

CHAPTER 17

COLLEGE RESIDENCE HALLS

THE trustees of every institution should have a well-defined policy as to what dormitories they desire ultimately to build. Their location is important, and ground must be reserved for them or purchased. Dormitories for men and women, should each have natural preferential sites. The whole problems will be much simplified and clarified if the trustees can reach a conclusion as to what is ultimately desirable.

If this first question is settled to the effect that dormitories are to be ultimately provided, the second question is the style of architecture and their cost. Dormitories have been built of relatively fire-proof construction ranging all the way from \$500 to \$15,000 per student housed, and some general limit on cost per student goes far to determine their architectural style and limitations. Certainly, the style of architecture should harmonize with the general style of architecture of the other buildings.

The cost will be determined by various factors. Perhaps most important is the quality of housing desirable for the type of students the institution expects to serve. Simple, crowded quarters might not attract students from families of ample means, while elaborate, expensive quarters certainly would not be suitable for students coming from low-income families. Assuming the land is available, that the dining room facilities are included in the building, and that most students are housed two in a room with common bath rooms in each corridor, the lowest practical cost will range from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per student. For a preliminary figure \$1,200 may be used.

Probably the most expensive dormitory that could be justified in a publicly supported institution would range in cost from \$2,000 to \$2,500 per student housed. Above this figure material increase in space per student, architectural beauty, and other luxuries enter into the costs. They can go to almost any figure.

In determining the rental charge, some consideration must be given to the prevailing room rent in the city in the vicinity of the college. The lowest room rent generally charged is \$100 for the college year. This is about \$3.00 a week per student. It is exceptional for rooms to exceed \$300 or \$350 per student for the college year.

The cost of operating the dormitory, including supervision, service, light, heat and water, and repairs to furniture and building, can be kept down to about \$50 per student, if the students take care of their rooms. With complete care of room provided, it may run to \$75 or \$100 per student.

The room rent charged should certainly be ample to pay all costs of operation and maintenance, and 4 per cent on the investment. Housing and boarding students is purely personal service and should not be provided below cost. If it is desired to reduce the cost to students below cost and reasonable interest, it should be done by grants-in-aid to needy students, and not in reduction of room rent.

It is rarely economical to house fewer than 100 students in one dormitory unit, although perhaps the ideal social unit would be 60 to 80. On the other hand, probably 200 or 300 is as large a group as can be conveniently cared for in one building. From 125 to 150 seems to be the best number if economy of operation and the best interests of the students are both regarded.

Great profit in planning dormitories will result from visits to institutions providing dormitories of the general character contemplated. Harvard and Yale perhaps have the most

generous dormitory provision. Dartmouth houses all students in dormitories and has invested a considerable portion of her endowment in dormitories. Most of the important women's colleges throughout the country house their students in dormitories. Miami University at Oxford, Ohio, University of Illinois, University of Minnesota, Iowa State College, University of Iowa, Iowa State Teachers College are of interest as representing public institutions which now house a large percentage of their students in dormitories. It is rapidly being accepted as sound policy to house all students in dormitories, or in dormitories and fraternity and club houses. Most of our older, privately supported institutions have endeavored to provide ample dormitories for many years. The movement among publicly supported institutions has by no means kept pace with the increasing enrollment of students.

Building Dormitories With Dormitory Income

A number of state institutions are authorized to make loans secured by dormitory net income for the building of additional dormitories. With sufficient dormitories in operation to produce a minimum net income of a few thousand or more, this is a satisfactory plan. The more net income the quicker the loan can be retired. In some cases bonds secured by dormitory net income are sold; in other cases the money is borrowed from a bank on notes. Over the years all dormitories desired can be financed under this plan.