

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 065 068

HE 003 201

TITLE The SCUE (Student Committee on Undergraduate Education) Report.  
INSTITUTION Pennsylvania Univ., Philadelphia.  
PUB DATE Apr 66  
NOTE 46p.  
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29  
DESCRIPTORS \*College Students; Decision Making; Educational Administration; \*Educational Improvement; \*Higher Education; Policy Formation; \*Student Participation; \*Undergraduate Study

ABSTRACT

With the annual rise in tuition costs for undergraduate students, it seems as though there should also be an increase in the quality and diversity of programs and opportunities for those same students. However, the two conditions in the past have not paralleled. For this reason, the Student Committee on Undergraduate Education (SCUE) was instituted at the University of Pennsylvania to study student attitudes toward both their curricular and extracurricular campus lives, and to propose recommendations for the improvement of undergraduate education. This document reveals student attitudes toward and makes recommendations concerning (1) the general atmosphere at Penn; (2) the campus facilities; (3) the college and the college for women dichotomy; (4) student-faculty contact; (5) advising systems; (6) entrance to the major; (7) field of concentration programs; (8) size of classes; (9) problems of course orientation; (10) teaching and teachers; (11) graduate students as teachers and graders; (12) methods of testing; (13) grading and the pass/fail system; (14) the seminar system and senior colloquia; (15) independent study and auditing; (16) student evaluation of teachers and courses; (17) the role of the student in tenure decisions; and (18) the role of the student in policymaking.  
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ED 065068

*The*  
**SCUE**  
*Report*

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HE 003 201

**THE STUDENT COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**April, 1966**

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In May, 1966, 7,000 copies of the SCUE Report were printed and distributed to all University of Pennsylvania administration, faculty and undergraduates. Since then, the committee has received many requests for copies not only from members of the University community, such as incoming freshman and graduate students, but also from members of other universities, national agencies and various education groups. It is in response to this demand that SCUE is printing additional copies of the report.

Several developments that have occurred since the publication should also be noted here. Both student and faculty interest was high and their support for most of the proposals, overwhelming. The administration responded by setting up a Steering Committee of three SCUE members and three administration officials to review the suggestions in the report and channel each to the proper administrative group responsible for effecting it. At this time, all the proposals are being studied and at least one, more information at pre-registration, will go into effect next semester. SCUE is encouraged by this response and is presently involved with further studies and proposals and with experimental programs of reform.

1.

## INTRODUCTION

As today's universities expend more and more of their time, facilities and money on the education of graduate students, the modern undergraduate is in an extremely unhappy position. Although undergraduate tuition continues to rise, the students often feel, with a great deal of justification, that they are given very little opportunity to define their own educational objectives and values within the framework offered to them. This feeling of frustration, and the anonymity associated with being a student at a large university, has led to a feeling of alienation, a lack of commitment to the educational system. The student may express his disappointment in any of several ways: he may become apathetic and indifferent, he may embrace a non-intellectual cause, he may stage demonstrations and pickets, or he may seek a way to express his dissatisfaction without entirely abandoning the educational framework offered him. The Student Committee on Undergraduate Education is a group of the last type of students, who feel that the education offered to the undergraduates at the University of Pennsylvania is less than it should be, and who are dedicated to the improvement of these conditions for themselves and their fellow students.

SCUE was formed in early 1965 by the Men's Student Government as an autonomous, but financially related, committee. Initiated as a group to study the undergraduate's attitudes toward, and evaluations of, their education at Pennsylvania, SCUE is presently composed of eleven members. Included on the committee are representatives from all four undergraduate classes, from the College, College for Women, and the Wharton School, and from both fraternity and non-fraternity groups. There is no specific cumulative average required for membership, and it might be said that the only common denominator of the members lies in their overriding interest in the improvement of undergraduate education at Penn.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to all those members of the university community who have supported, in many different ways, the efforts of the committee. We are especially grateful to all those students who filled out and returned last spring's SCUE questionnaire, to the Student Governments for the contribution of the funds for our expenses and publication, and to the members of the faculty and the administration, who have expressed their interest while never attempting to dictate what the committee could or could not investigate. We feel that we have been well received, and we are grateful for the warmth of this reception.

The following report is a brief survey of some of SCUE's findings over the past eighteen months, and includes a series of recommendations aimed at initiating academic reform. These recommendations are not all short-range propositions; some of them are offered as goals towards which we might strive. In offering them, we hope not only to stimulate change, but also to stimulate desperately needed dialogue between the administration and the students. The report is fundamentally based on two extremely important

concepts. First, we believe that the university should regard every student as exceptional, as a unique human being with unique needs and values. This entails a great deal more freedom for the individual student to formulate his own educational values than the present system allows. Along with this freedom, and a necessary adjunct to it, is the need for more responsibility on the part of the individual student, so that he may cope with the problems that increased freedom invariably brings. Second, we feel that there is very little "feedback" between administration, faculty, and students. The need for this "feedback," or mutual evaluation, is a constant and unfulfilled one at Penn, and presently takes place primarily in classroom grading, which is a poor method at best. The report is thus an attempt to define both a new sense of undergraduate freedom and responsibility, and to develop new and improved methods of feedback. We consider this report itself to be a new means of feedback.

## 2.

### METHODOLOGY

In order to meet the pressing need for organized expression of student attitudes, SCUE has explored various ways of eliciting student response. A six page objective questionnaire distributed in the spring of 1965 is the basis for most of our general information and statistical calculations. There were a great many reasons for undertaking the task of making up, distributing, and compiling the results of this questionnaire. Primarily, we were interested in getting a response from a good cross section of the campus in order to justify the use of the survey as a valid statistical sample. Secondly, we sought to establish a firm base of support from the undergraduate community so that we could properly present their views. Thirdly, we felt that through the use of the questionnaire, the main issues and problems of undergraduate life could be brought to a focus. Fourthly, we believed the responses could finally provide a basis for substantiating or disproving the heretofore stereotyped and unjustified notions about student attitudes. Finally, the results of the questionnaire were to provide a basis for further investigation.

This questionnaire was sent to all full time undergraduates in the College, College for Women, and the Wharton School, during May of 1965. Of the 5500 questionnaires distributed, 1432 were returned, or approximately 26%. There may be some bias in our returns merely because those who returned the questionnaire showed more initiative than those who did not. We have not been able, however, to isolate any obvious source of bias.

The respondents to the questionnaire were distributed in the following groupings:

1. 44.2% College, 30.3% CW, 25.5% Wharton
2. 41.9% Fraternity, 58.1% Non-fraternity
3. 25.8% Sr., 23.5% Jr., 24.5% So., 26.2% Fr.
4. The mean for grade averages falling just above 2.6

Statistics released by the Office of the Registrar (February 12, 1965) revealed the following percentage breakdown of the undergraduate body as a whole:

1. 46.9% College, 27.4% CW, 25.7% Wharton
2. 42.0% Fraternity, 58.0% Non-fraternity
3. 23.3% Sr., 24.1% Jr., 25.3% So., 27.3% Fr.
4. The mean for grade averages of men and women falling just above 2.6\*

With regard to the statistics compiled by SCUE, Dr. Clelland, Chairman of the Statistics Department, stated:

As regards obvious source of bias, school, fraternity, class and grade point average are among the most important . . . the breakdowns SCUE shows me for these categories do indicate that the sample is reasonably representative in these four respects. . . . No probability statements can be made, because no random design was used. However, I feel that the results are likely to be meaningful.

We believe, therefore, that our sample is very representative of the opinions of the students in the three schools.

Frequency distributions were determined for each question and thirty-one of the questions, including such vital information as school, year, fraternity, and grade average, were cross correlated against each other to determine any mutual relations. An additional sixty questions were employed in a rotated factor matrix program to determine behavioral attitudes among the students. Twelve factors have been isolated, but at the time of this publication, these factors have not been fully analyzed and given a sound interpretation; we hope to be able to use this information in the future. All information used in this report is available to anyone who cares to examine it.

The second part of our study was the formation of major evaluation committees in the College and College for Women. These groups were designed to bring together all the majors, to isolate problems in each specific major field, and to generate suggestions for improvement within the department. These studies have also enabled us to verify the attitudes and opinions expressed in the questionnaire. Committees were organized in some of the majors by early fall of 1965 and worked until completion in the spring, with students of high caliber and interest as chairmen. Form letters were sent to majors urging them to attend sessions and voice their suggestions and complaints. Unfortunately, the general response has been disappointing, and, at the time of this report, work has been completed in only a few areas. SCUE believes, however, that these committees can be a meaningful source of student attitudes, and we plan to continue to use them. Preliminary results of some committees indicate that some changes have already been effected; included among these changes are pre-graduate advising for senior English majors, graduate student tutors for Philosophy honors majors, and a new independent study program for Art History majors.

The third phase of our study was a symposium and teach-in that took place on February 28 and March 1, 1966. The programs were designed to secure opinion on major educational problems and to provide a forum for complaints

\* These percentages were taken from Fall, 1964 figures. No Spring 1965 figure is compiled by the Office of the Registrar.

and suggestions within the university community. They have also served to stimulate discussion on educational issues among the students, faculty, and administration.

The first event was a national symposium on "The Role of the Student in Policy-Making." Student leaders from seven schools and the National Student Association, each of whom submitted an essay on the above topic, were the participants. The best of these essays, as well as excerpts from the program, are to be printed in *The American Scholar*, the quarterly journal of Phi Beta Kappa. The symposium was moderated by Fred M. Hechinger, Education Editor of *The New York Times*. The teach-in, entitled "What's Wrong With Penn?," brought together members of the faculty, students, and administration, to discuss the shortcomings of undergraduate education at Pennsylvania. Information compiled by tapes of the programs has served as an added source of data.

There have been a number of other means used to gauge the students' reactions to our study. Correspondence has been carried on with a number of other schools that were interested in our investigation, or had made studies of their own and were seeking to supplement these studies. On Thursday and Friday, February 24-25, a Phone-In was initiated, whereby students who had complaints were encouraged to explain them to the committee and to offer specific solutions. Although response was sparse, some of the suggestions were found to be very valuable and are incorporated in this report.

Perhaps the most valuable source of information has come from the fact that we are undergraduates, our peers are undergraduates, and consequently, we have constant contact with a great many students. In thinking out many of the issues we present, we have relied on our own opinions as well-informed, concerned students.

The culmination of the above procedure is the report that follows. It has been our intention to approach each problem objectively and to examine it with no preconceived notions or prejudices. It is the opinion of the committee, however, that a certain subjective approach is also necessary to communicate the underlying feelings of the undergraduate body, and to that end, we have taken the liberty to express these viewpoints even in the absence of statistical information.

This report is by no means an exhaustive study of undergraduate life.

### 3.

#### ATMOSPHERE

Because one's perception of campus atmosphere is often a function of a unique perspective, this section will be largely subjective. Nevertheless, we believe that a great deal can be said about the framework of intellectual life at Penn, and that there is a common experience that affects all members of the undergraduate body. The generalizations that we make in this section derive validity, in part, from the configuration of opinions manifested in the SCUE questionnaire. We hope that the section will clarify the presently vague

and ambiguous impressions that many of us have regarding the campus experience as a whole. In order to evaluate the intellectual atmosphere at Penn, we would like to focus on three important criteria for a dynamic academic community: intellectual curiosity, open inquiry between faculty and students, and exposure to new ideas. We have not shied away from value judgments.

