

EDITORIAL

Last summer I was fortunate enough to take the Meredith Abroad trip. It was an experience that proved to be invaluable. Ironically, however, I remember pleading with my parents not to "make me" go. At the time, all I could think about was what I stood to lose instead of gain.

Weeks before we even boarded the plane, we attended classes at Meredith. It was this preparation that determined the

success of my travel. I began making entries in a journal. The first entry dealt with my "expectations and apprehensions" about the trip. Now as I look back, I see that the first few pages of my journal outlined what I hoped to accomplish and avoid.

I realized I would not be a good tourist even before we landed in Scotland. For this reason, I decided to concentrate on getting to know the culture of the day

more than the relics of the past. This approach was both gratifying and disappointing. While I learned to understand the Scottish dialect with relative ease, I ashamedly saw nothing more than a cluster of rocks when I circled Stonehenge.

I am sure I bought enough souvenirs and took enough pictures to engrain the memory of the trip in my brain forever. Yet, the people I met and the friendships I developed, not only with the foreigners

but with those in our own group, have a very special place in my heart.

Now I'm glad my parents "made me" go. My journal is one of my most prized possessions. And, luckily, nothing I was apprehensive about ever came to be. Meredith Abroad is the chance of a lifetime. Take advantage of it.

Betsy Short
Editor, Meredith Herald

LETTERS

The following letter to Mr. Seby B. Jones, Chairman of the Meredith College Board of Trustees, was submitted as a Letter to the Editor of the Meredith Herald and is re-printed here in its entirety.

March 18, 1986

Mr. Seby B. Jones, Chairman
Meredith College Board of Trustees
3936 Blue Ridge Road
Raleigh, NC 27612

Dear Mr. Jones;

As a senior member of the student body at Meredith College, I feel compelled to write to you concerning the recent controversy over the future of the graduate program at Meredith. I consider this step necessary because the letter written "on our behalf" by our Student Government Association president does not accurately reflect the views of the entire student body. Her letter did no more than state her well-known personal opinion on the matter. I think it is appropriate to hear from the other side.

I sincerely hope that the graduate program at Meredith College is maintained. I believe that graduate students, male or

female, can only enhance the undergraduate experience. Graduate candidates bring with them to our campus a variety of knowledge and experiences. Our learning environment will be enriched by their input and research; and the resources that must be made available to them will also be available for undergraduate use. We have everything to gain by continuing the graduate program.

I wish now to address some of the issues raised in opposition to the graduate program.

According to Title IX, if a single sex institution has a graduate program, the graduate program must be open to both sexes. It does *not* say that men have to be admitted at the undergraduate level. And for those that believe it is the first step toward Meredith going coed — HORSEFEATHERS. Tradition notwithstanding, Meredith has a long waiting list of females applying for admission. As long as Meredith can function as a single-sex institution, there is no reason to change. Look at other women's colleges who have installed co-ed grad programs. It hasn't affected their undergrad status at all. Why should Meredith be any different?

Allowing men to enter the graduate program does not in any way, shape, or

form compromise Meredith's "mission" of educating women. Admission of males is a side effect of providing WOMEN the opportunity to receive graduate degrees.

For those who oppose admitting men because "they might take over student leadership positions:" one need only to talk to current graduate students to find out that *even* if they have the interest, they do not have the time. Even full-time graduate students who are unmarried and unemployed are *unABLE* beyond the responsibilities placed upon them by their degree programs to participate in extra-curricular activities.

I have been distressed over the manner in which *factual* information concerning this matter has been presented to the student body. It hasn't been. It concerns me that the SGA would so easily give up credibility in order to present the narrow view of a few as representative of the entire student body.

You no doubt learned of a petition against the issue, but there was not one circulated by the same organization in favor of it to accurately gauge the feelings of the students. As the hysteria subsides, more factual information is becoming available, and more and more students are beginning to realize that their repres-

entation did not intend to present a fair and accurate case.

