



Paul Kirk

What the Students Really Want to Know

In The Report of the President to the Board of Trustees of Mercer University, Dr. Harris informed the Board of the proposed hike in tuition, for incoming freshman, and an across the board increase in room and board for all undergraduates. This of course was approved by the Board.

The increase in tuition, as has been promised, will not affect any student already enrolled in Mercer University. I will not debate this increase, for as Mr. T. Baldwin Martin, Chairman of the Board of Trustees pointed out, "Faculty salaries at Mercer in the present fiscal year average approximately \$3,000 per year less than salaries for comparable ranks in the University System, at Emory; and at Agnes Scott College". " . . . We are unable to project faculty salary increases for next year of more than 3 or 4 per cent, while the University System has just received from the legislature a 10 per cent increase."

Dr. Harris outlined the raise in tuition, room and board to the Trustees. "The tuition and fee structure involves an increase of \$150 per year for the entering freshman class . . . the school budget also includes an increase in the charges for room rent and health totaling \$36 per year and in the meal ticket of \$39 per year."

The reason for the increase in the meal ticket is: "The striking increase in raw food cost from September 1967 to January 1968 indicate the necessity for the increased charge in the meal ticket." In the report a tabulation was presented to justify the increase. Many people can be misled by this tabulation. The report shows food items e.g. Sugar, Salmon, Beans, Orange Juice, Onions, Peppers and other "essential" staple items used everyday in the preparation of meals. For twelve quarts of orange juice the table shows an increase of \$3.00 from \$6.95 to \$9.95. To my knowledge, you can count the number of times orange juice is served for breakfast in the cafeteria. But, every day the Co-op SELLS freshly made juice. The rise in the cost of this item should not fall into the category that affects the food price for the students. Since the Co-op is a profit making enterprise of Mercer University, then let them worry about the rising food costs and not charge the

students for it.

Another example shows that peppers (per bushel) have increased in cost by \$5.75 from \$3.25 to \$9.00. On the rare occasions that peppers are served, I am confident the students would not miss this item if it were not purchased because of sky high cost. It would seem to me that if this vegetable has risen in cost by almost 200 per cent, Mercer should look for another vendor to purchase this product. The prices in the local food stores have not moved upward in such a proportionate amount.

The rise in cost of the more staple items is considerably less. Frying chicken per pound went up 2½ cents from 27½c to 30c, also sugar went up 9 cents from \$10.60 to \$10.69 per 100#. Economically, the rise in the most purchased items by the housewife (staple food products) pretty much indicates the rise in the cost of living in the United States. Mercer's rise in the meal ticket shows a percentage increase of 9½ per cent. Economic market reports show that the cost of living rising on the average some 3 to 5 per cent annually. It generally fluctuates near the 3 per cent mark.

A basic reason for my opposition to the meal ticket hike is the not the raw food costs, for this is minor. But, the promise at Waverly last June to hire a caterer to serve and please the students was not carried through. This action by the Administration was in bad faith and until they justify this to the students a common agreement will not be reached.

In the last Student Government Association Election questions were asked of the students on pertinent areas of concern. One of them, a possible rise in the cost of meal tickets IF it would be accompanied by an improvement of the food. This was voted down by more than 2:1. Here we are, in complete opposite to the students wishes, and with no foreseeable improvement in the cafeteria. The Administrations concern for the students in this area is nil, after all we are only students.

As for the rise in room rent the explanation is given that janitorial supplies have increased. We will concede that point. Also the wages of the employees of Building and Grounds have also gone up. We will concede the second point. Now

the main point, what will the students see out of this rise in rent. If we lived in an apartment and the owner raised the rent some compensation would be made. A new paint job or possibly new kitchen appliances. What will we get?

One thing would be better service on the part of the janitors who work the three men's dormitories. These are the only people who take a "work break" of fifteen minutes every hour. One needs to only check in Shorter between the hours of 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. These workers are having their lunch break. One hour, which is more than they receive, is ample time to have a meal and relax. But, during the remaining 1½ hours these people are glued to the "boob tube." Ideally, these men should be paying the University for the use of the T.V.

At Waverly last June a number of complaints were registered by the students concerning the poor conditions of Shorter and Sherwood dormitories. At our last check, only some fifty per cent of these complaints were corrected. Shorter is one of the few lucky living quarters that gets its steam up during the summer and shuts it off during the winter months.

The faculty and staff were also a topic of discussion by the Board of Trustees. This area is of major importance if Mercer is to continue as a University with a reputation. The quality of faculty members should be the main concern of Mercer before jumping into any other areas that might tend to enhance the beauty of the campus. Promotions were made to Dr. Jimmy L. Crenshaw, Mr. Marshall Daugherty, Dr. Carlos T. Flick, Dr. Bernard G. Keller, Dr. Vincent Lopez, Dr. May F. McMillan and to Dr. Marguerite Woodruff. We extend our congratulations to these people.

