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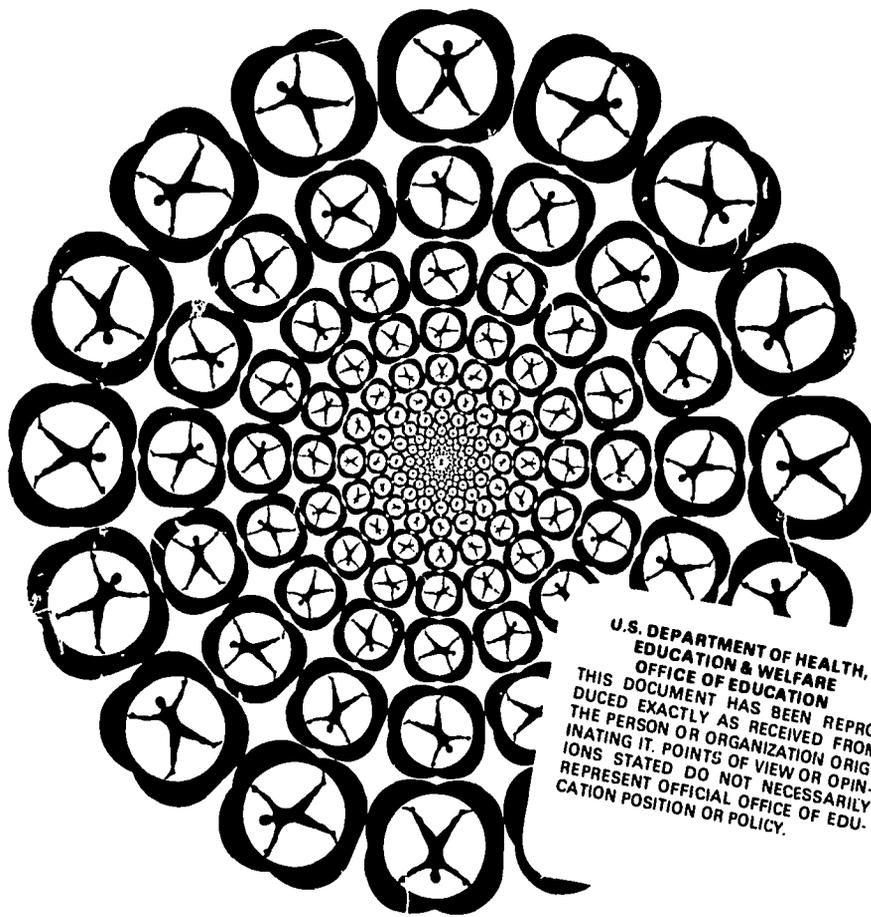
ABSTRACT

This publication describes a program at the University of New Hampshire called Life Studies. The Life Studies program is designed for freshman and sophomore students and was begun because of complaints voiced about lack of relevance in the freshman and sophomore curricula. The program is interdisciplinary in nature and is specifically designed to be taught within a loose structure. The main classes are workshops and seminars where students and teachers alike are present to learn. Life Studies intends to be a community of teachers and students who care about one another and who care about fostering the delicate process of learning. (HS)

ED 000 147

# LIFE STUDIES

at the University of New Hampshire



HE 003 267

## Program Announcement

*Prepared for the Life Studies Program Community  
by Robby Fried*

### What Is "Life Studies"?

Life Studies is a student trying to learn how to learn—and that ain't easy, because maybe for the first time in his life he's got to define for himself what "learning" is. . .

Life Studies is six minutes of embarrassing silence in a seminar room, during which a group of students realizes that the workshop leader hasn't come to class with all the answers. . .

Life Studies is making what you think is a good suggestion to fellow students in a Community Studies laboratory, and then getting the creepy feeling that everyone expects *you* to put your idea to work. . .

Life Studies is a student trying to decide if he should feel guilty for not doing the reading—and a workshop leader trying to decide if he should take it personally. . .

Life Studies is trying to learn to live with frustration—and not liking it at all. . . or maybe it's deciding which frustrations you can overcome and which ones are going to overcome you once in a while. . .

Life Studies is learning—the hard way—what the difference is between enthusiasm and commitment. . . It's realizing that if the dull chores in any project don't get done, the exciting stuff just isn't going to happen. . .

Life Studies is sitting in a Core Seminar and learning how to trust other people with your feelings—and then having to learn all over again how to communicate sincerely with people you don't trust. . .

Life Studies, as a program, is more what it is trying to become, than what it is now. . . and in the end what it becomes depends on the people who care. . .

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*president of the university*

Eugene S. Mills,  
*academic vice president*

David W. Ellis,  
*assoc. acad. vice president*

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# The Life Studies Program

## 1970-71



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## An Open Letter To Students From Students in Life Studies

Hi People,

Education should be part of what you are and what you want and what you need. We don't want to make "college" external to our lives. Learning should be part of our living. Life Studies is being alive and doing the things you want to do. Life Studies is sharing our lives with each other. We talk about what we like and what we don't like. We share ideas and actions. We turn each other on.

In Life Studies the students are teachers and the teachers are students. We all learn from each other. We talk about the things we want to learn. . . and then we charge on and learn them. We learn how to use what we know to be effective in our own way.

Life Studies isn't easy. . . (life isn't easy). . . but it wants to be a part of what we are, and that means a lot to us. We have found that to get things out of our education we have to put things into it. Things like ourselves. Discipline for each learner in his own personal way is very important. No one in Life Studies is going to punish us if we don't "get our homework done." But that's because our responsibilities, for doing our part of the work, are ones we owe to everyone in the workshop, not only to the teacher.

It's up to us to do our things and make them worthwhile to us. It's up to us to really take a hand in planning what we want to do—and then to do it. Life Studies doesn't promise a lot of wonderful things. No one claims that it is the only way to make education worthwhile. We only know it's one way, one attempt to make our University experience meaningful to us.

Growth and change, that's what education is all about. It means hard work with people who care about you and people you care about. Change isn't initiated or accomplished by merely accumulating information about what is going on or what has gone on or how things go on; rather, change occurs when people who know what is happening now begin to use the knowledge they have to make things different, to make things better for the future. Facts are but a stepping stone to action—and action is where change takes place.

So put your knowledge and your idealism on the line in a program that is interested in encouraging yourself and others to find some answers to the problems of your education—and to put those answers into action. Sound like a pitch for the Peace Corps or Vista? Well, it's not. But this is what your education can be like if you're willing to work for it.

KATHY RYAN, LISA BUSS

### Why A "Life Studies" Program?

Life Studies was born out of feelings of both frustration and optimism. The frustration came out of the experience of teaching (or being) Freshmen and Sophomores who just weren't excited about their education: teachers complaining about students who just sat there and took notes; students complaining about teachers who "don't seem to care." To be sure, most kids were getting something out of their education, but too many weren't getting enough. Many got disillusioned, some dropped out, and others had to wait too long before they got involved.