The first criterion for an ideal intellectual atmosphere is that all members of the university community must maintain a constant and substantial intellectual curiosity. This is the most basic assumption upon which the university is based, since neither faculty nor students should be here unless they have some desire for knowledge, some desire for intellectual excellence. At Penn, however, this assumption is too often neglected or distorted. It is distorted when students' primary concern becomes achieving good grades to secure a good job or admission to a good graduate school. It is neglected when students find their intellectual drives ignored or blocked by the impersonal administrative machine of the University. It is unfortunate that most students and faculty members are quite willing to let their academic experiences be institutionalized. Perhaps part of the problem lies in the complexity of the standardized learning process; it tends to give the student the impression that his education has been programmed and laid out before him in the catalogue. Courses are taken, credits are amassed, averages are computed, and graduate schools are chosen. The student is likely to become so involved in the technicalities of his institutional life that little room is left for curiosity, self-definition, and questioning. Furthermore, the role of the faculty member has become rigidly structured. Although the concepts of teacher-researcher can be very broadly interpreted by the individual professor, he generally does not take advantage of this opportunity. Thus we find Penn to be a campus with a minimum of intellectual vitality and spontaneity — a campus in which interests are insular and in which there is little exciting interchange.

It is interesting to note that, of the students answering the questionnaire, 85% found intellectual stimulation to be an educational ideal of particular significance (that is, 85% gave ratings of four or five where five is very significant and one is insignificant). When asked whether their experiences at Penn had significantly fulfilled their expectations, only 41% responded that it had. Clearly, the student is disillusioned with the quality of the intellectual experience at the University.

We feel, however, that the Penn community has begun to react to the threat to individual interests inherent in any large organization. The formation of the Free University is prime evidence of an attitudinal change, and we take the existence of SCUE as another manifestation of the new questioning spirit. The potential for intellectual curiosity is here, but it is only beginning to be used. When reading this report, the reader should be aware that institutional reforms are a prerequisite for the creation of a more dynamic and integrated community, but are not sufficient in themselves. It is ultimately up to the individual, supported by the institution, to insure the necessary changes.

A dynamic intellectual atmosphere must provide areas for communication between faculty and students outside the classroom. Ideally, the distinction between the student and the teacher is nebulous. The inhibiting nature of the

institution should evaporate in intellectual dialogue, and the student, at times, can be the teacher, the teacher the student. There is too little opportunity for this type of interchange at Penn. Students seldom see faculty members on a casual basis; it is often difficult for students to realize that faculty members are a permanent part of the student's academic environment, since they are rarely seen outside their role as teachers. The result is a formalization of the relationship between the undergraduate and the professor, who often has neither the time nor the inclination to become involved with students. Most professors see the token arrangement of office hours as adequate to serve the undergraduate, though this formal arrangement does little to enhance the possibilities of meaningful communication. What communication there is between faculty and students is often oriented toward the graduate student — an individual whose specialized interest in a given field better prepares him to relate to the professor. The undergraduate is ostracized, for he often feels he lacks the information to carry on a dialogue in the professor's field. This certainly does little to encourage an atmosphere of mutual respect and open inquiry.

For curiosity and interchange to truly contribute to an ideal intellectual atmosphere, there must be a constant flow of new ideas. At present, new concepts may be mentioned in the classroom, but too often they are simply sluffed aside. This conservatism is inevitable when students allow themselves merely to play out social roles that have predetermined sets and attitudes. A major reinforcement of the tendency for individuals to pattern themselves after rigid social roles is the fraternity system. Although it may have some social function on campus, it tends to type individuals and sort them into categories. Different houses have different values, and it is usually incumbent upon the members of the house to maintain those values. Thus the individual is inhibited from defining questions on his own; his reactions to a new idea may be one of rejection simply because accepting it would not fit in with his "type." This kind of intolerance has no place in an academic community. Another apt example is the senior honor societies, which tend to justify and to reinforce social role playing at the expense of real intellectual achievement. 84% of respondents to the SCUE questionnaire felt the Penn atmosphere to be significantly socially oriented. This orientation is reflected in the inordinate prestige associated with membership in senior societies that honor social and athletic achievement above academic achievement.

The university administration makes its own contributions to forcing the student into a social role. Sophomore men, for instance, are given the alternatives of residing in dormitories (where both living conditions and social restrictions make for a rather unhappy existence), or living in a fraternity house. In this manner, students who are in doubt as to the value of the fraternity system may join just to escape dormitory regulations and conditions. Similarly, the University's orientation programs for freshmen, especially for freshmen women, stress the social aspect of campus life at the expense of the academic aspect. During women's orientation the impression is often given that the Dean of Women's office and not the offices of the academic deans is the center of campus life.

In December 1965, a group of students broke up an anti-Vietnam War demonstration in front of College Hall. Some apologists said that the action of the students was merely a way to let off tensions or was the result of personality conflicts with the marchers. Whatever the case, the inability to listen to others, and the disregard shown for an individual's right to express his opinion, is antithetical to the establishment of an intellectual community; it is the best example of where "typed" responses can lead.

Once again it is necessary to state that we feel there are exceptions to the limited picture we have painted. There are areas in the framework within which an excellent intellectual atmosphere does exist. Unfortunately, the intellectual common denominator among these isolated instances finds little reinforcement on the campus as a whole. The intellectual and social systems that are now strongly dichotomized need not remain so; the ideal campus atmosphere would be one in which the intellectual and social are synthesized.

We have presented an overview, a picture that is greater than the sum of its parts. The parts are critical elements. We feel that a progressive and reforming attitude in regard to these particulars will help to alter the shortcomings present in the whole. The bulk of this report deals with what we have pinpointed as critical parts of this whole. When reading our specific analyses and suggestions, it is hoped that the larger concept of atmosphere will be kept in mind.

#### 4.

### FACILITIES

There is a distinct and shocking lack of adequate facilities for the undergraduate at the University. This situation only perpetuates a fragmented community, and re-enforces the tendency for academic and intellectual experience to become restricted to the classroom. The primary ideals of a university — intellectual curiosity, open inquiry between students and faculty, and exposure to new ideas — are ultimately hindered by the minimal physical accommodations provided by the University, and the result is a "campus with a minimum of intellectual vitality and spontaneity, a campus in which interests are insular and in which there is little exciting interchange." What is needed are both new facilities, such as a Student Union and department common rooms, and an improvement of present facilities.

In respect to the need for new accommodations, it should be stressed that while there is an extensive building program underway, the new gymnasium is the only facility presently being constructed that is designed specifically with the undergraduate in mind. The overwhelming majority of the current projects provide new and expanded facilities primarily for graduate and faculty study, with an emphasis on laboratory facilities for scientific research. We are afraid that undergraduate interests are here being overlooked, and recommend the following changes:

### **Student Union**

It is impossible to regard Houston Hall as an adequate Student Union or as any type of focal point. Of the total area of Houston Hall, over two thirds is devoted to dining rooms, while the remaining one third is all that is left over for student facilities. Given this lack of space, it is not surprising that students feel that it falls short of serving its designated purpose. Of the 1420 students answering the question "Do you think that Penn has a social focal point?", 1072 answered no. Yet 942 of the 1042 felt that such a center would contribute to the educational experience. In relation to this issue, 1049 out of 1421 stated that they made some or considerable distinction between acquaintances made in class and those made socially, further indicating that Penn is a poorly integrated community.

We feel, therefore, that a new Student Union is absolutely necessary for the creation of a more vital and interesting community. It should serve as a general communal center, and hopefully alleviate the present dichotomy between the social and the intellectual. It should include the following facilities: coffee shop, book store, student meeting rooms, lounge and recreational facilities, and other typical student union necessities. The student union would not only help to provide a campus focal point, but would be in an excellent place for commuters to enter into campus life. At the time of the publication of this report, we have been informed that plans have been made to devote the Irvine Auditorium office facilities to student organizations. We feel that a centralized location for activities and organizations is necessary, but it should be obvious that Irvine is far too small to properly be used for this purpose. The new Student Union would be much more adequate. It seems that the student representatives to the Development Committee have been told that there are no current plans for an undergraduate student union, and that no such building will be considered unless private funds are secured for the purpose. SCUE feels strongly that the lack of a student focal point is a University concern, and should be remedied by University funds. When we compare the attractive and adequate facilities of the Faculty Club to the inadequacies of Houston Hall, we cannot help but feel that the interests of the undergraduates and needs of the students are not being considered.

### **Department Commons Rooms**

A full exposition of the problems of contact and communication on this campus has been provided in the section on Faculty-Student Contact. As a means of supplementing the purely formal methods of contact (the classroom and office hour) which are inadequate and often demoralizing, we recommend the establishment of departmental commons rooms, or lounges, to serve a variety of functions. These should be open to the undergraduate majors, graduate students, and faculty of the department, and would be used to hold seminars, present papers, study, or engage in informal and spontaneous discussion. The lounges should be located near the office of the department, should be comfortably furnished, and should be stocked with the latest journals of that discipline, as well as with necessary reference books.

### **Performing Arts Center**

Although Penn has over 5,000 undergraduates, at least the same number of graduate and professional students, and a huge faculty, there is no place on this campus that a play can adequately be performed, or a symphony given. If the University conceives of itself as a cultural center, this is absolutely inexcusable. The need for a Performing Arts Center, that might house all of the excellent campus activities in this field, is an absolute necessity. The auditoriums of the new building, while dedicated to dramatic productions, film screenings, and concerts, could also be used as lecture halls, thereby increasing available space for University and guest lecturers.

### **5.**

#### **THE COLLEGE AND COLLEGE FOR WOMEN DICHOTOMY**

In a previous section, we noted that the atmosphere of the university is one in which things tend to become artificially dichotomized, causing a fragmentation that does not enhance the chances of having a truly satisfying learning experience. This does not mean, of course, that a large university can avoid such problems, or even that it should. It does mean, however, that some attempt should be made to integrate those facets of the university that serve no purpose as unique entities. An excellent case in point is the unwieldy, bureaucratic, and generally unjustifiable division of the liberal arts undergraduate body into a College and a College for Women. This unnecessary and anachronistic segmentation seems to us to be absolutely contrary to the unity that we are seeking.

In their responses to the SCUE questionnaire, the men and the women of the university showed virtually no difference in the substance or pattern of their answers. We take this to mean that: a) Students in both schools are substantially alike in values, orientations, and opinions, and, b) If the College for Women is attempting to produce a different type of student than the College, it is not doing so. In contrast to this, Wharton students, educated in a completely different framework, showed a markedly different pattern of answers.

Is there a significant difference between the College and the College for Women? We think not. The group requirements for the two schools are almost exactly the same; the academic rules are virtually identical; the same faculty teaches both men and women; the same degree is granted. The only possible argument for the continuation of the two schools as separate entities is that this is traditional, and, perhaps, that alumnae contributions are greater this way. This is a weak justification for a dichotomy that is neither educationally nor bureaucratically convenient.

In our many discussions with faculty members, regarding all sorts of issues relating to undergraduate education, teachers have overwhelmingly felt that the College/College for Women distinction is a useless one, one that demands too much time and effort to administrate. Most teachers felt that women undergraduates show little difference in ability with men undergraduates,

though some felt (along with a good percentage of those students answering the questionnaire) that the women are better students. This probably reflects a more stringent admissions policy with regard to women.

We feel that a more thorough unity of liberal arts students would be achieved through the amalgamation of the College and the College for Women.

