

MEMORANDUM

To: The Shimer Community

Date: December 12, 1966

From: President Mullin

The following statement is in response to a request for a general statement about the current unrest on the campus:

The purpose of Shimer College is to provide an educational program that is not only exciting to the superior student, but is a challenging one that most students can master. Comparative studies have shown that over the last fifteen years many students in all ranges of ability do significantly better at Shimer than elsewhere. A well-motivated student can thrive and profit tremendously in this community of intellectually-curious fellow students. Such a group learns to think rigorously, which implies a willingness to accept the necessity of self-discipline as well as external standards and order.

The first function of an educational institution, in distinction to other social groups, must be to provide the opportunity for students to meet fully their responsibilities in the structured acquisition of knowledge. Respect for the opinion and persons of others, enthusiasm for seeking significant relationships, and a deep trust in the essential meaningfulness of life are parts of any continuing environment for learning. To sustain such a community there must be freedom and integrity of inquiry and expression, and a deep regard for truth.

Shimer began this year on a high level of commitment to academic opportunities and responsibilities. Sometime in October the atmosphere on the campus worsened considerably because of at least two factors. One of these included an apparent great increase in the use of drugs on the campus, with its concomitant detachment of students from the formal learning situation as well as the consequent disturbance and exploitation of others.

The College is so concerned about the harmful effects of drugs on the campus that it has taken steps to keep unauthorized visitors off our property, and in addition measures are underway to meet the problem by identifying those who frequently use and distribute drugs. These people will be asked not to return to Shimer.

A second factor was the dissatisfaction of certain faculty members with the administration of the College, and the encouragement of faculty and students to take matters into their own hands. In this struggle for power there were many rumors of the dire effects on the College. Since the

campus is an isolated and closed group, rumors have a devastating effect on the community, and it is very hard to distinguish fact from fiction. This adds to the difficulties of communication and understanding, and lends itself to uncritical thinking.

As a result of these two factors and of the many unfounded rumors and because of genuine differences in opinion, there has been much unrest on the campus of late. Unfortunately, this can only work to the detriment of the students and the conditions under which they are trying to perform in a demanding educational setting. If the time and energy which has been spent recently in divisive and nonconstructive activity could have been devoted to scholarship and academic goals, great improvement in the environment for learning might be more readily noticed.

If those who want to carry on the great tradition of academic excellence here will earnestly seek to continue to value rigorous intellectual work and high standards of performance, much can be achieved. Shimer welcomes all those who adopt its goals and put its principles ahead of individual interests.

Neither retreat nor efforts to subvert the organized activities of the College will solve our problems, but, by uniting, members of this community can continue to make of Shimer a fine environment for learning which can deserve our lasting loyalty.