Seven new faculty members have been added, according to the report, for the Fall Quarter. On the other side of the coin, 11 present faculty are leaving Mercer. Those leaving are: Miss Louise Brown, and Miss Connie Byrd (both retiring). Those who have resigned: Mr. Robert L. Bledsoe (Political Science), Dr. William Easterling (Modern Foreign Languages), Dr. Sherwood Ebey (Mathematics), Mr. Jack Jones (Music), Dr. Donald Josephson (Mathe-

matics), Mrs. Carol Padgett (Biology). Three other faculty members are terminating their one year appointments: Mrs. Alice Bohannon (Education), Mr. Robert Miller (Modern Foreign Languages), Miss Margrit Soland (Modern Foreign Languages). The above mentioned eleven include those members of the faculty who have submitted their resignation more than one month prior to this report. At the present time we can report of 6 additional faculty members who are seriously considering leaving Mercer. All these people are waiting for is to make the final arrangements concerning their contracts with their future employers.

This is a deep and serious crisis facing Mercer University at the present time. Faculty do not leave a university for money alone. There is usually some reason more personal than this. Mercer offers an excellent retirement program along with a good housing program to offset their low pay scale. The difficulty lies in the working relationship between the Administration and the faculty and amongst the faculty themselves. The Faculty Committee on Curriculum decides what, if any, new courses should be taught and also

decides if revamping of the courses offered is necessary. The staunch conservatism on their part often scares faculty away to another university with forward looking ideas.

In the above paragraphs we have looked at some of the basic problems facing both the students and Mercer University as a whole. Since the Mercer Cluster is a student publication, we therefore are concerned with the problems facing us the students. This takes the number one spot of importance over the school's problems. The rise in costs for the students is against their wishes and should be reconsidered before the freshman class of 1968 enters Mercer in the Fall. The Faculty crisis should also be remedied before the Fall of 1968. This MUST be done for the students, for they are the main contributors to Mercer's operating budget of \$5.1 million. They MUST be pleased concerning the cafeteria. If no action is taken to eliminate this situation, the fear of a "long hot summer" will not compare with the actions the students will take in the Fall of 1968. As the most active and concerned student body, this will be their call letters in historical records of Mercer University.

Letters to the Editor

(Author's Note: This article is intended to be one of a series building to a definite climax. In analysing consecutive elements of the report *Community and Partnership: Student Conduct at Brown University* as to their significance at Mercer it is intended that some alternative to our current situation of "negative" discipline may be proposed.

P. O. Box 1288

Room 316, Freshman Dorm

Dear Mr. Editor,

Since my last note to you on the disciplinary committee at Mercer I have attempted some positive steps toward finding a solution to our situation. Having written friends in several schools asking for information on their rules of conduct and means for enforcement, I have begun to receive replies. Thus far the most interesting comes from a former Baptist affiliate, Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. Little more than a year ago student agitation for a review of policy caused the creation of a committee of students, faculty and administrators to recommend improvements.

The Advisory Committee on Student Council mailed questionnaires to four thousand Brown students and parents, of which 67 per cent were returned and processed. Surveys were taken from both student government officials and deans in thirty-seven rather diverse institutions. Thirteen hearings receiving testimony from fifty witnesses plus numerous written communications and meetings with various boards already established on campus heard from administration, faculty members, and students. The Committee met fourteen times in executive deliberation before offer-

ing its report, *Community and Partnerships Student Conduct at Brown University*, for adoption.

In the first installation concerning the report, I should like to quote some of the trends cited in the survey of schools.

"First, virtually all of the responding deans (twenty-three of twenty-six) reported that students were part of a mechanism 'primarily responsible for formulation of student conduct regulations.' Moreover, the largest number of schools (nine, including Cornell, Dartmouth, Illinois, North Carolina, Northwestern, Pennsylvania, Stanford, Swathmore, and Wesleyan (Univ.)) reported that this function was performed by joint administration-faculty-student board. (The student leader responses, though fewer in number, confirm this trend).

"Second, a strong majority of the deans (19) report that students are formally and significantly involved in rendering decisions in the most serious disciplinary cases. Many schools have their own variations, but at eight of them the responsibility belongs to a faculty-student board; at six it belongs to an administration-faculty-student board. So-called 'appeals' procedures also vary greatly, but the most common pattern (ten, including Amherst, Antioch, Bryn Mawr, Columbia, Dartmouth, Northwestern, Pennsylvania, Tufts, Vassar, and Williams) provides for appeal to the president; three schools (Chicago, Mount Holyoke and Pennsylvania) provide for appeal to a dean.

"Third, the dean's response (confirmed by student leaders) suggest that almost all of the schools we polled guarantee certain procedural safeguards to students involved in disciplinary cases. Thus, they are notified in writing of the precise charge against them at eighteen schools; may be represented by a faculty member at eleven schools (seven of these extend this guarantee explicitly to include also representation by a lawyer); and may present evidence and witnesses at twenty-three of the schools."

This information may be meaningful to us a Mercer, not that we should follow like the innocent lamb naively behind others, no matter how formidable they may be, but there is a message in the success of the institutions mentioned.

Respectfully yours,
Ernie Robinson

The Mercer Cluster

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