## 6.

### STUDENT-FACULTY CONTACT

As a large and relatively efficient corporation, the University has certain inherent and unfortunate characteristics: a formalized and complicated structure of hierarchies, roles, and rules, and a bureaucracy to coordinate its many functions. A consequence of this is great segmentation between administration, faculty and students, particularly between the latter two. This segmentation only leads to a communications failure and makes meaningful student-faculty contact almost impossible, when, ideally, continual and stimulating dialogue between student and teacher is a necessary criterion for a dynamic and fulfilling intellectual community. The problem is a difficult one to elucidate; there often seems little more to say than "Student-Faculty Contact is Inadequate and Unstimulating!" Yet, as simple as this is, it is very true and very disturbing, as indicated by the responses to the questionnaire.

On the SCUE questionnaire, students were asked to rate, in terms of the significance to them at the time they applied to Penn, "the quality of the faculty." 71% gave ratings of 4 or 5 (where 1 is significant and 5 is very significant). To the statement "Penn offers sufficient exposure to faculty members," 73% said they disagreed or strongly disagreed. Further, when asked "How many faculty members would greet you by name on campus?" 63% said that only five or less would do so, and of these respondents a great percentage were upperclassmen. It is appalling that the attitude towards professors is one of such disillusion and discontent.

It has been noted in the section on Atmosphere that one of the greatest hindrances to meaningful contact is the tendency for this contact to be formal, institutionalized within the classroom and through a limited number of office hours. The fact of a commuting faculty makes informal contact difficult, and too often the professor feels that he has adequately fulfilled his function solely within the classroom. Research, publishing, and graduate teaching are major concerns, yet they ultimately deprive the undergraduate of faculty time. In addition to these obstacles, there is the fact that discontent with student-faculty relations is largely a problem of attitude, both of the student and of the professor. Efforts are continually being made to organize lectures, seminars, informal discussion groups, and this year, a daily coffee hour in Houston Hall. Yet, these have done little to alleviate both the problem and the discontent, indicating that a basic change in attitude is necessary before any provisions and facilities can successfully be employed. To believe that open inquiry between students and faculty is vital to an intellectual community is unfortunately not enough. It still remains for both student and professor to take more initiative.

The problem, then, is a dual one of discouraging facts and discouraging attitudes; the solution is dependent upon a simultaneous change of both factors. In the following sections many recommendations are based on an awareness of inadequate student-faculty relations, and are aimed at creating situations in which they can be improved. Included among these are the suggestions for better advising, smaller classes, centralized and improved facilities, a more subjective grading system, and more independent study. It is further recommended that, while office hours usually promote only formal contact, they provide a situation in which dialogue is possible, and should therefore be increased to meet this need. We also suggest the creation of another University Free Hour to expand the possibilities for informal contact. The present hour is insufficient, as it is mainly devoted to faculty and student meetings, appointments, and office hours. Still, one can not institutionalize meaningful contact. We hope that as more possibilities for free inquiry among students and faculty emerge, a change in attitude and greater initiative will also evolve.

## 7.

### ADVISING SYSTEMS

As a potentially valuable area of undergraduate education, advising is a problem of particular concern. According to the College's "Committee of Fifty Advisers' Manual":

"The Freshman-Sophomore adviser is the principal official source of information and assistance in planning the student's program of study. . . . For many students, the adviser will be the main faculty contact in the first semesters on campus. . . . The adviser should act as an older colleague in a common effort. . . . It is our hope that the student's planning of his work with a faculty adviser can be a true educational process and not merely a routine to be gone through twice a year."

Our present advising systems fail to achieve these ideals. When asked to choose the most important kinds of contact with faculty members, most students ranked contact with the adviser less important than either classroom or personal contact; only 19% of the students answering the questionnaire felt that contact with their advisors was a most important source of student-faculty interaction. Student dissatisfaction with the present system starts with the first encounter with the adviser during freshman pre-registration. The initial interview is vague and perfunctory; the interviewer is usually disinterested, unstimulating, and generally rushed. Rosters are signed without a question, and the freshman soon adopts the attitude that advisers are merely rubber stamps for the University bureaucracy. Advisers are seldom prepared to give information other than what is listed in the Catalogue and therefore available to students anyway. This attitude is re-enforced during each subsequent semester's pre-registration, and the undergraduate seldom goes to his adviser as an "older colleague in a common effort."

The failure of the present advising system can be attributed, in part, to the attitudes of both parties involved; we feel, however, that the structure of the

system, as it now stands, precludes any significant improvements in the attitudes of its participants. The most glaring inadequacy in the present system is the size of the advising staff itself. The College provides a committee of 52 faculty members, each of whom is responsible for approximately 25 advisees; in the College for Women, only three full time staff members are available to counsel all College for Women freshmen and sophomores.

The adviser should be responsible for more than insuring that the student will fulfill his group requirements; he should be familiar enough with his advisee's particular interests to be capable of providing meaningful direction. Unless the adviser has enough time to devote to the requirements of his task, and is adequately equipped to provide helpful and necessary information that the student cannot obtain on his own, then his function is simply taken over by the academic grapevine, and the advising system becomes meaningless. We feel that such structural inadequacies can be remedied, and suggest the following as steps in that direction.

### **1. Union of College and CW Advising System**

As noted in a previous section, there is no rationale for the existing division between the colleges, and one great advantage of combining the two would be an amalgamation of the advising systems. The advising staff should be expanded so that each faculty member-adviser is responsible for 5-10 advisees, thus allowing each adviser enough time to establish a successful personal relationship with his students. In addition, a small full-time staff should be provided to answer the technical questions that students have concerning group requirements, taking extra or fewer courses per semester, and similar problems (the College Personnel Office is designed to do so). It is suggested that the University place a greater emphasis on the importance of the adviser's role and, if need be, make advising a more lucrative job. If students are to have more freedom in defining their educational values, the adviser's role becomes a crucial one.

### **2. Advising Aids**

It is impossible for a student or an adviser to become acquainted with every department and course offered in the University. We suggest that each adviser be equipped with the supplementary course descriptions for all departments (these supplementary course outlines are described in detail in Problems of Class Structure). We also recommend the establishment of a system of faculty references, whereby each department lists the office hours of faculty members available for special advising. Such lists could be posted in the department office and circulated among all advisers to aid them in referring their advisees for special information. Thus, a student's questions will be answered by a man well-qualified in the area concerned.

### **3. Academic Orientation**

The Freshman Orientation period offers the best opportunity for the student's initial meeting with his adviser, not only to shift the emphasis of Orientation from social to academic concerns, but also to provide the freshman with a meaningful faculty contact during his first week at the University. At

this initial meeting, the freshman could discuss with his adviser his educational objectives and other topics of general interest. At this time, the adviser should introduce his advisee to the many facilities and study aids which the University provides but seldom publicizes: inter-library loans, the exchange program whereby Penn students may take courses at Bryn Mawr, Swarthmore, Temple, and Haverford, the opportunity to audit courses, the possibility of petitioning for new courses, and other features, all of which are seldom utilized largely because students are uninformed that they exist.

#### **4. Pre-Major Advising**

The recently instituted departmental meetings for prospective majors is the primary way in which the student is given some insight into the structure and demands of each major program. Unfortunately, these meetings have been less successful than they might be, since they are inadequately publicized, generally only held once for each major, and often scheduled with time conflicts. We feel that the following additions to this program will significantly improve the quality of pre-major advising:

A. All sophomores should be informed in the mail whenever a series of meetings is scheduled.

B. Departmental pre-major meetings should be held several times during the course of each year.

C. Freshmen should be encouraged to attend these meetings.

D. Upperclass majors should be invited to participate in the meetings, since the prospective majors may wish to talk to someone who has taken, rather than given, the program. Upperclassmen who are interested in participating might enter their names on a list in the department offices, and thus be available to any underclassman who was seeking pre-major counseling or advising.

E. Each department should post a list of several faculty members who will be available at certain times for pre-major advising.

#### **5. Pre-graduate Advising**

All too often, a college senior finds himself applying to graduate schools with the same ignorance with which he applied to undergraduate schools. Since a university invests a great deal of its prestige in the placement of its undergraduates in graduate school, it is remarkable that so little is done to advise the prospective graduate students. In order to provide adequate counseling for prospective graduate students, we urge each department to provide:

A. An accessible office in which the catalogues of all the graduate schools may be perused.

B. A faculty board of perhaps three members which could meet several times each semester to answer questions. The times of these meetings should be well-publicized.

C. The faculty board should post a list of the graduate schools from which each member of the department graduated. In this way, a student interested in a given school might be referred to graduates of that school. A list should also be posted of recent Penn graduates, and the graduate school that they are attending, so that the present students might write to these people for information.

D. All sophomores, upon entrance to the major, should be informed, in writing, that if they intend to go on to graduate school, they should structure their undergraduate program accordingly. Thus, less seniors would find that they are applying to graduate schools with inadequate preparation in foreign languages or other necessary background material.

### ENTRANCE TO THE MAJOR

The University presents its concept of the major program in the Undergraduate Catalogue as follows:

This concentration upon a chosen field provides a focus for the student's intellectual interests; it gives him a first-hand knowledge of how much ability and effort are required to attain thoroughness of understanding; and it should give him also a satisfying taste of the rewards of intellectual achievement.

We agree in theory with these objectives and believe that such a program is valuable for a liberal education. Students answering the questionnaire similarly indicate that courses in the major departments provide adequate coverage and sufficient depth to satisfy these goals.

As indicated in the section on methodology we are still in the process of preparing a more intense analysis of the content and structure of the major programs. One hindrance to the success of the major programs that may be focused on at present however, is the tendency for majors to have special grade requirements for entrance. This arbitrary and narrow basis of selection not only creates a hierarchy of departments, but clearly denies the student freedom of choice in following his desired course of study. We see no reasons why the undergraduate should not be given this right, and therefore recommend that:

1. The choice of any major be open to all undergraduates, with the only grade requirement being equivalent to the present criterion for graduation: a 2.0 cumulative average. Thus a "C" average in major and related courses is all that would be necessary. There seems to be little evidence to support the dichotomy which requires a higher than "C" average to gain entrance to a major on the one hand, and only a "C" average to stay in that major, and to get a degree, on the other.
2. Departments concerned that the quality of the class will be lowered by the presence of marginal students should be responsible for upgrading the standards of their programs. To remain within the program would then become the responsibility of the individual student. It should be pointed out that there are few restrictions against generally marginal students taking the courses offered by major programs other than their own. A student, we firmly believe, ought to be allowed to major in the field of his greatest interest.
3. The pre-major advising program be accordingly strengthened and intensified to allow the best evaluation of the student's potential success in his intended major. We believe that this more subjective analysis of a student's potential will be more effective than the present objective one.

9.

**FIELD OF CONCENTRATION PROGRAM**

We have stressed that the structure of an undergraduate's course work should be modulated to the needs of the individual student. Under the present system, the second-semester sophomore is confronted with a choice of several major programs, each of which is pre-arranged and highly structured. The demands of every program include a number of required courses and a limited selection of major-related courses. Once the student enters a major, he is allowed little freedom for cross-disciplinary studies; he cannot relate disciplines beyond taking a few courses in separate departments. Unless the student's interests coincide with the limits of the traditional and somewhat arbitrarily defined disciplines, he is unable to satisfy his educational expectations and fulfill his academic goals. Under the present system, a student who is interested in the relationship of two fields is forced either to meet the requirements of both fields or to major in one field and to devote all of his electives to the other. It is perhaps more disturbing that, due to the rigid structure of the major program, the student is automatically discouraged from determining his own academic goals through careful consideration of his intellectual abilities and interests.