The complaints voiced by students and teachers alike were often vague, but they pointed to several shortcomings about the first two years of college life. Students and teachers, confined to huge introductory classes, weren't interacting very well with one another. Classroom life and campus life were two different worlds, requiring two different sets of attitudes and values. To walk into a Freshman English class on the first day of a new semester was to enter a room where twenty-five students, with plenty of interests and experiences to share, were sitting in three silent rows. An hour later, a similar group of "strangers" would be avidly discussing Vietnam, or housing regulations, around a lunch table in a dining hall.

Curiously, the very resentment people voiced about the often artificial atmosphere of classroom learning gave grounds for optimism. People everywhere seemed to be reaching for something called "wholeness," and for depth and personal sincerity in their dealings with one another. Educators began calling for a breakdown of the rigid distinctions between the intellectual life on one hand and the spiritual and emotional life on the other. The whole idea of "turning on" to life by integrating all of the resources of one's personality, in work as well as in play, had become the goal of many people on many different campuses.

#### Spirit of Change at UNH

Here at the University of New Hampshire, the spirit of change, of creative innovation, seemed to be stirring. Students were demanding, and receiving, a vital role in university government and were struggling to develop a constructive role in deciding educational policies within various departments. Issues of war abroad, and poverty and racism at home, burst out of quiet libraries and classroom buildings, and learning started to happen in impromptu seminars in the Student Union building, on campus lawns, and even on the doorsteps of houses in

New Hampshire towns, where students and townspeople tried to explain their views to one another and measured the "generation gap" from Cambodia to Kent State.

Within the university administration and faculty as well, concern for positive innovation in higher education has been growing. Dr. Eugene S. Mills, appointed Academic Vice President this year, came to his new office urging an "increasing interest in the development of interdisciplinary courses and projects; the general move toward more flexibility in defining degree requirements, particularly in the light of the development of new field course experiences; the development of more problem-centered studies—courses and field experiences that focus upon such issues as poverty, race, war, and social violence." A University-wide Council on Educational Innovation was created in 1969 by the University Senate and charged with sponsoring and guiding experimental courses and programs. This Council has worked diligently with the Life Studies Executive Board to help in designing our program for the coming year. Most recently, a subcommittee of the Senate's Academic Planning Committee reported its belief that "the University is seeking, in touch with the times, more flexibility to respond to the needs of students and faculty, to create new, innovative and timely educational programs and to venture into more interdisciplinary work."

### **Some Tough Questions**

So it was with feelings of optimism as well as criticism and concern that the "idea" of Life Studies was born, and for the students and faculty who first discussed the project, back in January, 1969, the most important question was: How can we design a program for Freshmen and Sophomores that will encourage students to become truly responsible for their own education, to work with faculty to make best use of the resources available at the University, and to have a positive and constructive impact upon the future of undergraduate education here at UNH?

Other questions arose, such as: "Should students in Life Studies live separately from other students?" or "How do we know that without letter grades or distribution requirements students aren't going to goof off?" or "Should Life Studies select its own group of students, or can our ideas work with the 'typical' UNH Freshman?" or "What's going to happen to a Life Studies student when he becomes a major in a regular department in his Junior year?"

Answering these questions wasn't easy, nor was a unanimous feeling reached on every major point. However, certain basic understandings about our program did emerge. We agreed that we wanted major reform in the University's undergraduate curriculum, rather than just

a chance to carve ourselves a little niche where we could "do our own thing." That meant designing a program that could work for the average student, not only those with special talents. We wanted to create a living, growing educational community, but we were aware that a very tightly knit community might become too inward-looking and separated. So we decided that every possible effort should be made to attract a wide variety of students from all backgrounds into the program.

#### **Making Participation a Working Reality**

On the issue of student participation in the entire educational process, there was near unanimous agreement that the University needed more of this participation for the good of students and faculty alike. We see the classroom not so much as a lecture-hall, but as a meeting place for concerned individuals who are anxious to explore a problem or an issue together. This means de-emphasizing traditional methods of motivating students by means of grades or distribution requirements and our turning instead to place primary responsibility on the individual student to develop his own reason for study. Yet we have to be able to provide academic guidance and help when needed, so that a student used to being told what to learn might not feel confused by his new responsibilities in the freer environment of Life Studies workshops.

The fruit of our discussions on educational innovation was a rather lengthy proposal called "LIFE STUDIES—A Program in Basic Education for the Freshman and Sophomore Years." This proposal was drafted in May of 1969, towards the end of the academic year. At that time we felt that we needed an extra year to fully prepare ourselves and the University for our comprehensive program, which would involve students on a full-time, or nearly full-time basis. So we agreed to go ahead last Fall with an Interim Program, which featured a series of small-enrollment seminars in which Freshmen and Sophomores could begin to participate in issue-centered and problem-centered study. And last year over 500 students enrolled in more than forty such seminars, with most students taking one Life Studies seminar and earning the rest of their credits in regular university courses.

#### **The True Test: Can Reform Succeed?**

With the successes—and shortcomings—of our Interim Program very much in mind, the Life Studies Executive Board met this Spring for a series of discussions on various alternatives for future development. Should we continue the series of innovative seminars in our In-

terim Program, with students enrolled in the program on only a part-time basis? Or was it time to move to implement the full Life Studies Program and test the validity of our philosophy of participatory education by inviting a number of Freshmen and Sophomores to base their studies in our experimental program? In March of this year the Executive Board voted unanimously to implement the full Life Studies Program, and a month later, the Council on Educational Innovation gave its approval to our new proposal, which read in part:

We now realize that if we are ever to have a positive impact on undergraduate education we must create a program so exciting that the resultant student enthusiasm for learning will attract other students and faculty to the Life Studies idea. Successful experimentation is the best guarantee of further experimentation. Life Studies has a sufficient mixture of students and faculty from various parts of the University, and a sufficient number of concerned observers to give us confidence that our emphasis on creating a sense of community within Life Studies will not lead to isolation from the rest of the University.

Why a Life Studies Program? Because, among other reasons for change, we feel that the current upheaval on the American college campus is the result not only of the activity of campus "radicals" but is rooted as well in a widespread feeling of alienation and depersonalization—factors which discourage and depress the "silent" majority of college students as well as incite the "activist" minority. The response, then, of those who prefer reform to revolt must be to seek constructive innovation wherever the symptoms of educational stagnation appear. Since nobody seems to have *the* answer to the problems we face in higher education, all of us are responsible for finding and developing those approaches which are likely to provide *some* answers. This is the shared commitment of Life Studies.

## Life Studies—A Philosophy and a Challenge

(Note: Professor Paul T. Brockelman, a philosophy teacher who now holds a joint appointment in the Education Department, has been central to the Life Studies idea since its inception. Now Faculty Coordinator of the program, Paul has put together some of his ideas on the philosophy of education for this catalog.)

### We Are A Happening

Our lives are a kind of active process, a growth. We are always in a situation of one kind or another, having emerged from a past strung out behind us, and going somewhere. Because of this, we are never finished, we are always becoming, always seeking to become something more than we are now or have been in the past. We are like a play in which we write the script as we perform it—even if we didn't build the set. We are a happening.

Because we are growing, because we are in process, learning is in a sense synonymous with living. Learning is growing. Skills, information, and discipline are not so much goals of education as they are means through which persons become, through which they enlarge their being by realizing their own potential.

