overworking, and are forced by many hours of labor to do an inferior grade of college work. Much remains to be done, both in excluding those of inferior ability from college and university, and in financing the proper education of those who are fully able to profit but lack resources.

Student Health Service

In recent years colleges have become conscious of their responsibilities relative to the health of their students. Nearly all colleges have some formally organized health service. This ranges from the part-time services of a local doctor to a complete hospital of 50 to 100 beds, with a staff of doctors, nurses, and technicians.

The usual services consist of a physical examination by the

college physician on entrance, with such periodic or special follow-up examinations as seem desirable. A daily clinic is usually held, and treatment is provided for injuries on the athletic field. Where there is a good city hospital with adequate facilities, it is usual to have an arrangement by which students can be cared for there in case of sickness, and for surgical operations.

If the college maintains its own hospital and staff, morning and afternoon clinics take care of minor matters, and students needing hospitalization are cared for. All except very minor surgery is either sent out to a hospital with a surgical staff, or if an operating room is provided, expert surgeons are called in when required.

Usually with a student body of 1,000 or more, a \$10 hospital fee with such charges as are necessarily assessed, meet the expense. The fee covers all needed physical examination, free clinical service, and usually two to four days free in the hospital. Medicine, X-rays, and unusual expenses are paid for by students at cost. Faculty members or others than students served usually pay reasonable fees for all services.

A college hospital with an adequate staff serves several uses. It enables the institution to insure prompt and economical service to all ailing students. It largely relieves parents of anxiety lest their child should be neglected when sick. It greatly reduces the incidence of contagious diseases, many of which are brought to the campus by students. It encourages dormitory directors and fraternity members to insist on sick students going to the hospital promptly. Finally, and by no means least in importance, is the familiarizing of all students with a good hospital and a competent medical and nursing staff and their education in what such an institution can do for them.