In order to stimulate the student to develop his abilities and to define his goals, we propose the formation of a Field of Concentration program, not to replace, but rather to supplement, the existing major programs. The new program is outlined as follows:

1. A board of faculty members including representatives of the sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities, should be established to advise interested students, and to review their proposed fields of concentration.
2. Any student who, during the second semester of his sophomore year, wishes to prescribe his own individual plan of study, may apply to this committee for temporary approval of his program. His presentation must include an outline of the area he is defining for himself, a tentative list of courses he plans to take, and a brief statement of what he feels he can accomplish through this study program.
3. The board would review the breadth and depth of the proposed field of concentration, and then refer the student to a faculty member who is expert in the student's chosen areas of study. This faculty member will then be responsible for advising and directing the student's studies during his remaining two years. We urge that students' preferences for advisers be considered.
4. Together, the student and his adviser would work out the plan of study in more detail, drawing up a preliminary program of nine to twelve required courses, the remainder to be devoted to electives. This plan of study would then be re-submitted to the board of faculty members who would pass final approval.
5. Each field of concentration program would have to include at least one semester of independent study during which the student would be responsible for synthesizing some of the material learned in his selected courses.

This semester of independent study, which students would most likely take during the second semester of the senior year, would culminate in a project or thesis devoted to such a synthesis.

6. Seminars should be available for each field of concentration program, in the same way that they are provided for major programs by each department. Students in the field of concentration program should, therefore, be required to take two seminars in departments related to his areas of study and at least one senior colloquium.

7. With respect to changing one's major to another discipline, the field of concentration program should be treated as any other major program.

8. We urge that none of the individual plans of study developed under the field of concentration program become mere models to be duplicated in future situations. This design must be kept flexible and unclassified, allowing maximum freedom for individual definition.

A tentative field of concentration program might be constructed as follows:

**AREA OF STUDY: Nineteenth Century Humanities**

**COURSES TO BE TAKEN:**

- 1) Art 345a — Modern Art (19th Century European Painting)
- 2) English 150 — Major English Romantic Poets
- 3) English 153 — 19th Century English Prose
- 4) History 45 — Europe from 1814 to 1914
- 5) Music 130-131 — Music of the Romantic Era
- 6) Philosophy 4 — History of Modern Philosophy (Descartes through Kant)
- 7) Political Science 82 — Marxist and Socialist Thought

**SEMINARS TO BE TAKEN:**

- 1) History Seminar #? — The Development of Urban Society in England
- 2) Philosophy Seminar #? — The Philosophies of Kant and Schopenhauer

**INDEPENDENT STUDY:** To be devoted to a paper on the structure of Romantic thought, as revealed through literature and the fine arts.

**SENIOR COLLOQUIUM:** "Darwin, Marx, and Goethe"

**10.**

**SIZE OF CLASSES**

The unwieldy size of classes is perhaps one of the most basic educational problems at Penn. Obviously this has a direct bearing on the types and amounts of interchange possible within the classroom, and the present situation is detrimental to both student and teacher. The professor is limited to a narrow choice of teaching and testing methods; the student finds himself removed from an adequate learning situation where constant questioning and dialogue are necessary.

Before we can propose solutions to this problem, it is necessary to consider the present distinctions among types of classes. These fall into four categories: lecture, recitation or lab, seminar, and "non-lecture." The lecture is a class of

indeterminate size in which the professor presents information and ideas with little opportunity for student participation. Results from the questionnaire indicate that if there are going to be lectures, relative size is of little importance. Almost by definition, the recitation or lab are necessary adjuncts to the lecture, allowing for clarification, application, interpretation, and discussion of the material presented in lecture. 71% of the questionnaire respondents affirmed the value of the recitation; 66% indicate that the ideal size is between 1-12 students. The seminar is a small and dynamic discussion group, oriented towards the consideration of specific topics and problems. The final and largest category is the non-lecture, comprised of all courses, introductory and advanced, which cannot be defined as lecture, seminar, or recitation. In non-lecture courses, dialogue can exist, but since there are usually 25-45 students in a class, it is difficult to maintain. Each of these categories demands different numbers of students to be most effective. Based on the distinctions defined above, SCUE recommends that:

1. All lectures be accompanied by a sufficient number of recitation sections conducted by well-qualified members of the faculty. As previously mentioned, the ideal size is considered to be 1-12 students, and in no case should exceed 20. This obviously requires that certain courses provide more sections than they do at present.
2. All non-lecture courses be limited to 25 students, and that the number of sections offered in a given course be adjusted to the number of students who enroll during pre-registration.
3. A greater number of seminars be made available, with a maximum of 12 students. For a full proposal of changes in the seminar system, see the section on Seminars.

The necessity for small classes cannot be over-emphasized. They provide maximum possibilities for discussion and free interchange of ideas, and create the situation most conducive to learning. While we realize the problems inherent in this proposal, we must insist that if quality education is to be preserved at Pennsylvania, there must be less concern for education by quantity. The problem is one that can not be met by an expansive building project alone; it is a human problem which can only be solved by a more judicious utilization of existing human resources, and by a proportional increase of new personnel. The Office of the Registrar records an 8 to 1 ratio of faculty to students; some of the greatest problems of the University would be alleviated if this were as valid in the undergraduate classroom as it is on paper.

## 11.

### PROBLEMS OF COURSE ORIENTATION

#### Selection of Courses

The present system of choosing courses from an ambiguous or non-existent description in the catalogue is grossly inadequate. A typical catalogue statement is sketchy at best, describing in one or two sentences what the student is going to study for sixteen weeks or more. This leaves the student two other

ways to try to obtain fore-knowledge of courses: through the "academic grapevine" or the *Daily Pennsylvanian Course Guide*. Course selection thus is based on guesswork or the opinions of others. We believe that every course should be personally significant to the student and should be chosen so that it relates to the larger concept of his educational goals. Unless the individual is better acquainted with the material to be offered in a course and with the orientation of the professor, he cannot make a valid decision to take the course. A notable step has been taken in this direction by the offering of reading lists for most Summer School courses during pre-registration.

To alleviate this problem of inadequate course information we make the following recommendations.

A supplement to the present Course Catalogue be mimeographed each semester. Each professor would submit a syllabus of his projected course to his department before pre-registration. This syllabus should be distributed to all advisers, and be accessible in all department offices and in the library. Under this new system, professors would be assured of an increasing proportion of genuinely interested students, and the immense confusion during the "Drop and Add" period would be alleviated. The supplement would include:

1. A description of the course written by the professor, indicating his general orientation and approach.
2. A tentative reading list.
3. Organization of the course, whether based on lectures, discussions, student reports, etc.
4. Admission requirements.

An example of such a syllabus for a course at Notre Dame University can be found in the appendix.

### **Petitioning for Courses**

A course may be petitioned for in the case that there are interested students who would take the course, if it were given. The present system of petitioning for additional courses and sections is inadequate, poorly publicized, and generally discouraged by the departments. It is our belief that a curriculum should be designed not only to dictate the needs of the students, but also to respond to them. The implementation of a new system of course petitioning, in response to the indicated needs of the student, would encourage the growth of an ever-modulating and diversified curriculum. The need for a new system was indicated by the strong response to the Free University. We therefore recommend that if a petition, signed by twelve or more students, is submitted to the department chairman, that the course be immediately included in the curriculum under the following conditions:

1. The course is a meaningful addition to the student's education in the given field.
2. A member of the faculty is judged competent to teach the course.
3. The students petitioning for the course recognize that in so doing they have, in effect, pre-registered for the course.

SCUE hopes that as the major evaluation committees become a permanent

organization that one of their main functions will be to continually evaluate and suggest changes in the course structure and the curriculum of their departments.

### Bibliographies

In order that learning and inquiry do not stop with the required course material, the student should be provided with guidelines for further study and reading. The need for this was indicated by some 60% of the questionnaire respondents who said that less than a quarter of their courses issue additional bibliographical material. SCUE suggests that every course offer a supplementary bibliography at the beginning of the semester.

## 12.

### TEACHING AND TEACHERS

Perhaps the most important factor in the over-all educational process is the quality and accessibility to full-time faculty. 35% of the students answering the questionnaire reported that stimulation of their intellectual abilities was a very significant consideration in the evaluation of their education. This stimulation is best achieved by exposure to scholars, well-versed in their fields and willing to impart to undergraduates their own enthusiasm. When we consider that 77% of those answering stated that the quality of the faculty was a determining factor in their decision to apply to Pennsylvania, it seems not only just, but imperative, that the undergraduates be given full opportunity to study under the faculty.

Too often, however, this exposure is minimal. The distribution of full-time faculty as teachers favors the graduate student; yet why should the undergraduate suffer? The only way the student can gain scholastic maturity is by exposure to top men in their respective fields — such exposure increases intellectual stimulation in the class. Hopefully, this stimulation will carry over to areas outside the classroom. Since undergraduates pay the same tuition as do graduate students, they are entitled to the same caliber of qualified instruction. Concern for scholarly research and publication also take professors out of the undergraduate classroom. Scholarship should be a dynamic process, the results of which should be regarded as a further contribution to the undergraduate's education. Involvement in scholarship should by no means detract from involvement in teaching. While the quality of teaching ultimately depends on the individual teacher, the need for a deep concern for *teaching* on the part of all faculty cannot be overemphasized. *Teaching* requires more than a mere concern for the dissemination of fact; it demands from the teacher not only a firm grasp of his subject matter, but also an appreciation of all knowledge, a curiosity for current problems, and an enthusiastic involvement in his work. Most important, he should endeavor to impart these attitudes to his students, drawing them into the experience of learning. In order for the undergraduate to derive full benefit from the Pennsylvania faculty, and in the hope that undergraduate teaching will become the major concern for the faculty, SCUE recommends:

1. *That all undergraduate courses be taught by full-time faculty members.*  
This entails a modification in the university's policy towards employing graduate students as teachers. The implications of this are more fully discussed in the following section.
2. *That more use be made of the resources available for teaching,* such as the seminar, variety of testing technique, and the myriad of approaches that can be used to impart knowledge. As a specific proposal we recommend the immediate implementation of the system of faculty fellowships now used at Yale, by which selected professors are given a free semester to be used for the development and organization of new courses.

### 13.

#### GRADUATE STUDENTS AS TEACHERS AND GRADERS

A major hindrance to the quality of the teaching and the amount of exposure to faculty is the present policy of using graduate students to teach undergraduates. The teachers the undergraduate often meets in the classroom are not classified as teachers, but as students one or two years more advanced than he himself may be. Needless to say, the undergraduate is not satisfied with this system. 47% of the questionnaire respondents reported that the quality of graduate student teaching is unsatisfactory, while only 7% indicated that they were highly satisfied with the quality. Most critical of the graduate students were the sophomores, of whom 50% felt that graduate students were very unsatisfactory. Evidently the experience of the first two years is a most unhappy one.

Even more disturbing is the fact that dissatisfaction with the present system is not one-sided. Graduate fellows are also concerned with their ability to handle a substantial course load and still be effective as teachers. *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, the alumni magazine of the University, recently did a feature story on the graduate fellows. One fellow interviewed states, "Perhaps, then, the chief philosophical pressure on the teaching fellow comes from the feeling that more is expected of him than he is able to give. He, himself, often feels that he would be doing an even better job; his ideals seem to outreach his capacity to deliver. . . . It's a good program for the teaching fellow. Yes, I hope the undergraduate comes out as well." The very least the undergraduate should ask is that he "come out as well."

A further problem is that graduate students not only bring academic inexperience into the classroom, but teaching inexperience as well. Again we quote from the *Gazette*. "You're thrown into the system. You walk into the classroom and you start to teach. You're not given any sort of education course; now as far as the technique, it's up to you. You may have a terrible classroom technique, and the students may suffer."