### The Process of Living, Not a Preparation

The man who has been touched by the problems and vision of American politics is not the man he was before. He has changed. He has learned. The man who "sees" the possibilities of biological chemistry and who then strives to realize those possibilities, is just not the same man he used to be. As George Leonard has put it: "To learn is to change. Education is a process that changes the learner."

In so far as we are living, we are learning—sometimes pleasantly, sometimes painfully. When we think of education, we ought to think of it in this broader context of life, and not merely in terms of formal education. John Dewey pointed out that education is the *process of living*, not a preparation for it.

### Educational Malaise

When formal education in the classroom becomes unconnected with life, irrelevant to the lives of its students, and yet is thought of as education *per se*, then we are in trouble. Such a divorce is a terrible and painful symptom of an educational malaise—a separation of life and learning. It is a sickness because it is a contradiction in terms. It is a sign that learning has stopped or has been constricted in that formal setting, and then life-learning, since it must continue, has to take place outside of "education." A kind of social schizophrenia

ensues: we live, but the learning involved in that living is not education; we are educated, but that education is neither learning nor life.

Such a divorce of life and learning is a disaster. It is also probably a sign that the system of formal education—in substance and process—is oriented to goals other than learning: perhaps to social advancement; the production of skilled citizenry to run the economy; baby-sitting our young until they can be digested by the industrial complex; or homogenizing rising classes and races of Americans. In other words, such a divorce seems to me to indicate that formal education has given up on learning (as opposed to “training”)—even if some real learning happens to take place there in spite of it.

#### **Power To The Person!**

I guess this is one reason why I think Life Studies is so important. We must reconnect life and learning in education, but especially in that undergraduate education which is presently witnessing an influx of classes and races of Americans hitherto excluded from our universities. It is at this age, the late teens and early twenties, that growth and self-development are so important. As I see it, one aim of Life Studies is to create a participatory learning environment in which a student can grow and find meaning for himself by becoming dynamically involved in his own life and learning.

Broadly speaking, personal “power” means participation and engagement in the process of living one’s own life. Such power, then, is a condition without which genuine growth and learning cannot occur. Students and faculty must be permitted to associate freely, to share the basic decisions which determine the goals, the substance, and the process of their learning—else they are not learning at all but are trapped in their respective roles by fear or apathy.

#### **All Educators**

No man can “educate” another, for no man can live another’s life. But every man can help himself and others to learn. In fact, if we would only realize it, we are all educators. In so far as we live, we learn; and we all have a human responsibility to ourselves to live—deeply, fully, genuinely. That means we have a responsibility to ourselves to learn—deeply, fully, and genuinely.

### Who Gets In . . . ?

The question of admissions to the program has been one we've wrestled with for quite some time. In brief, our thinking has pursued two paths: First, there's the desire to try to select the people who we feel can really make the program work. Secondly, there's the realization that if Life Studies is to have a positive effect on the University and be a catalyst for constructive reform, we have to prove that our ideas can work for a great variety and diversity of students. And central to our whole philosophy of change is the concept that truly self-motivated and individualized education can benefit all the students, not just those with special talents or motivation.

It's this second path which we have chosen to build our program upon. Perhaps it's more risky to admit a cross-section of students than to pick the ones we like best, but that just means we'll all have to work harder to understand the differences between us and try to work and learn together. And after all, isn't that very effort to create cooperation amid diversity one of the most important challenges we can encounter? Wouldn't it be just as "risky" to gather an in-group together and spend two years "grooving" with one another, while human misunderstandings and "gulfs" and "gaps" between people continue to divide our society and our world?

So whatever the length of your hair, or the cut of your clothes, or where your head or your heart may be at, or what you want out of life, or what you've already been through—if you're alive, you qualify!

### What Happens When You Apply

In order to insure both fairness to all who apply and a reasonable cross-section of interested students, our selection procedure will be approximately as follows:

- 1) Only students who fill out an application form will be considered.
- 2) 75% of next year's Freshmen in the program will be selected at random, i.e. picked out of a hat.
- 3) The remaining Freshmen will be selected in order to give balance to the program, i.e. in-state, non-resident; male, female; school grades, SAT scores; etc. (By the way, since we have no way of knowing who the first 75% will be, your grades or SAT scores—whether higher *or* lower than average—could help us in creating that balance. That's the only reason we ask for them.)

- 4) Sophomores will be chosen from those who have had some Life Studies or comparable experience.
- 5) Students not selected will be put on a waiting list and will be offered admission to the program if and when vacancies exist.

### **Nitty Gritty . . . Stuff You Oughta Know**

The basic structure of Life Studies, as far as things like grades and credits are concerned, has been designed to help students coordinate their work in the program with work in regular University courses and majors. Students should understand, though, that after two years of study without letter grades (and thus no individual "grade-point average") their "status" in the university community will depend to large measure on whatever reputation the Life Studies Program has made for itself by that time. All credits earned in our workshops will, of course, be honored by the University, but our academic standing—as students and teachers—is something we must earn together.

**ENROLLMENT:** 60—100 Freshmen, 40—50 Sophomores; 100—150 total.

**WORKSHOP CREDITS:** Each workshop activity (seminar, study-group, laboratory) will be worth four credits, although a student may apply for additional credits in a single workshop.

**WORKSHOP CREDIT-LOAD: FRESHMEN—**A minimum of three workshops per semester, including the Core Seminar.

**SOPHOMORES—**A minimum of two workshops per semester, unless student is involved in a restricted curriculum.

**EXCEPTIONS:** We are currently negotiating to be permitted to admit a limited number of Freshmen in restricted curricula (i.e. curricula which prescribe a large number of required courses in the first two years) to individual workshops.

**ADDITIONAL CREDITS:** All students are free to elect additional workshops or University courses to complete their curricular schedules. Students are advised to consider University courses relevant to their intended major.

**REQUIREMENTS:** see page 12.

**GRADES:** Aside from a written assessment of a student's work, each student will receive the grade of "Credit" or "Fail" for each workshop.

**PASS-FAIL:** Students taking regular University courses will be urged to do so on a "Pass-Fail" basis. Any workshop taken for "Credit-Fail" in Life Studies will not count against a student's "Pass-Fail" options.

**WITHDRAWAL, VOLUNTARY:** Any student wishing to withdraw from Life Studies may do so as soon as arrangements can be made with the college or program he wishes to transfer to.

**WITHDRAWAL, INVOLUNTARY:** Students are expected to enroll in Life Studies for two years and will normally be permitted to enroll in the second year program after completion of their Freshman year. However, students whose work in Life Studies has been generally unsatisfactory may be refused permission to continue in the program by the Life Studies Executive Board.

## **University General Education and Degree Requirements**

There is little difference between Life Studies and the regular university curriculum in terms of ultimate goals for students. Both encourage students to seek a balance between a broad-based education in a wide variety of academic areas, and intensive study in the student's major field of specialization. Where the programs differ is in how to reach those goals. The University, through a system of university-wide and in some cases college requirements, seeks to insure that students are exposed to a number of disciplines. Life Studies prefers to encourage the student to freely choose to broaden himself. We would accomplish that objective in the following ways:

**WORKSHOP OFFERINGS**—Our principle means of encouraging breadth in a student's curriculum is by attempting to provide him with challenging learning experiences in a multitude of subject areas. Among the disciplines involved in our six planned workshops are: English, Economics, Sociology, Community Development, Physics, The Fine Arts, Education, Philosophy, Religion, Psychology, and the Environmental Sciences.

