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Dr. Norbert Hruby, president of Aquinas College, was recently on the Belmont Abbey campus to speak to the faculty about his college's highly successful Re-Entry Program. Dr. Hruby spent most of the day in conference with Mrs. Mary Wilson, director of the Abbey's Re-Entry Program, and other college officials. Shown above are Mrs. Wilson and Dr. Hruby.

Abbey Re-Entry Program Sparking Interest

Returning to college after several years can be a rewarding and challenging experience for the student who, for one reason or another, has had to abandon plans for a college degree. Making this transition as painless as possible is the primary objective of the newly organized Re-Entry Program at Belmont Abbey College. The Belmont Abbey faculty has designed a special 6-credit course for Re-Entry students representing the three divisions of the college -- humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. The course is being taught on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 9:30 in the Science Hall. Students who enrolled in January completed the first segment, "Introduction to Literature" on February 11. The second segment, "The Foundations of the American Republic" began February 13. The third five-week course, "Science in Society" will begin on March 25 and concludes May 6.

Classroom activities vary to accommodate the material being studied, and to help students readjust to the academic demands of college life.

To further help the re-entry student's adjustment, Belmont Abbey has acquired the services of Mrs. Henry Hall Wilson as director of the Re-Entry Program. Mary Wilson is uniquely qualified to head the project since she had the occasion to return to

college herself after a twenty-five year absence. "I had a long list of reasons why I wanted to return to college," Mrs. Wilson said. "The list of benefits I gained from the effort is just as long and I'll happily share it with everyone I meet."

Giving personal encouragement and counseling to every student is a facet of her job.

As Belmont Abbey prepared to introduce the Re-Entry Program, officials studied a similar program at a small midwestern college that, over a four-year period, achieved remarkable success. Re-Entry students in that project, more mature and highly motivated, not only earned their baccalaureate degrees, but also out-performed their younger classmates in doing so.

The availability of a course designed to re-introduce students to college was found to be important in the success of the concept, as was a small friendly campus, much like Belmont Abbey, where re-entry students were quickly made to feel at home as members of the college community.

Mrs. Wilson stressed that financial aid is available for those students who qualify. She added that she can be reached by calling the College at 825-3711 and that she is available to speak to civic and social groups about the Re-Entry Program.

Expert Is Speaker For Open House

A lecture on "Careers in Science" was delivered on Thursday, January 30, at Belmont Abbey College as part of an open house for the Belmont Abbey Science Department. Fred Fortess, chairman of the Department of Textiles at the Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, spoke in the Pharr Auditorium of the William Gaston Science Hall at 3:00 p.m.

Fortess' lecture concerned the inter-relationships between the biological and physical sciences, with emphasis on the field of mathematics.

Fortess played an important role in the development of science organizations in Charlotte, and worked closely with the Charlotte Nature Museum while he was a research chemist for the Celanese Corporation. In 1968 he was promoted to the company's New York office, where he was director of consumer information and technical relations for the Celanese Fibers Marketing Company. He took an early retirement from Celanese in 1972 to accept the teaching position in Philadelphia.

Fortess is a past president of the American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists and is currently a member of its technical committee on research. He is a recipient of the AATCC's Olney Medal for his contribution to textile research.

A member of the editorial board of Textile Research Journal, Fortess has written more than 200 technical articles for publication and holds forty patents on polymers, fibers, and natural and man-made yarns and fabrics. "My particular interest in science is as an instrument in serving mankind," Fortess commented. "I am most pleased to challenge young people with the opportunities which science provides."

Tours of the science department and other programs planned for the open house, including the Fortess lecture, were open to the public, free of charge.

INSIGHT

by Fr. John Bradley

President, Belmont Abbey College

Excerpts from a speech given by Father Bradley at the 1974 session of the Association of Church-Related Colleges and Universities in the South in Dallas, Texas, on December 10, 1974.

I should state at the outset that I can lay no claim to any special knowledge or particular expertise regarding the identity of the church-related college. Perhaps the only justification for my talking to you about it is my deep conviction that the identity of a church-related college is of fundamental importance in the operation of such colleges, and has thus occupied a good deal of my thinking over the past few years ...

If it truly lives up to its proper identity, the church-related college can make a distinctive contribution to higher education. Furthermore, in the contest of our increasingly secularized culture, the Christian churches, and indeed our society at large, have a greater need than ever for the distinctive contribution the church-related college can make ...

It seems that in recent times there has been a blurring of the identity of church-related colleges, but perhaps this was in some degree inevitable as these colleges rightly disentangled themselves from a seminary-type identity and moved toward identities proper for institutions of higher education with a certain Christian commitment. However, it is probable that a stronger influence on the blurring of our identity has been the surrounding secular culture. Over the last few years, church-related colleges have been striving to obtain a clearer understanding and a more sure grasp of their proper identity so that they can be effective in making their own distinctive contribution in a culture that is generally recognized to be increasingly secular ...

Some people seem to be tempted to take a simplistic approach to the problem and tell us that the identity of a church-related college can be neatly spelled out and this, together with a battery of regulations, solves the entire problem ...

I am convinced, however, that the proper identity of a church-related college cannot be implemented from day to day by published statements and regulations. Would that it were possible! Rather, if the Christian college is to implement its identity and exercise its own distinctive role, this has to be done by the solid, patient building of a Christian climate or atmosphere throughout every phase of the college's life ...

Fortunately, different kinds of help that were not present before are now at hand, at least for those of us involved in Catholic colleges. For instance, responding to the turmoil in the Catholic Church that has followed in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, the International Federation of Catholic Universities has produced an excellent document on the identity of the Catholic college. This document designates the following four essential characteristics that must be present if a college or university is to be truly a Catholic institution: a) a Christian inspiration, not only of individuals but of the university community as such; b) a continuing reflection, in the light of the Catholic faith, upon the growing treasury of human knowledge to which it seeks to contribute by its research; c) fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church; d) an institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal that gives meaning to life ...

Guidance such as this can be most helpful, of course, but when all is said and done, the success or failure in establishing an authentic Christian identity will depend ultimately on the convictions and dedication of all of us who have the leadership and influence to build Christian community in our colleges: administrators and faculty who are in a position to explain why the college ought to have a distinctive role in higher education and who can lead in the effort to implement that role ...

In this, the college president's constant leadership is of paramount importance and he should, in my opinion, be totally convinced that this responsibility must always be accorded the highest priority in the day-to-day exercise of his office.