We also feel that the present system of using graduate students as graders for undergraduate courses is inadequate. Very often these markers do not share the orientation of the professor teaching the course, and it is not infrequent for a graduate marker to fail to attend the classes for which his services

are used. The result is often a distinct difference between the grades the professor gives and those the markers assign. It also seems unfair for a senior undergraduate to be marked by a student who is virtually his academic peer, as can happen. This system is, to say the least, unjust, and markedly to the disadvantage of the undergraduate. Therefore, SCUE recommends the following solutions:

1. The policy of graduate students as teachers should be discontinued. (An exception to this would be in lab courses where the need for instruction is minimal.) Evidence indicates that the graduate student has neither the broad overview necessary to teach a survey course, nor the specialized skill to teach an advanced course.
2. If it is impossible to eliminate the use of graduate students as teachers, the quality of their instruction must be improved! If this system is a "necessary evil" inherent in a large university, then the system as it now exists must be restructured. Too often, there is no attempt to provide standards of quality and experience; truly incompetent graduate students may be allowed to teach. The English Department has recently instituted a plan which could well be adopted by other departments. Their program is a four year Ph.D. sequence in which the first year is devoted to full-time course work. In the second year  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the time is given to course work, while the rest is spent as an Apprentice Teacher; this requires working with a full faculty member, and gives the apprentice a chance to learn methods of teaching and grading. Under supervision, the third year student is responsible for a class of undergraduates, and the completion of necessary course work and comprehensive exams. The fourth year is devoted to the completion of a dissertation. This program is an excellent one. We must stress, however, that the ideal is the elimination of all graduate student teaching, and that any plan for improvement of the present system is a means to that end. If a University of the reputation, size, and wealth of Pennsylvania cannot afford to put a qualified teacher in every classroom, the ideals of an undergraduate education have not been realized.
3. The present system of graduate markers should be discontinued. The need for markers stems from the large size of classes, a situation which we hope will be ameliorated immediately. As long as this system does exist, however, we urge that a marker be required to attend each class to which he is assigned, that he be available for student contact, and that he have regular office hours. It must be emphasized that most students do not mind waiting an extra week or two for exams and papers to be returned if they can be assured that the person marking the papers is the same person teaching the course. This does not seem to be an unreasonable request.

#### 14.

### METHODS OF TESTING

It is too often assumed that the purpose and the value of tests and papers are to measure what a student has learned in a course and to evaluate his

presentation of this material. Yet this is only a minor function of the testing procedure; a basic premise for testing should be that it is, in itself, a learning process in three stages:

1. Preparation for an exam or paper encourages the student to analyze and review the material, seeking new insights and formulating new conclusions.
2. The writing of the exam or paper does not have to be merely a reiteration of memorized material; it too should provide an opportunity for thinking, synthesizing, and inter-relating of ideas.
3. Reconsideration of the graded exam or paper should be as valuable a part of the testing experience as the first two phases. Critical comments by the professor provide the basis for a system of feedback whereby the student may re-evaluate his understanding and presentation of the material. We consider this a significant link in the learning process without which the student's education is incomplete.

Any testing method may approximate to some extent the three ideals outlined above. Students' reactions to the five traditional testing methods are here taken from the SCUE questionnaire (where all statistics are based on a scale of one through five, one representing the most inaccurate testing method, and five being the most accurate method):

1. *Surprise quizzes.* Of the students who answered, only 15% of those in Wharton, 7% of those in the College for Women, and 4% of those in the College believed surprise quizzes to accurately measure knowledge of the course material. It might be interesting to note that the student who works ahead on his assignments is often penalized by the surprise quiz.

2. *Objective Tests.* Only 37% of the respondents thought that this form of testing accurately or very accurately measured what they had learned, and 63% believed that there was little or no degree of accuracy in objective testing. Students became more and more disenchanted with objective testing as they reached the senior class: 54% of the freshmen, 63% of the sophomores and juniors, and 77% of the seniors believe that objective tests are an inaccurate yardstick for measuring ability and knowledge of a course's subject matter.

3. *Oral Tests.* Although few students have had exposure to oral testing procedures, there is a considerable approval of them in the College, College for Women, and Wharton, as a possibly advantageous testing method. The percentages of approving students increase in direct relation to the number of years that the student has been at the university. 15% of the freshmen, 25% of the sophomores and juniors, and 35% of the seniors believed that oral tests are a very accurate or accurate measure of knowledge. 41% of all students reported (4) or (5) on the one through five scale. This indicates some approval of the oral testing method.

4. *Essay tests.* On the scale used above, 65% of the College, 77% of the College for Women, and 63% of Wharton, students reported (4) or (5), while only 10% of these groups reported (1) or (2). Here, again, seniors show an increased preference over freshmen for the essay examination.

5. *Papers.* In the College and College for Women, 59% report that papers measured accurately or very accurately what they had learned, and 42% of Wharton students recorded the same opinions. From these groups, 64% of the seniors, 59% of the juniors, 56% of the sophomores, and 48% of the freshmen judged papers as very accurate or accurate measures. It must be remembered, however, that a paper is often not intended to cover course material *per se*; often it provides the opportunity to instigate a smaller area in greater depth. When asked to evaluate methods of learning, 82% of the respondents said that the paper was a most valuable one.

Students expressed approval of essay exams and papers as the most accurate measure of how well they had learned course material. We believe that this is due to the fact that these methods most closely fulfill the ideals of preparation, writing, and feedback outlined above. It is interesting to note that the more experience the student has with testing (seniors as compared to freshmen), the greater his preference for the more subjective methods which have the maximum opportunity for feedback. Although the objective method often appears as the only alternative in large classes, we feel that the very strong mandate given those types of tests which provide the best learning experience (i.e. essays and papers) is another powerful argument against the proliferation of larger classes.

## 15. GRADING

In their responses to the questionnaire, students expressed grave doubts as to the efficacy of the present grading system. There was a general feeling (64% of the students) that an over-emphasized amount of competition for grades exists in the classroom. When asked if their grades are an accurate reflection of the knowledge they have gained in a course, 1020 out of 1351 students (75%) said that they did not. In addition, over 50% of the respondents felt that the present grading system (A-F) does not adequately evaluate their performance. These statistics are disquieting, especially since we believe that some sort of grading system is necessary in a university.

The necessity for grades is primarily a societal one. The student, as a product of the educational process, receives a constant qualitative evaluation. Businesses, draft boards, and graduate schools need to know how a given student compares to his classmates. Within the university itself, there is a need to decide how students rate in comparison with one another in order to facilitate the organization and administration of the educational process. In addition, grades often serve as a motivational factor and provide a means for the student to evaluate the quality of his work.

Since the statistics that we have quoted indicate dissatisfaction but do not reveal the reasons for that dissatisfaction, some discussion of the inadequacies of the present system seems to be necessary. A grading system is a method of feedback, a means of evaluating quality of performance. What is peculiar about the present grading system is that it is a quantitative, objective, measure-

ment of a qualitative, subjective, experience. The categories of A-F are rigid and inaccurate, clearly not adequate to truly evaluate the quality of a given student's work. The system acts as a motivating force, but too often as a motivation for the achievement of good grades rather than the achievement of good scholarship. What is necessary is a loosening of the system, so that it is not only less arbitrary, but more subjective, thus insuring greater feedback.

Given the predominant feeling that our present grading system is indeed inadequate, we feel that the justification for change is evident. Ideally, SCUE does not believe that grades have a place in the learning experience, but that extensive comments on each student would be much more effective. Perhaps unfortunately, however, a university cannot exist at an ideal level, and needs some basis for discriminating between students. Any grading system, including the one we are going to propose, represents a compromise between the ideal and the pragmatic. We find the present system inadequate since it is both inaccurate and inhibiting, and we have two proposals which will begin to rectify these situations to some extent. The first of these suggestions, which represents an attempt to loosen the present system and to cut down on the pressure for grades as an inhibiting factor, is the Pass/Fail system outlined below. The second suggestion will be found in the appendix to this report, since it is offered tentatively and is primarily intended to stimulate discussion, to act as a catalyst for plans towards a new system.

### **Proposed Pass/Fail Grading System**

It is the opinion of the Student Committee on Undergraduate Education that the University should adopt a Pass/Fail Grading System. Such a system, in which a designated number of courses are taken without a specific letter grade other than "Pass" (A-D) or "Fail," seems to be an adequate solution to many student problems. Specifically, the system will offer five unique advantages:

- 1) It will lessen the pressure for grades by offering to the student a chance to study a certain number of courses for no end other than knowledge of the material. Penn students have demonstrated a suspicion of the efficacy of our present grading system. While SCUE feels that grades are necessary to some degree, the pass/fail system would re-enforce an attitude towards learning as an *end* rather than as a means.
- 2) The pass/fail system will allow a student to explore areas of knowledge in which he has interest but lacks particular talent or aptitude. The opportunity to take a course without worrying about "doing badly" or lowering one's average would enable such a student to extend his horizons into new areas; it would encourage science majors to take courses in the humanities, humanities majors to take science courses. This wide range of interests is, of course, central to a liberal education.
- 3) Insofar as a pass/fail system will encourage cross-disciplinary study, a stimulating variety of viewpoints will be introduced into all classes. The sharing of views in lower-level courses and the exchanging of expertise in more advanced courses will, again, greatly enhance the liberal education.

- 4) The pass/fail system would provide an excellent opportunity to study the effect of grades on student motivation and performance. We suggest, therefore, that for the first few years of the system all teachers report the specific letter grades of their pass/fail students, along with the grades of their regular students, to a committee which would compare the results of the two groups. SCUE would be most willing to undertake this research or to join with members of the faculty and administration in such a study.
- 5) This system should encourage the addition of experimental courses to be conducted entirely on a pass/fail basis. If such courses prove valuable, they might then be included in the regular curriculum under the standard grading system.

In addition to the reasons listed above, SCUE recommends the institution of an experimental pass/fail grading system on the basis of student response to questions relating to this issue.

### **The Pass/Fail System**

SCUE recommends that, of the 40 course units required for graduation each undergraduate be allowed to designate six (6) course units for pass/fail grading, no more than two (2) of which may be taken in any given term, under the following conditions:

- 1) No pass/fail course may be used in:
  - a) a group requirement
  - b) a major-related requirement
  - c) the major field
- 2) No freshman may take a course for pass/fail, as such a privilege demands some experience in evaluating and planning one's own study.
- 3) No student is obliged to take any course as a pass/fail.
- 4) Students must pre-register as pass/fail members of the class; at the end of the drop-and-add period, this status becomes permanent.
- 5) In the event that a student wishes to major in a field in which he has previously taken a pass/fail credit, and the department will not accept this as fulfilling its major pre-requisites, the student has two options:
  - a) he may request that the letter grade which he received in the course be considered by the department. In such a case, he would nevertheless have used one of his 6 pass/fail options.
  - b) he may, with the permission of the department, select another course to fulfill the requirement.
- 6) In the event of over-crowded sections, the following order of preference is to be observed:
  - a) majors
  - b) letter-graded students
  - c) pass/fail students
  - d) auditors

It is hoped, in cases where sections become inaccessible to pass/fail students, that new sections will be created to accommodate them.

- 7) Professors should grade all students according to normal procedure; the final mark would then be transposed to "Pass" or "Fail." There is no need

to inform professors which students have signed up for pass/fail, though the information need not be classified.