**INCENTIVES**—Whereas the University has recently instituted a series of "Pass/Fail" options to encourage students to enroll in courses outside of their normal pattern of studies without the risk of receiving poor grades, all Life Studies workshops are organized on a similar, "Credit/Fail," basis. Our purpose is to remove "artificial" incentives for choosing learning areas (i.e. the promise of easy grades or "gut" courses) so that incentives of curiosity and intellectual challenge will lead students to broaden themselves.

**ADVISING**—An extremely important part of the role of teaching participants in Life Studies will be that of advising students concerning curricular opportunities. All of us are committed to the ideal of a broad-based general education as part of the process of living and learning. We are also aware that after twelve years of rigidly structured schooling, some students may be uncertain or fearful about venturing into areas where their competence is unknown. The advisors will act to encourage students to take advantage of the opportunities available in the program as well as to prepare themselves for intended majors.

In all, these methods for helping students develop breadth in their studies are certainly not "fool-proof." We cannot guarantee that every student will avail himself of every phase of our academic program. Our whole philosophy of education demands that we all take certain "risks" in moving towards the concept of self-directed study and away from that of "getting by" or "getting through" one's education.

### **Suspension of University General Education Requirements**

The University Senate, in establishing a Council on Educational Innovation, recognized the need to develop experimental programs which would provide the University with alternatives to existing academic structures. The Senate specifically empowered this Council to suspend university general education requirements for innovative programs for up to three years. This is the first year that Life Studies has requested such suspension, which was granted by the Council when they approved our program.

### **What This Means To You**

As a Freshman in Life Studies, you will be expected to choose and develop for yourself a broad-based program of study from among our workshops, and including such university courses as you and your advisor feel are beneficial to you. You need not be concerned with fulfilling the University's general education requirements (as described in the University catalog), although you should keep in mind the intent of those requirements, which is to avoid over-specialization and to insure exposure to a variety of disciplines at this early point in your studies.

Should you decide to withdraw from Life Studies before the end of your sophomore year in the program, you may petition your respective college to allow you to substitute successfully completed workshop experiences for either area requirements or free electives. In most cases, such substitution should present no problem, as the "petition" method is regularly used by many university students wishing to make adjustments in their curricular programs.

If you will be a Sophomore this year and have had previous Life Studies experience, a similar suspension of general education requirements depends on the extent and nature of your total involvement in Life Studies. Specifically, you would have to meet these conditions:

1. A minimum of 23 credits earned in Life Studies workshops over the two-year period.

2. Those credits should have been earned in at least four distinct workshop areas.

3. You should have significant exposure through workshop and/or university course experience in each of the following areas: a) science, mathematics, or technology; b) arts and humanities; c) social sciences. This year's Sophomores will have the added option of using the normal "petition" method for arranging to fulfill their general education requirements. If that option is chosen, of course, none of the above conditions would apply and normal university requirements will be in effect.

All students involved in Life Studies should bear in mind that no decision has yet been made regarding suspension of specific college requirements. Negotiations are now under way with individual colleges and this question should be resolved at the beginning of the fall semester.

### **Requirements For Your Major**

Every student at UNH is responsible for preparing himself to meet the degree requirements, in the major field of his choice, prior to the completion of his studies at the University. Life Studies students are no exception. Since Life Studies is a two-year program, and since required course work for most majors (especially in Liberal Arts) can be completed during the junior and senior years, few students in the program should encounter much difficulty in combining Life Studies experience with a departmental major.

However, every student, along with his advisor, should pay particular attention to those introductory courses which many departments feel are necessary or advisable for students intending to major in a given field. While we certainly expect that Life Studies workshops will provide the skills, the experience, and the inspiration for a student to successfully undertake in his junior and senior years a program of study in the major field of his choice, we cannot guarantee that the Life Studies experience will be itself sufficient preparation in all cases.

Life Studies is designed not only to permit, but to encourage students to seek out those courses in the University which will be valuable in building their academic programs. Specifically, a Freshman in Life Studies may take one-fourth, and a Sophomore one-half, of

his academic credits outside of the program and still be considered a full-time student in Life Studies. Moreover, each student's advisor will be instructed to help him prepare for his major by carefully examining suggested prerequisites. The chairmen of all university departments have been contacted by Life Studies with a view towards determining what academic experiences, if any, in Life Studies might provide alternatives to regular course prerequisites.

The first two years of undergraduate study for many students is a time of academic testing, and tasting, and trying, until an area is found in which a student feels comfortable and excited about specializing. We expect this to be true of students in Life Studies as well. But we do caution students interested in the program to check the university catalog very carefully with respect to any department majors they may be interested in, to see what course requirements those departments specify for students in their freshman and sophomore years.

### **Finding Out How We're Doing**

Evaluation in a program like Life Studies presents some special problems and offers us all some particular challenges. Our basic aim is to develop mechanisms for evaluating ourselves fairly while at the same time offering the university community an opportunity to compare the educational effects (and side-effects) of Life Studies with what's happening to students in more traditional programs. To help bring this about, we have an Evaluation Committee, headed by Dr. Robert Congdon, Director of Counseling and Testing Center, which has been hard at work developing suggestions for various methods of evaluation within the workshops, as well as comparative studies of students within and without Life Studies.

#### **Workshop Evaluation**

Evaluation of a workshop's progress, and of the efforts of all within it, is primarily the responsibility of workshop members themselves. As far as student performance is concerned, workshop leaders will be asked to offer ratings and/or written comments to students twice during the semester. Some of the criteria on which these comments will be based include the student's ability to:

- 1) communicate in specifics and in generalities, whenever each is appropriate;
- 2) develop accuracy and precision in dealing with problems and concepts;
- 3) pursue independent work and supply his own structure, while at the same time relating these efforts to the specifics of the workshop problem area;

- 4) be both critical and productive in workshop meetings;
- 5) interact in a constructive way with students and workshop leaders who hold viewpoints differing from his own;
- 6) suspend judgment while examining and evaluating alternative approaches to a problem.

A significant counterpart to evaluation of students by workshop leaders will be the evaluation of workshop leaders, and of the workshop as a whole, by student participants. Naturally, much in the way of informal evaluation will happen during workshop meetings, but we feel that students should have an opportunity at least once during each semester, to evaluate the role of the workshop leaders in facilitating learning within the workshop.

#### **Comparative Evaluation of Life Studies Program as a Whole**

Crucial to the concept of Life Studies as an "experiment" in participatory education would be a comparative study, conducted over a four-year period, in which the problems and progress of Life Studies students can be compared to those of non-Life Studies students with respect to key educational objectives. The Evaluation Committee is in the process of developing both the testing methods and the relevant criteria for such a study. It is our hope that this process will strengthen both Life Studies and the University as a whole, and make us all aware of the goals we strive for and the degree to which UNH students are reaching them.