It is recognizable to the thinking student that the Board of Trustees and the President of the College are not actively seeking to recruit men; only that qualified male applicants must be admitted under the law. It is also recognizable that the Board and President do not have the forum to reach the entire student body. It is laudable that they chose to remain apart from the media, the cheapest way of stirring passions.

Please rest assured that more and more students are listening to reason and are joining the strong core of supporters of the graduate program.

Thank you very much for your efforts in behalf of the many who have been disenfranchised by the SGA in this matter.

Jenny West

Class of '86

cc: Dr. John E. Weems, President; Dr. C. Allen Burris, Vice-President and Dean of the College; Dr. Sandra Thomas, Vice-President for Student Development

Dear Editor:

As a member of the Class of 1984, I am an alumna of Meredith College. As a member of the "soon-to-be-graduated" Graduate Class of 1986, I am also a current student at Meredith College. I have yet to see anything in print to state how I feel — as an alumna or as a student — only statements written "in my behalf." I would like to address your readers in my own behalf.

As an undergraduate, I served in several governing capacities: Student Foundation Vice-President and member, Student life member and committee Chairman, and President of CCA (now MEA), to name three. I was also in many other clubs and organizations which enhanced my liberal arts education. I always had time to participate, always had a desire to participate, and always had a need to participate. When I began working toward my graduate degree in Music nearly two years ago, I still had a deep desire to participate, but the time was completely consumed with practice, class, teaching, and study, and the need was replaced with

a need to learn all I could in my chosen field of study. My classes, like most graduate classes offered at Meredith, are in the late afternoon, after most undergraduate classes have ended. My involvement and interaction with undergraduates are so limited that I really do not feel like a member of the student body at all. I come to Meredith for my classes or to go to the library and then go home. Ask any graduate student of any institution how his time is spent on campus, and he will relay the same information. Do we have time to participate in student activities? No!

What is the point of this letter? Simply this: Men in our graduate program will be less visible to undergraduate students than the Fraternity men who pick up their dates on campus. They will not live on campus, will not participate in general student activities, and will not influence the undergraduate program in a negative way *whatsoever!* There are several points that we all must address no matter what our stand, no matter what our background:

1. Meredith College is a business and must make sound business decisions.

2. Meredith College's undergraduate enrollment is sky-high. From a business standpoint, it would be disastrous to admit men into the undergraduate program and lose prospective female students to the other all-female institutions.

3. Meredith College would never admit men into the undergraduate program. The Law in question protects the college's right to maintain its status as an undergraduate institution. It also would be too costly for Meredith to consider admitting men — forcing everything from a complete overhaul of the plumbing systems in the dorms to the establishment of male sporting events — neither of which would benefit the business of Meredith College.

4. Meredith College could lose a newly established branch of its business — the graduate program — without the admission of men into the program.

5. The loss of the graduate program would injure Meredith undergraduates more than the admission of male students into the graduate program. At this time, plans are being instigated to upgrade and enhance the library services to accommodate the graduate program — plans that

benefit *all* students and faculty in research materials and educational opportunities.

I am very disappointed in the approach and attitude adopted by the Student Government Association in this matter. The facts have not been presented in truth or with integrity. I certainly hope that in the polling of the Student Body, each student is given a fair and adequate opportunity to state her honest opinion. If the method for polling the students is through use of a petition, make *two* petitions — one FOR and one AGAINST — to be presented to each student simultaneously so as not to prejudice the petition or to misrepresent the feelings of the students. I also encourage the Board of Trustees to continue with the new graduate program at all costs. I hope the Board will weigh all of the facts before deciding upon the issue, and not succumb to the hysterical rantings of well-meaning students, faculty members, or alumnae who refuse to see the overwhelming benefits to be reaped through the continuation of the graduate program.

Peggy Overton
Graduate Student
Alumna, Class of 1984