

Curriculum Revision

Last year the College revised the outline of requirements for the baccalaureate degree. A new curriculum plan was originated in our Academic Affairs Committee, a faculty elective committee including three students among its nine members and chaired by the Academic Dean. The proposal was discussed - in fact, rather hotly debated - in meetings of the College's three divisions (Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences). Finally, with resulting modifications, it was sent to the administration for approval. It went into effect at the opening of the present semester and seems thus far to promise good results. Basically, it constitutes a change from the prescription of specific courses in rigid sequence to the use of more flexible "distribution" requirements, arranged as follows:

General: 120 credits, distributed as follows: Core: 63 credits, Major, 30 credits, Approved Electives, 12 credits, Free Electives, 15 credits.

Core Distribution: Humanities, 30-39 Credits. English, Fine Arts, Foreign Language, History, Philosophy, Theology.

Social Sciences - 12-15 credits. Economics, History, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology.

Natural Sciences, Mathematics, Accounting: 8-14 credits.

Accounting, Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Geography, Geology, Mathematics, Physics.

Physical Education - 4 credits.

Several Seminars will be offered for the option of Freshmen. They will offer 3 credits which may be applied to core requirements according to the area of the seminar as determined by the Academic Affairs Committee.

For activities such as student publications, debate, and theatre, a student may earn one co-curricular credit per semester for full participation certified by a faculty moderator or director.

The following extract is from an article appearing in **Free Lance** (our student newspaper) September 10, 1971.

Student Reaction To Curriculum

By Ben Bowling

In recent weeks Belmont Abbey College has experienced a drastic curriculum revision. This has generated definite responses, and while it is somewhat premature to attempt a broad evaluation of the program, the incubation period is safely past, and some observations can be made.

Most outstanding is a plan of "free access" opened to freshmen. A student with a particular bend of interest does not have to wait until his sophomore year to get the first taste of his intended major. Assuming he is not barred by prerequisites, he can enter into a two-hundred, three-hundred, or even four-hundred level course.

There is considerable applause from the freshmen this year for this point, but not so from the upper-classmen, particularly the sophomores. Many feel that the registration process did not take this fully into account, resulting in a number of courses being closed out with massive freshman enrollment. Sophomores could not get necessary history and political science courses until after registration period, and many still could not do so because of further conflicts. Even some seniors have been caught short on a few of their basic requirements.

The situation, however, is closely tied with another phenomenon: the great exodus from foreign languages. There is some difference of opinion regarding the proper place of languages in a student's college curriculum. Some regard it as fundamental to his cultural awareness, others think it a discipline from which he will derive no particular value, and still others remind us that while Belmont Abbey will grant a degree without a language, most graduate schools prefer an applicant who is so equipped. Perhaps the most even-handed response came from one of the faculty members interviewed. According to him, while this flight shows an "undesirable disinclination" toward languages, it "serves to illustrate the extreme pressure the College was under to do something about a mechanical language requirement."

The run from languages overloaded other areas and created the illusion that the Abbey is becoming primarily a social sciences college. Some go so far as to say that these have become the bread and

butter of the College. Others disagree, citing the danger that such a move would set the Abbey up in competition with other schools who may be better equipped to perform this function. They say further that much of this illusion is created by the lumping of the College's busiest single major, Business and Economics, into the social sciences division, when it really belongs by itself. They also cite strengths in other departments and divisions.

Many of the loose ends of this restructuring move will take considerable time to tie up. Some things will take a few years. Those areas that were helped are that much ahead. Those that were hurt must adjust and adapt their programs in a competitive atmosphere, with the only assurance against an academic undersell being the faith that the students will choose quality over a particular course's ease . . .

NLRB And Higher Education

AAUP recently petitioned the NLRB to consider issuing general rules to clarify issues in representation cases involving college and university faculty members. The petition states that problems confronting NLRB arise from the uniqueness of relationship between faculty and the college or university, a uniqueness which has no counterpart in any industrial setting. NLRB has ruled against the petition. (AGB Notes, Vol. 2, No. 6, July-August, 1971.)

Crisis In Private Colleges

TWO NEW REPORTS SEE CONTINUING FINANCIAL CRISIS FOR U.S. COLLEGES

Two separate research reports released this week predict a continuing financial crisis over the next decade for the nation's colleges and universities. One report, prepared for the U.S. Office of Education by the Syracuse University Research Corporation's Educational Policy Research Center, states that the crisis "will persist at least through the 1970s." The other study, prepared by the Association of American Colleges, warns that a large number of private institutions "could be out of business in ten years."

The Syracuse study, prepared by James C. Byrnes and A. Dale Tussing, associate directors of the research center, assert that the present financial crisis was generated by "an extraordinarily high rate of increase in the 1960s in the tendency of members of the 18

to 24 year old age group to go to college." They say the increases were paid for in three ways: by significant increases in real resources, by a reduction in staff-student ratios, and by an abnormally low rate of growth in expenditures per staff member.

There is considerable doubt, however, they state, "as to whether any of these three ways of paying for the growth of the system in the 1960s can be sustained in the 1970s." They said general income received by all institutions during the 1960s, adjusted for price changes, rose 7.7 percent per year, more than doubling in a decade.

Continuing conditions of "stable crisis," they said, meaning no further deterioration, would require an annual increase of real resources of 7.8 percent through 1975, 7.5 percent through 1980, and 5.7 percent through 1990. To achieve conditions of "stable health" experienced in the 1960s, they estimate an annual increase in real resources of 12.9 percent would be required by 1975, 10.1 percent by 1980 and 6.9 percent by 1990 . . .

The AAC report found that 316 out of 507 private institutions had operating deficits in the 1970-71 fiscal year. This compares to 308 out of 531 colleges and universities surveyed in 1969-70, and 223 out of 531 institutions in 1968-69. William W. Jellema of the AAC staff and author of the report, said the deficits of the 316 colleges and universities ranged from \$2,000 to \$4 million.

Jellema said that 210 colleges and universities could be on the verge of extinction in less than a year, including one third of those in the geographical center of the country. He predicted that colleges enrolling 1,000 students or less - particularly those below 500 - will be the hardest hit.

His report states that even if the colleges continue to run deficits no larger than they anticipated this last fiscal year, 50 percent of all private accredited four-year institutions - including 72 percent of those enrolling 500 students or less - as well as 45 percent of those offering the master's degree in no more than three fields could be "out of business" in ten years. Suffering the same fate, he said, would be 37 percent of those offering the master's degree in four or more fields, and 48 percent of all private institutions granting the Ph.D. (Higher Education and National Affairs, Vol. XX, No. 35, September 24, 1971.)