#### **The Workshop: Where It's All Supposed To Happen . . .**

What's the difference between a workshop and a course? This is one of the questions most frequently asked about Life Studies, and an easy answer is difficult to give because it's wrapped up in the whole idea behind the Life Studies Program. The answer has more to do with atmosphere, perhaps, than with simple details of classroom size or credits. In our Life Studies Proposal, we've said:

The central structure of the Life Studies curriculum will be multi-dimensional workshops organized around a problem area, an issue, or an idea. Each workshop consists of a team of faculty and students brought together to explore a problem area of particular importance to them and of general value to the community.

The workshop operates as an umbrella under which a variety of learning activities take place: a 'fundamentals' or 'methods' seminar to introduce students to central concepts and basic readings in the problem area; small study-groups on particular aspects of the issue or idea; independent study or individual

and group projects, etc. Workshops are resource centers to provide students with opportunities for individual and group study, and will constitute an environment for learning. . .

It's just this "environment for learning" that might make the difference between a Life Studies workshop and a typically large section of an introductory course that students sign up for "to get your requirements out of the way."

Undoubtedly, some of the regular university courses that you will take here at UNH will have an environment for learning that is really positive. In any good course there should be genuine interaction between students and faculty. Students should be encouraged to explore individually not only the subject matter of the course itself but any and all related topics that involve them personally. And evaluation of students should be based upon recognition of individual performance as well as "objective" standards. These are some of the aspects which you would hope to find in any course here at UNH that excites and involves you.

The point about Life Studies workshops is that each workshop is specifically aimed at creating that learning environment, whatever the subject matter, and *you* will be the one to help make that environment real. This is why, for example, participation in Life Studies has to be voluntary on your part. In a course which you are somehow obliged to take, you might easily feel little motivation to work to make the learning atmosphere right for you. And the attitude that says: "They put me here, now let them try and teach me something" is unfortunately much too common during the early years of undergraduate education.

But please don't make the mistake of assuming that just because it's "Life Studies" you'll be automatically provided with an ideal atmosphere in each workshop. The easiest formula for disaster in a program such as ours would be for students to enroll in Life Studies with the expectation that "everything's going to be groovy." What's true about a good learning environment is true about everything else that's important to your education: "It ain't going to happen, unless you make it happen," or, in the words of that old Spiritual:

*Ain't nobody here can get dere for you  
You got to go dere by yo'self. . .*

Each workshop is going to be a new experience for the teachers as well as for the students. Problems and misunderstandings are bound to occur, as they do with all experimental efforts. What we can promise is that ways will be found to bring those problems to the surface and try to solve them together. And you're one of those "ways," so if things aren't working out in any of your workshops, **DON'T COP OUT!**

## The Core Seminar

### Enrollment: All Freshmen in Life Studies

The idea behind the Core Seminar is that some sort of continuing, intimate association should be provided in which Freshmen in Life Studies can meet in small groups of ten to fifteen, explore language and the processes of communication, discuss program-wide and campus experiences, and generally learn to define and begin to meet their individual educational needs. Faculty leaders and workshop associates will act as advisors to the students in their Core Seminar groups. The Core Seminars will meet regularly throughout the year and should provide a kind of "home base" for participating students.

In order to improve communication skills, students in Core Seminars will be asked to 1) articulate their own experiences in relation to their education, 2) examine their expectations for academic development, and 3) work to create a productive learning environment within the Core Seminar itself.

People communicate best about the things they know best, within an atmosphere where their feelings are valued, where their individuality is respected, and where sincerity is expected of them by their peers. Core Seminar leaders will themselves form a continuing study group to explore the problems of participatory teaching in communications, as well as other issues involving the Core Seminar idea. An effort will be made to coordinate the year's activities and allow for interaction between individual Core Seminars.

The Core Seminars will have a dual purpose with respect to communication skills. On one hand, they will attempt to foster an atmosphere of sincerity and integrity with respect to interpersonal communication. People will be urged to be honest with one another and to discuss those aspects of their social environment which make sincere communication difficult. On the other hand, Core Seminars will look outward to the larger community in which we live, and students will be asked to both examine the processes of communication which our society uses (media, etc.) and to develop and improve the skills necessary to reach, to interact with, and to influence their fellow human beings in the world at large. Core Seminars will also encourage the student to become conscious of the way in which language operates on him in his daily life, and to explore alternate ways of articulating his experience.

During the first semester, Core Seminars will follow fairly similar programs of study, called "Task Units." Each Task Unit will encompass a variety of communication exercises and experiences. Titles for suggested Task Units include: "What do words mean?", "Non-verbal

communication," "Perspectives on education," "Media," and "Moving people to action." There will be flexibility within the program for students to improvise or create new Task Units to accommodate needs within each group.

During the second semester, we expect a far greater degree of specialization among Core Seminars, as workshop leaders and students identify particular areas of communication which they wish to pursue in greater depth. Subjects such as creative writing, literary criticism, logic and debate, media studies, interpersonal dynamics, etc., may well become focal points for group specialization during the second semester, when students will be permitted to transfer to a specific Core Seminar whose program will be of special interest to them.

### **Contemporary Education Workshop**

**Maximum enrollment: 50 students**

This workshop will provide opportunities for students to discover new ways of learning for themselves and to participate in an elementary or middle-school classroom where they can try out their ideas. The workshop consists of five study-groups. Each participant will meet with his individual study-group two hours weekly, spend a minimum of three hours a week in an elementary school classroom, and meet with the Educational Workshop as a whole periodically to integrate the various aspects of learning and to investigate current issues within the field of professional education and their implications for innovative change.

#### **Workshop Study-groups**

##### **TALENT AND INTEREST CENTERED LEARNING**

After some introductory readings the participants will deal with concepts of exploring the talents and interests of individual elementary school children. Areas in which exploratory experiences can be conducted include art, music, creative writing, drama, and earth science. After the participant's preliminary study and practice of providing exploratory experiences for the elementary school children, each participant will allow the elementary student to follow his or her own creative impulses and will encourage the child to ask his own questions and to develop his interests and talents at his own rate.

##### **ACTIVITY CENTERED LEARNING**

An activity centered classroom is organized into working areas or activity centers, each area designed for a separate activity, and all areas being utilized concurrently. Emphasis is placed on learning

through experience. Ideas are gained through manipulation of many kinds of objects in the various activity centers, rather than limiting learning solely through verbal channels. For this reason the physical setup of the classroom—the placement of various materials around the room—is very important in creating an optimal environment for learning. Students will be encouraged to use their experiences in the activity-centered classroom as an “avenue” by which to question their own ideas and feelings concerning the learning process. Each student will be encouraged to explore a facet of elementary education that is relevant to his or her goals and interests.

#### INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP IN FACILITATING LEARNING

This study-group is designed to help the student investigate how to provide an emotional climate that facilitates learning and to help the participants put this knowledge into practice in the multi-age classrooms of nine, ten and eleven year old children in the Oyster River Elementary School District.

#### NEW WAYS OF FACILITATING LEARNING

In this study-group the students will investigate various innovative theories of facilitating learning, through reading, discussion, lectures and discussion with resource people expert in various areas of education, and visitation of innovative schools throughout New England. Experimentation with these ideas with fellow students in class through role play, creative dramatics, and in other ways will also be encouraged. Participants will experiment with these ideas with elementary school children through regular participation in elementary school and free school classrooms and through tutoring on a one-to-one basis through SCORE. The individual student would have to define which sort of situation he/she would like to work in.

