

Skeletons From SGA Files

Searching into the files of the Student Government Association can result in some startling surprises. Last year, all the bills that have been passed in the Student Senate from former years until the present time were codified and filed in the SGA permanent files. While in the process of putting all the legislative measures into order, the officials in charge of the project made some interesting discoveries.

According to the operational organization of SGA, when a bill is passed by the campus legislative body, it becomes permanent law unless otherwise stated in the bill itself. Yet, several of the bills now in the codified file are lying idle in function or have become outdated.

Two such bills include one to provide prizes for Homecoming displays and a bill to establish a program of Student Body scholastic awards. The first, passed in 1959, states that the SGA shall award \$30 as a first prize and \$20 as a second prize to campus organizations or dorms which, in the opinion of three faculty judges, chosen by the HC Committee, shall construct winning Homecoming displays. This year, and for the past few years, three prizes have been awarded for displays in the sums of \$25, \$15, and \$10. According to the official record, the third place winner could not actually collect, while the first and second place winners could collect more than now given.

The second bill establishes a SGA fund for scholastic awards of \$15 to be given each year to Elon students who have done outstanding work in their studies. According to this bill, awards are to be given in each of the four Divisions of the curriculum. The candidates for such honors are required to have a "B" average and must prepare a 2000 word paper on a subject encompassed by the division in which they are competing. The candidates are to be chosen, on the basis of their papers and class work, by a central committee of judges composed of faculty members from the four Divisions.

These awards are to be presented at the final regular meeting of the student body. The bill was passed in 1957. Such honors have not been presented for at least four years. Had someone with a "B" average written a 2000 word paper last year, he might have had some money for books. At any rate, the competition would no doubt have been slim since so few people are aware of this bill.

Does all of this mean that when an interested Senator 1) works three weeks writing a bill, 2) has forty-four copies made of the bill, 3) has twelve copies signed, 4) labors over a convincing speech to deliver to his fellow Senators, 5) presents his bill only to have it sent to a committee for discussion, 6) receives the bill back from committee and has it passed, and 7) finally has it signed by the SGA President and now stamped with the new official seal, that it is stowed away in the file and forgotten? More, perhaps it means that as the original purpose of the bill is carried out and as the author is graduated and is not around to prod SGA into utilizing the measure, new officials neglect to familiarize themselves with the files and become unaware of the more obscure bills. New ideas and methods quickly replace those which are lost due to what sometimes be merely an oversight. Or, perhaps a succeeding administration may simply deem a certain bill too expensive, unnecessary, or impractical and no one is the wiser.

SGA is an ever-changing establishment which continues to move forward. However, there must be a certain amount of back-tracking and consolidation in order to keep policies definite and files uncluttered with rior or unused rules. Also, stabilization is aided with a continuing knowledge of just what is contained in the SGA history and with familiarization with all records on the part of those in the main offices.

This year's administration is presently attempting to weed out unnecessary bills, revise those which have been already changed through practice, and to put back into operation those regulations which have valuable purposes and have been overlooked. Here is a tremendous task for the Senate and for the SGA officers. When the skeletons have been discovered and the clearing-house project finished, then perhaps the loopholes will close and continuing stability can be preserved through an up-to-date and truly "governing" file.

Meanwhile, it may be well for all Senators who are writing bills to judge their work. Will the bill be useful in the future as well as the present? Is it a flexible law? When a Senator signs his name to a new law, it is as though he has made a small footprint in the SGA path of progress. But the destination is only reached through straight traveling. -CT