SCUE recognizes that this system may contain certain weaknesses. We urge that it be instituted on an experimental basis, and strongly believe that its advantages far exceed its shortcomings. Opponents to such a system generally state three objections:

1) *That it lowers class quality.*

This is at present impossible to ascertain; the research done on relative grades of regular and pass/fail students would indicate its validity. It is also true, as previously suggested, that a pass/fail system will open classes to a multiplicity of views and thus expose different insights into the material.

2) *That certain classes may be overloaded with pass/fail students.*

While we doubt that such a situation would be at all objectionable, class balance can easily be maintained by the entrance preference list presented above.

3) *That departments, especially in advanced courses, will erect barriers against pass/fail students.*

Since all pass/fail students should fulfill pre-requisites for the courses they enter, the departments should be urged to comply with the spirit of the new system, and asked to refrain from placing further restrictions on course entrance.

If the pass/fail system is instituted at Penn, as SCUE strongly feels it should be, we urge that it be given a fair test and a sufficient evaluation period. Experience with the ill-fated honor system should clearly indicate that we cannot "water down" a proposal and still retain its positive effects. We feel that the Pass/Fail Grading System, as presented, will merit our support and contribute a great deal to the quality of education at the University.

Note: As this report goes to press, we have been informed that the Pass/Fail system (as outlined above, with the one change of exclusion of students on general probation from taking P/F courses) has just been accepted by the faculty of the college. Thus, the option should be available to students next semester. We are delighted to hear this news.

### **Failure of Courses**

Under the present system, the student who fails a course is forced to undergo the same unsatisfactory intellectual experience a second time: he must make up his failure in a related area regardless of his interests, his abilities, or his status within the University. The present system demands that the student succeed where he has previously failed without considering his reasons for originally choosing the course and without recognizing that the student may be unable to deal with certain types of material.

These rules obviously deny the student the responsibility of judging whether he should direct his efforts towards the same field or attempt to deal with a new one. Although by fulfilling his group requirements, he has demonstrated a basic familiarity with the broad divisions of knowledge, he is now forced to continue in one of these areas in spite of having chosen it as an elective. We recommend that any failure of any course be made up wherever the student

feels his intellectual potential can best be invested. The freedom afforded him through electives should not be impinged upon by a penalty for experimenting, even if he fails. Once his group and major requirements have been satisfied, there is no need to insist that he pursue a field which lies outside the range of his intellectual capabilities.

The same concept of encouraging the student to follow his intellectual motivation to its fullest should be applied to the administration's rule requiring a student to make up every failed course, regardless of whether he has completed the credits necessary for graduation. If an undergraduate has taken extra courses during his college career, either in summer school or by carrying six courses per semester, he should be encouraged to continue his interests as far as possible. Yet if he knows that a failure in the second semester his senior year will mean that he cannot graduate until it has been made up, he is unwilling to jeopardize his future by carrying more than the minimum load. The requirements for graduation should be only forty course units, and a failure beyond this number should not be penalized. As long as the administration discourages academic excellence by punishing the student who goes out on a limb, intellectual curiosity cannot thrive at Penn.

## 16.

### THE SEMINAR SYSTEM AND SENIOR COLLOQUIA

The SCUE questionnaire indicates that students consider seminars to be the most valuable of all teaching methods used at the University. It is a shame, in light of this evidence, that seminars are treated as mere requirements to be completed in the senior year. Since taking a seminar course is presently restricted to senior majors, the implication is that these courses are valuable only to the individual with experience in a specific field. This is clearly untrue. The student's first introduction to college-level study comes with the seminars given during Orientation Week — the only seminars to which he is exposed until his senior year. Such a program indicates, first, that even beginning freshmen can benefit from this method of learning and, second, that the University recognizes the superiority of seminars over other teaching situations since it considers this method the best introduction to academic endeavor.

The seminar provides excellent opportunities for mutual participation and intellectual feedback, and maximum possibilities for a dynamic dialogue between student and teacher. It calls for increased preparation on the part of the student and increased responsiveness on the part of the instructor. This method is infinitely preferable to the lecture or large class which are merely means of transmitting knowledge from lecturer to listener.

Because we feel that seminars should not be restricted to the final year of study, we wish to do away with the notion of "senior seminar." We have therefore used the term seminar to refer to the general teaching situation denoted; a course of the seminar type should mean any topic — or problem — oriented course involving mutual participation among a small number of students and their instructor. In addition, we have developed the concept of "Senior Colloquium" to insure the kind of learning experience that should have been provided by senior seminars.

For these reasons, we strongly urge that the following programs be adopted:

#### **A. Revised Seminar System**

1. Since the purpose of the major program is to delve as deeply as possible into a given field, the seminar is of crucial importance. We thus recommend that a greatly increased number of seminars, on a variety of topics and problems, be offered within each major department.
2. All seminars in the major field should be open to well-qualified students who are not majors in that field.
3. All seminars should be limited to twelve students.
4. The seminar should serve as an introduction to the major program. It would be extremely beneficial to one's future work in a major field if, during the first semester of the junior year, every major were required to take a seminar in the methodology, problems, and philosophy of his field. This seminar should be a functional equivalent of the Proseminar required of all in-coming graduate students.
5. There should be a minimum requirement that all students take three seminars during the course of their four years at Penn, including the mandatory junior seminar.
6. New seminars should be developed in response to petitions from interested students.

#### **B. Senior Colloquia**

This is an entirely new concept for the University. A senior colloquium assures the opportunity for one's college career to culminate in an effort to integrate material from the major field with related areas of knowledge. We believe that such an attempt at integration is of primary importance to the undergraduate's education. This view is supported by sociologist Daniel Bell, who has stated that a college education ought to end on the "third tier" of intellectual endeavor: interdisciplinary courses, which enable students to apply their specific knowledge to a widely defined topic or problem. Stanford University is one of the most active proponents of the senior colloquium system. During their senior year, all Stanford undergraduates are required to take two senior colloquia, which are limited to fifteen students, and are designed to encourage cross-disciplinary study. Typical colloquium topics are "Concepts of History, Myth, and Fiction," "Communication, Thought and Learning," "Anthropology and Epistemology," "The Destiny of Europe," "Voltaire and Johnson: Contrasting Spokesmen for the Enlightenment," "Pessimism in Philosophy and Art" — in all, over two hundred such colloquia are offered each year. Because we believe that a true liberal arts education, unlike a graduate or professional education, should provide every student with an opportunity for this type of integration, we recommend the following program:

1. Senior colloquia should be established on the principle of cross-disciplinary study with enough courses provided to insure maximum possibilities of interrelation in all fields.
2. All seniors should be required to take one semester of a selected colloquium and ought to be encouraged to take more.

3. All colloquia must be limited to fifteen students.

4. Colloquium topics should be oriented to the interest of the individual teacher. This would mean, in effect, that colloquia are taught only by those professors who are most interested and expert in the subject matter of the course.

It is hoped that the system of senior colloquia will enable undergraduates to leave the University with some common ground; that the homogeneous group of freshmen who were split into narrow orientations will be re-integrated in the search for applications of their knowledge.

## 17.

### INDEPENDENT STUDY AND AUDITING

The independent study programs that the University presently offers are generally available only to the superior student. As a privilege or reward, independent study is granted only on the basis of excellent grades in the field concerned. As was apparent in the preceding section on grading, however, the highly objective, and often misleading, four-point scale of cumulative averages does not accurately assess a student's performance, nor does it reflect the intellectual capability of the specific student. The criteria used to select students for independent work are therefore inadequate, and exclude many students who would benefit greatly from the increased freedom and responsibility that one finds in doing independent work.

SCUE believes that the opportunity for independent research should be made available to all undergraduates who have a sincere desire to pursue a subject intensively, and who are of proven intellectual maturity. Independent study must be recognized as an integral element of every student's education, and should thus be available to, (if not mandatory for), all students. From the questionnaire we learn that 84% of the students believe that independent study is a most or very valuable learning method, and to deny the great majority of these students an access to this method is indefensible.

Individual work has many advantages. The student is able to delve into a narrower area in far greater depth and over a longer period of time than is feasible in a general course. He becomes thoroughly familiar with the complete scope of the topic, understanding its implications and ramifications fully, becoming able to relate all aspects of the subject to a larger context. He is further permitted to study the specific areas of the problem which have personal interest to him, unlike in a classroom situation, where individual concerns must be subservient to a broader, more inclusive view. The student pursuing independent study is made acquainted with valuable research techniques and methods, learning the pragmatic side of scholarly investigation, and becoming familiar with the specific tools used in his field. The relationship between the student and faculty-member established in this situation allows the greatest possibility for dialogue and exchange of ideas, and needless to say, provides maximum feedback to the student.

There is a definite need for independent study in the career of the undergraduate. Harvard has recognized the importance of this educational method in its tutorial program, whereby each student is offered the chance to work individually with a professor in his field. In working toward such an ideal goal, Penn must initiate a system which allows every interested student to participate in independent study according to the following proposal:

1. The now rigorous admissions standards to independent study which exist in most departments must be eliminated.
2. A student interested in individual research would find a sponsor in the department who would be willing to advise and direct his project, meeting with him regularly to discuss problems as they arise, and assigning pertinent reading and bibliographic references.
3. In the event that the student has not had enough contact with the faculty members of the department to know which professor would be best suited to assist him, the department would recommend several men whom the student could approach on his own.
4. Each student would submit to his advisor a tentative outline of his research, complete with a short bibliography on the subject (where pertinent). The outline would include what the student hopes to gain from the study program as well as any previous knowledge he brings into the experience.
5. A student would be allowed to do independent study outside his major field, provided that he can prove himself competent in the outside area.
6. Independent study can be repeated for credit.
7. All junior and senior majors who wish to do independent study (under the conditions listed above) must be allowed to do so. In the case of sophomores and non-majors, who could not find faculty tutors, it would not be the responsibility of the department to assign that tutor.

### Auditing

As a method of learning, the value of auditing a course cannot be over-emphasized. The increased freedom which is implicit in the recommendations SCUE has made must be accompanied by an increase of responsibility on the part of the student. One way in which this responsibility can be readily demonstrated within the existing framework is by the auditing of courses. This is a privilege, open to all members of the undergraduate body, which has not been taken advantage of in the past. Of the students replying to the questionnaire, 82% had never audited a course. Yet, in view of the strong response to the Free University, we feel that the lack of auditors is due to the fact that the auditing system is poorly publicized, generally discouraged by teachers, de-emphasized by advisors, rather than reflecting student disinterest. Auditing provides increased stimulation and enriches the educational experience, while relieving the unnecessary pressure of a grade needed for credit. We therefore suggest that some of the student's excess energy be directed to the auditing of courses. This is an ideal means of satisfying intellectual curiosity and increasing knowledge, besides demonstrating student interest and responsibility. It should not be overlooked.

## 18.

### STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF TEACHERS AND COURSES

Feedback works both ways. It not only helps the student to evaluate his work through grades, comments on tests and papers, and dialogue with professors in small classes, but it can also help the faculty member to evaluate his performance as a teacher. At present, the means by which the individual instructor can evaluate himself are limited and inaccurate. The *Daily Pennsylvanian Course Guide*, which serves a useful function on the campus, nevertheless is often based on too small a return to be statistically significant. Since all teachers must, of course, be interested in teaching to the best of their ability, some means needs to be formulated to that end. The student, who is not thoroughly qualified to judge a teacher's knowledge of his field, is nevertheless eminently well-qualified to comment on the classroom methods that his teacher may use. Teaching is more than the transmission of knowledge, it involves a complicated and difficult series of personal interactions between teacher and students. Because teaching does involve interaction, feedback must go both ways if it is to be effective. We must stress, however, that the goal of evaluating teachers and courses by students is improved teaching, not improved knowledge on the part of the undergraduates. It is not the intention of this system that the results be published, or even made available, to the university public.