#### LEARNING IN A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL CONTEXT

This workshop will focus on the needs of young adolescents and how these needs can be met in education. The emphasis will be on studying innovative programs in nearby schools and creating, from these programs and the students' own ideas, new approaches in the classroom. In addition to observing schools, each student will be involved in an on-going classroom situation which will provide the opportunity to put some of his ideas into practice. Weekly meetings will be held to discuss students' observations and work and to explore important educational issues such as grading, discipline, grouping, scheduling and curriculum. Students will be asked to keep written records of their observations and reactions which will later be compiled into a manual which could be used by classroom teachers and administrators as a resource in establishing innovations.

## Perception and the Creative Arts Workshop

Maximum enrollment: 60 students

The objectives of this workshop are, first, to learn to work in one of several art media: sculpture, painting, photography, dance, music, literature, and second, to study perception from a biophysical and psychological point of view and from the point of view of the creative artists.

The aim is not merely to teach the techniques of an art media, but to understand and become articulate in the "language" of that media—to learn to articulate a corner in space, to learn to move to express inner feelings.

Studying the scientific basis of perception, including the physical phenomena that produce the sensations, helps a person understand how he functions, helps an artist understand his media: light is to a photographer what movement is to a dancer, what sound is to a musician—and it helps an artist understand how his audience assimilates his creations.

Each student will be enrolled in one of five study-groups. In the first semester, these study-groups will be "language" oriented—students will concentrate not on 'making things' but rather on developing a feeling for the 'raw materials' of an artist's craft and how he uses those raw materials in shaping his perception of the world.

In the second semester, students will concentrate on in-depth projects within a given media. Often these projects will be outgrowths of exercises and conceptual studies undertaken during the first semester, but in all cases special interest will be maintained in the relationship between the creative act and the particular perception of reality which underlies it.

### Study-Group: FALL

THREE-DIMENSIONAL DESIGN  
TWO-DIMENSIONAL DESIGN  
LIGHT  
MOVEMENT  
LANGUAGE

### Study-Group: SPRING

SCULPTURE  
PAINTING  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
DANCE  
CREATIVE WRITING

The entire workshop will meet together once a week for a formal lecture on the physical, biophysical, and psychological aspects of perception. Immediately following the lecture, the workshop will break up into small, informal discussion groups, led by the various study-group leaders.

The lecture-discussion group sessions will be concerned with what we perceive (sound, light, color, space, time) and how we do it (eyes, ears, fingers, mind). There will be special emphasis on the relationship of aspects of perception to the creative arts.

## Community Studies Workshop

Maximum enrollment: 75 students

For UNH students and faculty, the need for coming to terms with the issues and problems of the people of this state really points to a greater need: the need to seek one's education and develop one's talents through first-hand experience with those people engaged in the "business of life". The days when learning could be nicely separated from living are past; the problems and challenges of our time simply don't permit us to stay within our citadel of higher learning and examine our fellow man, his institutions, and his problems. The University is an island no longer. If we are students, we are also citizens. The problems of the factory laborer, the small farmer, the housewife, or the businessman sooner or later become our problems.

The workshop in *Community Studies* begins with the premise that a "study" of those New Hampshire communities which surround our University must be far more intensive and more sensitive than most previous attempts at sending students "into the field" to survey the scene. We must bring ourselves into the community to learn before we can even think of helping those who live there with their problems. We must bring community people to the University to teach as well as to learn before the full resources of the University can be made sensitive to the needs of the people. And in going into the communities of the state as students and teachers, we must develop an awareness of the problems and prejudices that our presence in the community will generate before we can begin to deal with those problems which the communities themselves recognize.

Each student who enrolls in the Community Studies workshop will take four credits of study in an area which emphasizes the fundamental concepts and background for social change, and another four credits of work in a study-group "laboratory" which emphasizes learning through participation and involvement with actual community groups.

The concept of "field experience" as far as first semester students in *Community Studies* are concerned will be mostly limited to the following tasks:

- a. How to define a problem
- b. How to gather information on the problem
- c. How to evaluate current efforts to solve the problem
- d. How to redefine the problem in view of what has been learned
- e. How to share what you've learned with the people concerned

The study-group laboratories are designed to give students more than a mere exposure to a community situation but will stop short of

encouraging students to participate actively in community work. Most important, perhaps, will be those study-group meetings at which the "what" of community or agency problems will be discussed in terms of the "how" and "why" of progress or frustration. That is, instead of a student's merely visiting a town or agency, attending meetings of a community group or talking with officials, he will be continually urged to explore and understand the process by which these individuals or groups function. Students will be urged to keep their eyes on the total process of any organization or agency under study, to attempt to understand the dynamics of the whole situation, rather than to become an advocate for any individual, group, or cause.

In addition to regular weekly meetings with his study-group laboratory, each student will plan to spend one full week in the community or agency in which his lab is located. Students will work together with community to agency personnel during the week in order to gain a better understanding of the nature of community work.

**NOTTINGHAM STUDY-GROUP LABORATORY.** This is an example of the field experiences for first semester students. The town of Nottingham, population 800, is a perfect example of a community that is very resistant to change. Like many New England towns, the people fear newcomers, particularly those associated with the University. The town is quite rural and would like to stay that way, but very few town people feel that zoning is necessary to maintain this rural atmosphere. During the past five years, several young professional families have moved into the community and are trying to become active in the community. The participants of this workshop can be involved in several activities:

1. Identifying the current state of the town
2. Identifying overall goals of the town
3. Observing organizations in their normal operations and identifying the mechanisms used for decision making.
4. Functioning as resources for each one of the organizations
5. Facilitating instituting more than one organization in the community for accomplishing some common objective.

During his second semester the student will participate in one or more study-groups devoted to a particular problem area in community development, such as health, political structure at the county or town level, surplus food, housing, delinquency, economic development, poverty programs, etc. Each study group will attempt to provide the students with a variety and depth of training necessary for them to be able to make a worthwhile contribution to the community during their third semester in the workshop, which will be spent largely or entirely in the field.

## Dimensions of Spirituality Workshop

### Maximum Enrollment: 50 students

We are a group of faculty, students, and community people who have come together in an attempt to develop a workshop to explore the vast area of religious and spiritual experience. Although we represent diverse backgrounds and theological viewpoints, our common focus is in the growing religious awareness, interest, and needs of the community and campus. From what we have observed in the student community, our task is not to generate interest in this workshop, but to focus on an interest already widespread.

Many people are asking questions, and finding nowhere to turn for answers. To them it appears as if there is no live medium in which to explore this; neither the church nor the university has been fulfilling these needs.

It is our hope to build a climate in which we can revitalize the study of human spirituality, in which we can trust and share, both in theory and in an experiential way that becomes intergrated in our daily living.

