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(continued from page 1)

help chart a new course for liberal arts higher education." He will be no more specific because as a new dean, his first priority is "taking stock—a full exploration of the resources and potential of this college." He says, "I don't want to be a naive reformer riding in on my horse."

During this exploration he has become "keenly aware of the constraints—financial, geographic, demographic, etc.—affecting the planning process." But he also says, "I am no less aware of the powerful advantages that we enjoy: an exceptionally gifted faculty and staff, a set of attractive and thoughtfully designed academic programs, a student community that is at once, serious in its purposes and lively, and a natural environment that rivals Thoreau's."

He credits his secretary Becky Spencer and his "predecessor-mentor" George Melton for "being an enormous help" to him during his first two weeks.

Walden."

"I am looking forward to the challenges ahead with an exhilarating mixture of realism and high hope," he says.

The "imaginative and dedicated" faculty have gained his deepest respect. "Unlike the faculty at other schools just 'doing time' as teachers," he says, "these are always worrying about their teaching, revising, improving. Effective teaching is such an intimate thing, and these teachers care enough to pull it off."

Benson's teaching talents have been recognized by the Student Government Association of the University of Maryland, awarding him the Teacher of the Year Award in 1979-80 and the distinguished service award in 82-83.

Benson received his B.A. from Augustana College magna cum laude, his M. Div. from Harvard Divinity School and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University.

## Sexual Harrassment Policy Complex

(continued from page 1)

the damaging effect of one's actions and needs to become conscious of the ways one may exploit others unintentionally.

Sexual harrassment is "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." It usually occurs when there is a discrepancy of power between the individuals, for instance in strength or status. As long as the advance is unwelcome, sexual harrassment can include sexual innuendo, propositions, leering or ogling, or obscene gestures, as well as physical contact.

Of course, this definition is open to varied interpretations. Misunderstandings are dangerous because they could result in false accusations.

Dr. Bringle paraphrases John Calvin on the distinction between giving and taking offense. "If you have to put on your binoculars and peer through your neighbor's window to be offended, that is not offense given, but offense taken."

Misunderstandings could also result in unintentional sexual harrassment taking place. Of a professor might be reluctant to develop a close and appropriate professional relationship with a student for fear of being

accused of sexual harrassment. With everyone aware that prompt and effective grievance procedures are in place, misunderstandings between two individuals can be resolved before the matter becomes more serious than it needs to be. A professional relationship can be saved or more serious sexual harrassment can be averted.

The goal of the grievance process, according to Dr. Bringle, is to "mediate as discreetly as possible any complaints or problems that people feel they are encountering" so that a mutually satisfactory conclusion can be reached.

The interim procedures begin with a complaint being lodged with a grievance officer. The grievance officer hears the story of the aggrieved and then goes on to facilitate dialogue, to help sort things out. All parties will be treated with respect and sensitivity. The goal is not to "catch perpetrators," but to reason together, to address and resolve conflict.

Ninety-five percent of all cases will be resolved at this level, according to Dr. Alexander.

When grievances cannot be resolved here, the proposed policy provides alternatives. The person with a complaint can go directly to

the Dean of the Faculty Dr. Tom Benson, the Vice President of Finance Parker Umstead, or the Dean of Students Dr. Bill Loftus, if the accused is a member of the faculty, staff, or student body, respectively. More formal procedures would be found in the Faculty Handbook, the employee manual, and the Saltire. The system for sorting out false accusations from true accusations could include a public or private hearing.

Other solutions are being explored because of problems inherent with each of the current alternatives. In the case of a private hearing with the dean, so much power resting with one person may not ensure due process. For instance, it could be devastating to be charged with making a decision with disastrous effects on the career of a colleague or friend. On the other hand, the fear of a publicized hearing might deter some people from coming forward with their concerns. One alternative being discussed is the possibility of a closed hearing with the student judiciary.

There remain many questions to be answered. How shall future grievance officers be selected and how long should their terms last. If St. Andrews consistently provides one male and one female grievance officer, the women faculty will be

called upon to serve more often than the men. What training should be made available to the officers? Can the procedures ensure confidentiality and provide a means of detecting any patterns of deviant behavior or patterns of false accusations? How should frivolous accusations be dealt with?

It will be difficult to publicize the names of the grievance officers without overemphasizing the issue of sexual harrassment. Bill Throop made the observation that it is "important to be aware of it (sexual harrassment), but it is also important to exercise the principle of charity as one interprets another's actions."

On the other hand, with added awareness, people can avoid doing those things that might, upon reflection, be considered sexual harrassment. The confidential, informal nature of the procedure will reduce the odds of that not being addressed. Bob Martin feels that the "policy raises issues and serves as a good reminder of thoughtful prohibition. It is a thoughtful statement of appropriate and inappropriate behavior. It's a venture, a risk that moves away from the greater risk of no policy at all."

He adds, "certainly we are stronger with it than without it."