The system we propose can be outlined as follows:

Goal: To effect improved teaching through self-correction.

Execution: To be effective, this system requires that every student be held responsible for handing in an evaluation in every course that he has taken. The evaluation forms could be the student's admission ticket to the final examination.

Use: These forms are not to be published, but are reserved for the use of the individual faculty member, and perhaps for administrative evaluation of the faculty member.

The Evaluation Forms: Forms should be easy to fill out, and require both objective and subjective reactions to both the professor and the course he teaches. See appendix for examples of workable forms used at other universities.

## 19.

### THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT IN TENURE DECISIONS

The decisions determining tenure appointments have always been far removed from the area of student concern; the situation should not be continued if the University wants to truly consider "teaching ability." Since part of the evaluation of a candidate for tenure must be a consideration of his ability as a teacher, as well as his competence as a scholar, student opinion is absolutely necessary. Just as his colleagues can best judge the candidate's credentials as a scholar, so can the student best judge his competence as a

teacher. The plan for student participation in tenure decisions can be outlined as follows:

Goal: To provide an equitable way to evaluate the *teaching* ability of a candidate for tenure.

Procedure:

- a. Each year all major students in each department be asked to volunteer in the evaluations. Each student who expresses an interest would then submit a list of his courses and teachers in the major program. These forms would be kept on file.
- b. When a specific teacher is under consideration, a random sampling (perhaps 10) of those people who have filed under that teacher would be contacted and asked for an evaluation of the teacher's classroom presentation.
- c. The teacher may, if he elects, select three students of his own choice, and either ask these people for a recommendation or have the department secretary contact them. The basis for this system is analogous to the one currently used by graduate schools, whereby each applicant is allowed to choose three teachers to evaluate his ability.

The evaluation committee would have both a random sampling and selective recommendations from students within its own department. This testimony as to a professor's teaching skill would then become part of the over-all investigation the department in conducting. The final weight the student evaluation would have, of course, would be determined by the individual departmental committees.

This proposal is not a final one; it does, however, offer a stepping stone to the inclusion of students in procedures where the opinion of the undergraduate is both valid and necessary.

## 20.

### THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT IN POLICY MAKING

During the course of this report, repeated reference has been made to the prevalent feeling among the undergraduates that they are given very little freedom in directing their own education. We have further noted that students often feel computerized, as if the decisions that affect their education are handed down impersonally by IBM machines. This is, of course, exaggerated, but the justifiable demonstrations centering on the new Fine Arts Building, the Institute for Cooperative Research, and the tuition increase, might well have been avoided if the undergraduate body had been able to comment on and amend the plans and policies of the university administration. All too often, the students are informed of the newest changes in policy by reading the news in the *Daily Pennsylvanian*. It is hard to imagine an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect in such a framework.

In order to change the situation in which undergraduate opinions are neither consulted nor respected, we believe that students should be invited to sit on all major policy committees whose decisions affect the undergraduate body in any important way. During the course of the last year, the students were represented by members of SCUE on the Committees of Instruction of both the College and the College for Women. It seems clear that this arrangement was most satisfactory to members of both the faculty and the student body, and that valuable interchange resulted from the increased contact. We strongly recommend that other major committees (including those on Admission, Faculty Tenure, and all departmental education bodies) follow this progressive and responsible measure. It is not necessary, at the outset, that the student member(s) be given voting privileges on any of these committees, but the opinions of the student members should be strongly considered in the decision making process. The students asked to sit on committees should be chosen for their proven interest in educational affairs at Pennsylvania, and their knowledge of undergraduate education as a whole.

It is often felt that students have no right to sit on these committees. The usual reason given is that undergraduates are too young and inexperienced to have anything meaningful to say about the way in which a university should be run. It is claimed that only a man with experience in teaching or administration is capable of such action. This view is not only invalid, but shows little respect for the opinion of the undergraduate body. We have stressed, throughout this report, the need for increased feedback between the various factions of the university. By including students on policy making bodies, this feedback would be better achieved. Perhaps, in the case of higher education, it is true that faculty and administration might be as aware of the needs of the students as the students themselves are, but they are certainly not exclusively so. What is seldom realized is that the undergraduates have a unique point of view. It is hard to imagine a system in which plans are made towards the well-being of a given person, if the values and opinions of that person are not earnestly solicited. The undergraduate, as a paying (rather than paid) member of the university community certainly ought to have some say in the manner in which his money is spent. The taxpayer retains some control over the expenditure of taxes, by electing the officials of his country, and thus indirectly influencing the way in which that country is run. At the university, however, students are asked to cede their money to the Decision-Makers, who spend it as they see fit. Of course, this is to some degree necessary, but it is definitely most peculiar and hard to rationalize.

We have been attempting to define a new spirit that we hope will someday pervade the Penn campus. Crucial to this renaissance is the establishment of mutual trust and confidence between the administration, faculty, and student body. If we are ever to consider ourselves as partners in the same enterprise, a necessary change in the policy-making structure must be an initial step. The inclusion of undergraduate representatives on University committees would begin to make the undergraduate feel (as indeed he must) that he has some stake in his own education, and is more than the passive recipient of intellectual and administrative dogma.

## CONCLUSION

This report should by no means be considered as an anguished plea for smaller classes or a new student union; it is an attempt to define, however implicitly, a new concept of undergraduate education at the University of Pennsylvania. We believe that institutionalizing the recommendations that SCUE has made in this report will not, in itself, make Pennsylvania a great university. Without such changes, however, we can never achieve this greatness. Primarily we seek to establish a new spirit, to begin a constant dialogue among all members of the University. We are not attempting to define an academic utopia, but an atmosphere in which every member of the university community will be constantly aware of the mutuality of our enterprise. Crucial to this new spirit must be an increased respect for the opinions and freedoms of every member of the university, from the newest and most inexperienced freshman to the oldest and most famous member of the faculty. Such respect is fundamental to the humanist ethic to which we must subscribe.

If the opinions and desires of every undergraduate achieve the respect that we firmly believe they deserve, we will have created a prerequisite for undergraduate education of the highest quality. At present, the college structures its programs on the basis of the needs of the mythic "average undergraduate." Group requirements, the major fields, comprehensives, and cumulative averages are designed to meet the needs of this academic Everyman. Privileges are parceled out to those students who indicate that they are somehow "above average," which is determined by computing the cumulative average and noting whether it is above 2.0 (or 3.0 or 3.5 depending on the privilege to be granted). This process thoroughly rationalizes the educational process, leading to the inevitable feeling that education at the University of Pennsylvania consists of the confrontation of the individual student with a huge body of rules and regulations. These rules and regulations are necessary aids in the administration of an undergraduate program, but they should always be regarded as tools with which each undergraduate can structure his own program, rather than as inflexible methods that dictate the content of the student's education. This is not to say, of course, that there should be no rules that apply to all members of the undergraduate body. Many of our recommendations, such as junior methodology seminars and senior colloquia, would become requirements for all undergraduates. Within the limits of these requirements, however, there is still great flexibility.

Change must be a constant in a great university. In order to avoid stagnation and administrative rigidity, the university must constantly be experimenting, innovating, evaluating, and revising. Education is a dynamic process, and it cannot be achieved in an inflexible framework. The changes that SCUE has recommended in this report are generally best regarded as experimental, as ideas with enormous potential that are as yet untested in this university. Some of them, we recognize, may fulfill this potential better than others, and some are more important than others, but if we are unwilling to innovate,

we are unwilling to improve. It is paradoxical that universities are so conservative about making changes in their programs, since the academic life is generally regarded as one of constant questioning and evaluating of existing structures and values. The SCUE conception of undergraduate education is thus based on the fundamental premises of the freedom of the individual student to realize his personal academic goals and values, and the concept of every student as an exceptional one. On a superficial level, it might seem that we are searching for an education that can only be provided by a small college, but this is not true. We believe that a large university, with proper utilization of its enormous resources, can offer an excellent and unique undergraduate program. With its large and talented faculty, varied facilities, and heterogeneous student bodies, the University offers unparalleled opportunities for quality education.

We are not presenting a program, but a method. None of the innovations that we suggest is idealistic or impossible to implement. The suggestions are directed both towards remedying weaknesses in the present system, and proposing entirely new programs. There should be little question that the goals we have outlined can be achieved, but this would require both a total change of attitude on the part of all those concerned with undergraduate education, and a shift in the working faculty-student ratio. It would be difficult, under the present conditions, to provide opportunities for independent work, colloquia, seminars, lecture recitations, and fields of concentration unless a greater number of faculty members are devoted to the teaching of undergraduates. This could be accomplished in either of two ways: lowering the size of the undergraduate student body and holding the size of the faculty constant, or raising the size of the faculty and holding the size of the undergraduate body constant. Both Cornell and New York University have recently decreased the number of admissions that they grant each year, in the hope that they could then produce a better student body. At Penn, however, there is a constant pressure from the administration to increase the size of the undergraduate body, which may represent one of the prices that we pay for accepting state funds. The goal of the University should be to provide the best possible education for its undergraduates, and then to decide the maximum number of undergraduates it can accommodate.

We have suggested our ideals for undergraduate education; perhaps we now ought to consider the direction in which the University seems to be moving. The new Development Program, with its emphasis on increased size of both student body and physical plant, will ultimately leave the university more fragmented, and more impersonal. The new house system is a fine idea, but if it is not supplemented with a student union, the students will become exclusively oriented to the house as the focus of their campus life. No attempt has been made to integrate the student body through centralized facilities. At the same time that the undergraduate body is being thus neglected, a huge population of graduate and professional students is monopolizing the senior faculty and resources of the university. Since the senior faculty is thus able to offer no more than token instruction to the undergraduates, much of the slack must be taken up by the inexperienced and often unqualified graduate teaching

fellows. Little emphasis is placed on excellent teaching, and no means has ever been established to assess teaching ability as a factor in faculty promotions. No reward is offered for excellent instruction, and the faculty member can hardly be blamed if he sometimes wonders whether he is being adequately compensated for his concern with undergraduate education. At the same time that the trend is obviously away from undergraduate education, tuition continues to rise. The recent \$200 increase in undergraduate tuition was announced with no mention of how the increase would provide for better education for the undergraduates. Are we subsidizing graduate education? faculty research? the construction of architecturally inferior buildings? If the present educational values of the University are allowed to continue unevaluated, the undergraduates will inevitably receive a second-rate education. Penn has a reputation of being a university with excellent graduate and professional schools; it should provide the same quality of education for its undergraduates.

The profound problems of undergraduate education at this University cannot be solved by mere changes in institutional structure. What is required, to begin, is a thorough re-thinking of the University's commitment to the College, as opposed to the Graduate School. In order to take an active part in this evaluation, SCUE hopes to become the permanent voice of the students, the means by which they can responsibly express their opinions. In the future, we hope to investigate a great range of topics, including: the experience of the freshman and sophomore years; the role of the Wharton School as an undergraduate institution; the fraternity system and its influences on intellectual atmosphere; the grading system; the effects of the Pass/Fail system on student motivation and values, and any other topics crucial to the education of undergraduates at the University of Pennsylvania.

We are not pessimistic about the future of the university. Change has begun, but a great deal remains to be considered. Our goal can be summarized as follows: if every student is urged to define his own goals and values, instead of having them dictated to him, we believe that a more committed, responsible, and thoughtful student will be the result. It will have become difficult for a student to be apathetic, unfeasible to take no interest in the educational process. Education will have become a way of life.