Specifically, the goals of the workshop are:

1. to help the students articulate for themselves those "spiritual" or life issues which at this point in their lives are most important for them
2. to help students grasp the intellectual and historical material necessary to deal adequately or responsibly with those life issues. . . e.g. to see the variety of religious and life options which various traditions represent
3. to facilitate religious and personal growth on the part of all the members of the workshop through in-depth laboratories or task groups within which students may dig into special religious and spiritual concerns in a systematic way, within which they may share their learning. We will help these special task groups to develop "naturally" from those interests and desires and life issues articulated by each student at the beginning of the workshop.
4. In short, then, we intend in this workshop to deal with the whole man. We hope to facilitate religious and spiritual concern and learning in both an intellectual and experiential sense. Especially with respect to the religious dimensions of life, the two go hand-in-hand.

### Structure:

There will be two central aspects of the workshop:

1. GENERAL MEETINGS: These will be weekly meetings of the entire

workshop. The purpose is twofold: to bring the entire workshop together to share information and criticism, and to provide the relevant historical and intellectual framework necessary for students to deal with the spiritual and life issues which face them.

2. **TASK GROUPS:** We intend that special small task groups will develop within the workshop as a whole. The purpose of these task groups is to permit small groups of students and workshop associates to dig into a variety of religious issues or phenomena in some depth. If the General Meeting is to provide the intellectual framework, the task group will provide the learning environment for experientially articulating one's religious concerns and developing a religious focus or style of one's own.

Each task group will be small in number (no more than 12), and will be led by a team of two workshop associates. Each task group will meet at least two hours a week. Since the groups will be designed to meet the actual needs of the students, they will play a major part in formulating them. We suggest that the following might be the kinds of task groups which will emerge in the course of the workshop:

- ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIANITY
- ELEMENTS OF JUDAISM
- YOGA AND OTHER TECHNIQUES OF MEDITATION
- AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE NATURE AND MEANING OF RELIGION
- THE OCCULT
- EXPLORING THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION THROUGH LITERATURE
- MYSTICISM: IN ESSENCE AND PRACTICE

The 'trying on' of religious and metaphysical options should be part of each person's search for a meaningful life. The tremendous spiritual and psychic resources of the individual can be explored in many ways to give him an increased feeling of responsible participation as a whole person. Ultimately the way a person lives is the expression of his religious position, and these groups are intended to provide the framework in which to explore some options for personal commitment and growth.

## **Environmental Studies Workshop**

**Estimated enrollment: 75 students**

The Environmental Studies Workshop will explore the question of human survival by looking at the various conditions and factors in our modern world which endanger the ecological balance of our planet and threaten our species.

The workshop will be divided into several study groups, each of which will study one or more of the factors which affect the quality and even the survival of human life.

Each study group will examine a cluster of resources, value systems and socio-economic forces that may either enhance or endanger the human condition. The approach may include discussions with scientists, engineers, politicians and industrialists and in some cases may result in action programs aimed at local environmental crises.

Suggested topics for study groups are:

**THE OCEANS AS A LIMITED RESOURCE**

**VEGETATION, WILDLIFE AND FOOD**

**IMPACT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPON NATURAL RESOURCES**

**POPULATION GROWTH, ITS CONTROL AND ITS EFFECTS UPON**

**HUMAN LIFE**

**HUMAN REDESIGN: SHOULD MAN SURVIVE IN HIS PRESENT FORM?**

**ECOLOGY AND NATURAL SELECTION**

**TECHNOLOGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

**CONFLICTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LAND AND WATER RESOURCES**

**HISTORY AND THE POLITICS OF CONSERVATION.**

A major goal of each study group will be to work towards a synthesis of information with other study groups in the workshop. During the spring semester it is hoped that some study groups will combine forces to develop solutions to these complex problems.

### **What Does It Mean To Be A Student In Life Studies?**

*"What I liked about Life Studies was that you weren't put under any pressure; anything I did was through self-motivation, and the area interest I had was of my own choosing. . ."*

*"I liked the warm closeness our Self-Discovery group developed among the members. Everyone's sincere concern and helpfulness had the greatest effect on me. I'd like to see this unity and caring spread through the entire Life Studies community."*

*"I'd like to see Life Studies taken more seriously—I know a lot of people who take it as a 'gut' and who do less thinking in a Life Studies class than any other class. I think workshops should be a year long—especially because it takes so long for people to feel comfortable with each other. . ."*

*"The Life Studies program helped me make a major decision about my future at the University. I am splitting. Thank you." (Comments from Interim Program evaluation questionnaire)*

Responses from students in last year's Life Studies 'Interim Program' (in which most students took only one workshop per semester) tended to be as varied and individualistic as, well, the students and workshops themselves. In general—and it's really tough to generalize—students were excited about two things: an atmosphere of warmth and noncompetitiveness within the workshop, and a chance to come to grips with major issues through personal experience. As one student in a workshop called "Poverty in New Hampshire" put it: "I liked being able to get off campus and into a community. I liked doing field work—that makes the course more than just a rap session. It gets you into things."

The biggest "hang-up" concerned the question of freedom and responsibility. After twelve years of formal schooling, years in which students were for the most part told what to do, when and how to do it, many found it difficult to adjust to the flexibility and informality of Life Studies workshops, especially since most were spending three-fourths of their time in more traditionally structured University courses. This was one reason why Life Studies decided to go "full-time" for the coming year, so that students would have a fuller opportunity to develop true self-motivation in their studies. But faculty, too, had their problems with the new spirit of informality and struggled with the question of how to encourage students to work hard—without holding a grade over their heads.

### **Some Challenging Questions**

So Life Studies—whatever else it may mean to you—will mean a challenge to make the “freedom to learn” a working reality. And that challenge is likely to boil itself down to a few hard questions before your first semester in Life Studies nears an end:

Just how much more initiative and commitment is expected of me, by my workshop leader, my fellow students, or myself, than in a regular lecture course?

What can I do to help my workshop get beyond the informal bull-session stage and get involved with real issues and projects?

If the workshop leader doesn't seem to understand the mood or feeling among the students, what's my responsibility to him or to her?

When I find myself getting “turned off” about the reading list, or writing papers, or working on a project, what effect will my frustration have on other students in the workshop?

Where do my responsibilities really lie in my workshops—in my own education or to my fellow students? When can “doing my own thing” help—or hurt—others in my workshop?

What's my obligation to Life Studies itself—is it there merely to help me get my education, or am I needed to help Life Studies survive as an experiment in participatory learning?

## Who Gets To Teach In Life Studies?— Who Gets To Learn?

The teaching staff of Life Studies represents a rather broad spectrum of interest and experience, from faculty members with many years of teaching behind them, to students still completing their undergraduate studies, to people from the community who may not have been involved in a university for years. Because we know of no perfect set of criteria for a teacher in participatory education, and because we assume that a variety of talents promises a greater variety of educational possibilities, we have opted for a balance of talented individuals among our teaching staff.

Our philosophy of "teaching" in Life Studies runs something like this: The purpose of a teacher is not to teach, but rather to allow and encourage others to learn. We would facilitate learning, not impose it. We assume that when a student reaches for and grasps a particular concept or skill, he receives the benefit not only of that knowledge but of the "power" that brought that knowledge to him. And by that act he is empowered to reach still further. We advocate no particular "style" of teaching, although we envisage the teacher as a partner or co-participant in the learning experience. We have seen that many different individuals with many different styles or approaches to a subject have facilitated learning in others. We have seen some who, although they wanted very much to stimulate students to share their concerns, have been unsuccessful. What seems to count is the honesty and forthrightness of the teacher himself, in sharing his goals and his needs with the students he is there to serve, so that he comes across as human and vulnerable, not some distant and impassive deity.

