

Littleton Says Drug Policy Uncertain

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In the second place, when an abuse is so judged, there is no provision for probation. The exercising of punitive acknowledgement is restricted to suspension or expulsion.

It must be stated that these concerns have been expressed to the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees and taken into consideration. These two concerns need to be removed for the sake of persons involved and if student government is to be a reality and not an appeasement.

Everyone agrees that we are concerned about the student who illegally possesses and use drugs. Our problem is how best to express our concern. As a Christian college and as a community we have a responsibility. Now to whom? and how far?

Wrath and Mercy

I reject the concept of *in loco parentis*. Therefore, I say the college's first responsibility is to the student. Lest I be misunderstood, let me quickly add that this does not intend to say that "protection" is the primary response; it may or may not be the appropriate response. Then, not necessarily in order, the institution has responsibilities to the entire college community, the students' parents, and Raleigh community, the sponsoring denomination. In exercising our responsibility (may I say "our judgment"?) we must seek the fine balance between wrath and mercy; for they are inseparable. It is this balance that many feel is absent in the present policy.

Communication

Initially, if there is to be any responsible communication between faculty-administration and students, ground rules must be laid. The school needs to formulate carefully a statement on privileged information. This statement must be conscious of the legal implications regarding confidences, and it must be conscious of student needs. In my opinion the implementation of the policy will be on an individually voluntary basis, but the statement is necessary as guidelines for faculty-administration and as the framework for confidential relationships students can trust. All parties need to be made aware of its provisions.

I regard such a statement as further recognizing the special relationship which exists between students and school. It is not our role to tattle-tale or offer incriminating evidence when not required. It is our

role to be response-able.

Further awareness of and involvement in the problem of "drug abuse" require that we distinguish between user and pusher as well as habituation and addiction. Such distinctions are necessary to enable the proper response to each situation. A concomitant preparation will be the knowledge of doctors and referral agencies capable and willing of providing adequate medical attention. Law enforcement agencies generally cooperate with physicians and psychologists on confidential cases. We all need to know the atmosphere in Raleigh in this respect.

Why?

Beyond the *abuse* is the problem of *why* students choose to respond to life this way. We do not need to react emotionally without the benefit of historical perspective. This is not the first "problem" or "gap" at Meredith or in the history of parent-child relations. Our posture must be rational, knowledgeable, and sensitive. We need to strive to establish communication and trust. The faculty-administration needs to be aware of conditions that create frustrations and anxiety, conditions that feed "drug abuse," and some are. Stu-

dents need to be mature and realize that being over "30" is a state of mind. Not all minds automatically cease functioning at the 30th birthday!

Suggestions

I suggest that one way to begin establishing trust is to judge adults who misuse alcohol and drugs by the same standards we do youth. This will require some work in overhauling the state and federal judicial systems. A second way is to make factual information about drugs available, a "Drug Information" booklet if you please. A third way is to direct punitive action against the pusher-man and not the victim, concentrate attention on the causes that lead to "drug abuse," be sensitive to human problems.

In conclusion I would invite all of Meredith to join in a call for consistency in the college's judicial procedure. I would invite the college as a whole to engage in honest dialogue and map out a responsible procedure for handling cases of "drug abuse." I would also invite the college community to sensitive living, sensitive to personal problems and needs, sensitive to mutual responsibilities.

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