If this report stimulates discussion and controversy, among those who disagree, as well as agree, with its premises, it will have accomplished its primary function.

### EPILOGUE: A PARABLE

Once upon a time there was a young man who had come into some property, which included some beautiful, but as yet uncultivated lands. In order for this estate to become as valuable as it could, the man decided to buy a mule, so that he might till the rich soils. One day, he came upon a man who had a mule for sale. The man assured our friend that the mule was perfectly compliant, a hard worker, and would never have to be beaten. The deal was made, the mule taken home. As soon as the mule saw the huge amount of work before it, however, it refused to work, and just stood around chewing his cud (if mules do, in fact, have cuds). Our friend, very annoyed, hurried back to the man who had just sold him the mule, and demanded his money back. The man, however, said that he would make the mule start working, and they returned to the estate. The man then took a huge log, and bashed the mule over the head. Sure enough, the mule began to work. "What's the story here?" asked our friend, "I thought that you said the mule never has to be beaten." "He doesn't," replied the other man, "all you have to do is attract his attention."

## APPENDIX

### A. A New Grading System

In this section, we would like to tentatively propose a significant change in the present grading system. It is offered because we are convinced of the inadequacies of the present system, and would like to begin the dialogue that will result in modification of that system. The new method of grading, however, cannot be instituted before it has been thoroughly evaluated. To this end, we plan to send a questionnaire, sometime during the next year, to members of the student body, faculty and administration. In addition, we will contact numerous graduate schools and businesses, in order to gauge their reactions to such a system of grading. The new system, we hope, will provide for a vastly increased amount of feedback, as well as breaking down the rigidity and arbitrariness of the present system. We therefore recommend the consideration of the following grading system:

1. The system would consist of four categories: excellent, good, pass, and fail. These categories are not intended to correspond to the present distinctions of A-F in any specific way. By allowing only three categories of grades to pass a course, instead of four, we believe that there would be less competition for, and interest in, grades as an end in themselves.
2. Since the system would have less categories than the present, it would necessarily have to be supplemented by an additional means of feedback. This would be provided by requiring that every teacher submit, in addition to a grade, a series of comments that provides the reasons that the student was given his specific grade — in effect, a brief analysis of the student's work. These comments would thus prove to be an invaluable aid to the student in his self-evaluation.
3. Under the new system, the same number of people would pass as do under the present system, since we have only changed the categories of "Pass" grades.
4. The comments that every teacher is required to submit would force instructors into making a thorough study of the work of each student, rather than merely superficially assigning a letter grade. This system cannot, of course, be successful if courses have over twenty-five students. Since we have suggested that all lecture courses be accompanied by recitation sections taught by full-time faculty members, and since we have also suggested that all non-lecture courses be limited to twenty-five students, the new system can work. Those teachers who feel that this is asking an unreasonable amount of work are giving the student very little consideration indeed.

We would be delighted to have any opinions or suggestions regarding to this, or any other, substitute for the present grading system.

## B. A Sample of the Course Description of Electives for Upper Classmen of Notre Dame

### Literary Criticism — Mr. Meagher

1. Admission: By statute, the course is open to seniors in the General Program. Other are presumably admissible through the approval of the Director of the General Program.

2. Organization: There will undoubtedly be a size restriction set by the General Program. The course will be taught primarily by discussion, with some lectures and student reports.

3. Readings: Basic reading for the first half of the course will be Bate, *Criticism, the Major Texts*. Emphasis will be on precise and detailed understanding of the selections therein, not on background reading. Some anthology of modern critical essays, as yet unchosen, will be used in the second half of the course. And this may well be complemented by background reading or wider readings in the critics represented in the anthology, or additional critics not represented in the anthology, or additional critics not represented. Reading will be reasonable, but enough to scare away people not interested in literary criticism.

4. Aim and Theme: The course is primarily an investigation of the various ideas about, attitudes towards, and methods of literary criticism from the beginning to the present. There will be an examination of major critical texts from Plato on, in an attempt to grasp the way in which each critic focuses on literature — his preoccupations, biases, insights, and the ways in which he resembles and differs from earlier critics. This will conclude in an examination of a variety of contemporary critical approaches in literature, with the same general approach, augmented with a consideration of the advantages and limitations of each theory, and the ways in which they relate to each other in an intelligent reader's attempt to achieve the balance and ample understanding of literary texts.

5. Requirements: There will be probable at least one substantial paper, a midterm; possibly another at the end of the semester. Besides the final there will be at least two other exams testing the precision of understanding of the texts read. There will probably be some seminar-type reports; exams and papers will be reduced in proportion to reports.

6. Added note: I'm usually a rather stingy grader for B's and A's, but I give pleasant parties.

**A SAMPLE OF TEACHER AND COURSE EVALUATION FORMS  
USED AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**

**Course Evaluation: Form A**

The purpose of this Course Evaluation Form is to give you the opportunity to express your opinions of this course to your instructor. He has been asked not to read this until after final grades have been submitted. You will remain anonymous; please be honest and fair.

Directions: Circle U (Usually) if the statement is always or generally true; S (Sometimes) if the statement is often, but not usually true; R (Rarely) if the statement is never or seldom true. In multiple choice statements, check the appropriate space.

**A. Student Background — omit answers which would specifically identify you.**

- 1. Fresh. \_\_\_\_\_ Soph. \_\_\_\_\_ Jr. \_\_\_\_\_ Sr. \_\_\_\_\_  
Grad. Student—yrs. 1 2 3 4 5
- 2. Major field of study \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Overall grade average at this University \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. This course is:  
Required for my degree \_\_\_\_\_  
Part of my major \_\_\_\_\_ minor \_\_\_\_\_  
An elective \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Textbook**

- 1. Well organized ..... U S R
- 2. Develops material in sufficient depth and scope .... U S R
- 3. Provides clear explanations ... U S R
- 4. Relevant to course ..... U S R
- 5. Presents both sides of controversial issues ..... U S R
- 6. Textbook material is:  
a. too elementary \_\_\_\_\_  
b. too advanced \_\_\_\_\_  
c. satisfactory \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Comments on Textbook (s)**

**D. Comments on Homework Assignments**

**E. Lectures**

- 1. Lecturer speaks clearly ..... U S R
- 2. Lecturer ties together the various aspects of course .... U S R
- 3. Lecturer adds to the required reading rather than repeating it ..... U S R
- 4. Lecturer offers adequate generalization ..... U S R
- 5. Lecturer presents opposing views as well as his own ..... U S R
- 6. Lecturer adequately clarifies the course ..... U S R
- 7. Lecturer is stimulating and interesting to listen to ..... U S R

- 8. Material presented is well organized ..... U S R
- 9. Lecture topics and reading assignments co-ordinate ..... U S R
- 10. Assume too much prior knowledge of basic subjects ..... U S R
- 11. Students' questions are answered adequately ..... U S R
- 12. Discussion is interesting and informative ..... U S R
- 13. Discussion is germane and relevant to theme of course... U S R
- 14. Lecturer is easily available for consultation ..... U S R
- 15. Lecture-discussion balance is satisfactory ..... U S R
- 16. Lectures are:  
a. too technical \_\_\_\_\_  
b. too simplified \_\_\_\_\_  
c. satisfactory \_\_\_\_\_

**F. Comments on Lecture & Lecturer**

**G. Examinations**

- 1. Questions are clearly worded.. U S R
- 2. Criteria for correcting are clear. U S R
- 3. Involve fair degree of reasoning rather than memorizing ..... U S R
- 4. Frequency of exams:  
a. too often \_\_\_\_\_  
b. too seldom \_\_\_\_\_  
c. satisfactory \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Length of exams:  
a. too long \_\_\_\_\_  
b. too short \_\_\_\_\_  
c. satisfactory \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Cover important aspects of this course ..... U S R

**H. Comments on Examination**

- I. Laboratory (if applicable)**
1. Relationship of lab objective to rest of course is clear ..... U S R
  2. Role of lab in teaching scientific method is clear ..... U S R
  3. There is enough work for the allotted time ..... U S R
  4. There is enough time for work assuming you have prepared properly and diligently used allotted time ..... U S R
  5. Lab facilities are adequate ... U S R
  6. Labs add significantly to the course ..... U S R
  7. Safety features in lab are adequate ..... U S R
  8. Lab instructors:
    - a. give adequate instruction. U S R
    - b. are helpful during lab .. U S R
    - c. are friendly and helpful.. U S R
    - d. are themselves properly prepared ..... U S R
  9. Frequency of lab exams:
    - a. too often \_\_\_\_\_
    - b. too seldom \_\_\_\_\_
    - c. satisfactory \_\_\_\_\_
  10. Lab manual is:
    - a. clearly written ..... U S R
    - b. well integrated with text and lectures ..... U S R
    - c. too advanced ..... U S R
- 11. Field trips (if applicable):**
- a. clearly relevant to course U S R
  - b. valuable supplement to it U S R
  - c. fairly priced ..... U S R
- J. Comments on Lab and Field trips**
- K. Discussion or Recitation Instructor (if applicable):**
1. Guides discussion without monopolizing it ..... U S R
  2. Seems to comprehend subject matter adequately ..... U S R
  3. Gives adequate individual help during class ..... U S R
  4. Encourages participation ..... U S R
  5. Encourages expression of differences of opinion ..... U S R
  6. Is available and helpful outside of class ..... U S R
  7. Clarifies readings and lectures adequately ..... U S R
  8. Can express himself clearly... U S R
  9. Class pace:
    - a. too fast \_\_\_\_\_
    - b. too slow \_\_\_\_\_
    - c. satisfactory \_\_\_\_\_
- L. Comments on Discussion or Recitation**

**M. Overall Evaluation**

1. Outstanding features:
2. Weaknesses:
3. Suggestions for improvement:

**Course Evaluation: Form B**

The purpose of this Course Evaluation Form is to give you the opportunity to express your opinions of this course to your instructor. He has been asked not to read this until after final grades have been submitted. You will remain anonymous, therefore please be honest and fair. Be clear, concise, and give specific examples where needed.

- A. How does the level of instruction compare with your background and ability for this course?

- B. Did you get as much out of this course as you had anticipated? Explain in detail.
- C. What single aspect of this course did you like the most? Dislike the most?
- D. Do you think the lecture-discussion balance was satisfactory? Were you satisfied with the handling of classroom discussion?
- E. Give your comments on the lectures, textbooks, and examinations.
- F. Were you able to do all the required work? If not, why not?
- G. What changes, if necessary, would have enabled you to gain more from this course? Explain in detail.  
(If you cannot complete the answers in the space provided, use the back of this sheet and, if necessary, additional sheets).

### **Seminar Evaluation: Form C**

The purpose of this Seminar Evaluation Form is to give you the opportunity to express your opinions of this course to your instructor. He has been asked not to read this until after final grades have been submitted. You will remain anonymous, therefore please be honest and fair. Be clear, concise, and give specific examples where needed.

- A. Did you get as much out of this seminar as you had anticipated? Explain in detail.
- B. How would you characterize the relevance, breadth, and quality of the discussion?
- C. To what extent did the seminar leader influence the scope and content of the discussions?
- D. Were you prepared for active participation in the seminar before each session? If not, why not?
- E. How did your preseminar preparation relate to your seminar participation?
- F. What changes, if necessary, would have enabled you to gain more from this seminar? Explain in detail.

(If you cannot complete the answers in the space provided, use the back of this sheet and, if necessary, additional sheets).