Some of the people who teach in Life Studies come to us. Some we search for. Quite frankly, we concern ourselves with working with a man or woman once committed to teaching in our workshops, rather than screening him or her meticulously beforehand. By this choice, we open ourselves to the criticism that our "standards" of choosing faculty are imperfect. We can probably live more easily with that criticism than with those standards.

We do, however, classify our teaching participants into two categories. (We used to have three, so it seems we are making progress.)

**WORKSHOP FACULTY** are regular members of their respective departments in the University. In most cases, but not all, they serve as coordinators or have wide responsibilities in their workshops. Most have been released by their departments from part of their normal teaching load in order to participate in Life Studies; some are obliged to do so on an "over-load" basis.

TEACHING ASSOCIATES are people from the community with special skills, graduate students, or upperclass students who have received special training in teaching through a course entitled "Teaching Skills in Participatory Education," which was offered in the spring semester, 1970, by a group of faculty from five disciplines. Teaching Associates have at least one trait in common: they have all been actively and intensively involved in their area of specialization for a considerable period of time. They receive either a nominal salary or academic credit for their efforts. Anything they pick up on the side, in the way of experience in or commitment to teaching, is to their own credit.

### **The Life Studies "Establishment," or How to Help Us Beat our Own "System"**

**We're here because we're here, because we're here,  
because we're here . . .**

Typically enough, this section of the brochure is being written at about eleven o'clock on a Sunday night when I should be home reading or drinking beer with friends. Oh, I'm certainly no martyr—I wouldn't have to be here now, hitting the old typewriter, if I hadn't spent the afternoon sailing on Great Bay. But it's July now, and if this brochure is going to be any good to anybody, it better get finished soon. And somebody's got to do it, so. . .

So here's a bit of insight into the "dilemma" of running a program like Life Studies. The ideal, of course, would be for an experimental program to be completely self-governing, that is, to be organized and run by the students and teaching participants themselves. The truth about Life Studies is that we still have a long way to go to reach that goal. There are several reasons for this. First of all, the program had to get started by somebody, and not all of the people who developed the program were free to actually teach in and be a part of it. Some were students who have since graduated; others were faculty members who were already overly committed to other responsibilities. Initially, then, the actual "running" of the program fell into the hands of a few people, like myself, who were free to commit a lot of time and energy to it.

### **The Life Studies Executive Board**

The second reason why Life Studies isn't yet fully self-governing is political, rather than personal. We are part of the University of New Hampshire—our very philosophy is aimed in part at serving the larger University by creating challenging and exciting alternatives to current programs for Freshmen and Sophomores. The relationship of our program to the university community—the administration, the faculty, and the students—is really crucial to the success of that aim. And to insure that in its early years, before we've had the chance to prove ourselves, Life Studies can win and hold the respect and support of the larger community, we've tried to find people on this campus with the wisdom, the experience, and the understanding of "how the system works"—but also with a genuine desire for innovation and reform. These are the people who make up the Life Studies Executive Board, a group of nine faculty members and six students (still to be chosen). I think it is a measure of the commitment of the members of this board that every one of the faculty members on it have already or are planning to be involved in teaching in Life Studies or in program evaluation.

### **Getting Through To Us**

But however involved and committed the Executive Board, or I as director of Life Studies, may be, our program badly needs and eagerly awaits true and meaningful participation by you the student in determining just where Life Studies is and where it should be going. That kind of participation is not going to be easy to come by. If you're a student in your freshman or sophomore year, you're probably not very well acquainted with how an institution, like the University, works and you'll probably be out-argued the first few times you suggest ways for the program itself to be restructured. Then, too, for those of us who are used to making the major decisions, it's just plain hard to get out of the habit, and you'll probably have to speak a little louder, or back us into a corner, before you can be sure your ideas are being listened to. Whatever you do, don't give up the first, second, or third time you feel frustrated; just remember that it will probably take us a while before we realize that you really care.

### **This Might Help**

For this year's program, we're going to try to set up the mechanisms for more active participation by students and teaching personnel in the functioning of Life Studies. Here are some of the ways we hope to loosen up our own "establishment":

**ASSISTANT DIRECTORS**—two students, one a Freshman or Sophomore in Life Studies, the other an upperclass student, will be chosen to share with me some of the administrative duties of the program. Assistant Directors, it is hoped, will be available in the Life Studies office to help students with individual problems.

**FACULTY COORDINATOR**—Paul Brockelman will serve as inter-workshop liason and trouble-shooter. He will be taking major responsibility for facilitating cooperation and interaction between workshop faculty.

**COMMUNITY MEETINGS**—at least once a month, all members of the Life Studies community will be invited to participate in a "Town Meeting" at which any and all issues may be raised, discussed, debated, and referred to the Executive Board for action.

**LIFE STUDIES EXECUTIVE BOARD**—will add six students to the nine faculty now on the board. Two of these will be Teaching Associates (upperclass students) and four will be elected by the students themselves.

But . . .

But true participation in deciding where Life Studies goes—and how it gets there—doesn't necessarily begin at a community meeting or in the Life Studies office. It begins whenever you care enough about what's happening to your own education, in your own workshops, and with the people you feel close to, to want to make your concerns shared by others. As a student in Life Studies, you have only as much "power" as you have faith in your own ideals and the guts to make them real.

Very Sincerely,

ROBBY FRIED

Where We Are . . . and Where We're Going . . .

### A Brief Summary of What It's All About

by Paul Brockelman

LIFE STUDIES is a new, experimental, and highly innovative educational program designed to fit the special problems, needs, and possibilities of education during the critical first two years of a student's career at UNH. Learning means change and personal growth, it means developing involvement in and responsibility for some aspect of our shared world. The aim of our program is to provide some of those educational environments and resources which contribute most effectively to the interest, self-motivation, and disciplined growth of students within Life Studies.

We strive to help students educate themselves, i.e. to grow personally by becoming informed about and involved in some aspects of the manifold of human life. We have developed at least three broad, working principles to facilitate this.

First of all, there is the concept of a "workshop"—an inter-disciplinary, team-taught, learning-center which deals with human issues of widespread concern to both faculty and students. We hope our workshops will give an initial exposure to students of several facets of an idea and then provide the support for them to develop, broaden, deepen and discipline their interest in that issue or idea. We believe that human beings want to learn, need to grow. Life Studies workshops are designed to be the occasion for such growth and for the development of self-motivated learning.

Secondly, we believe that the only route to effective learning is through interest and participation. Therefore, we seek to involve each student and faculty member in the decisions which determine the goals, substance, and processes of the program as a whole and the workshops within it. An environment of trust and *élan* can be created only if all members of the community combine to give that environment its meaning.

Lastly, Life Studies intends to be a community of teachers and students who care about one another, and who care about fostering the delicate process of learning. To that end, we are all committed to facing the facts, trying new methods, evaluating and correcting, and trying again.