

From Shimer Coll. Institutional Profile 1967
(for NCA)

REPORT OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS

The personnel aspects of the College have not moved forward with developments in the academic aspects. The interest and attention which have gone into the forging of an excellent curriculum were necessary to establish the academic goals of the institution, but with the increasing size of the College, the personnel functions and structure should be examined and strengthened.

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Living centers now include three modern dormitories and two old buildings which are scheduled within the next several years to be replaced. While the two old structures are less convenient and smoking is not permitted in the student rooms, many students prefer them to the new dormitories because they provide greater range for individual tastes to be expressed in decorating and furniture arrangement. The new dormitories, when built, should make maximum provision for single accommodations, since there is always more demand for these than can be supplied currently.

The residence halls are staffed by a faculty member (the New Men's Dormitory accommodates a faculty family) and three or more resident counselors who are students. The philosophy of having a faculty member living in residence with the students is, I think, good. The difficulty is to find faculty willing to live in residence and committed to personnel work. Where the faculty member accepts the residence assignment but has no particular interest in the personnel functions, his effectiveness is limited. Currently there is not a sufficient reduction in his teaching load to give him time, even where there is interest, to devote to his resident head functions. Improvement could result if more of his time were freed, or if a new position were created for the direct supervision of all dormitories so the faculty member in residence could act as the "adult in residence" without administrative obligations. The staffing problem has been recognized and solved in the women's dormitories by allocating time to the resident heads.

The use of student resident counselors gives the students selected a worthwhile experience and provides students with a member of their peer group with whom they can discuss any difficulties. The student counselors also assist with "housekeeping" functions such as room inspections, keeping down the level of noise, etc. These students are given a considerable amount of leeway in using their discretion in the solution of difficulties. Unsatisfactory situations sometimes arise because they are loathe to report infractions of rules which might result in disciplinary measures.

The informality of the organization of student activities has the advantage of flexibility. Groups are not likely to continue to operate unless there is real student interest in their objectives. Student government has wide latitude in the recognition of new groups and in the distribution of funds for student activities. There is a lack of consistent interaction between the student body and student government, and interest in the latter frequently wanes. This has been discussed with members of student government and they are seeking solutions.

The isolation of the campus and the lack of recreation facilities in the town put the burden of providing recreation on the College. There are lounges in each of the dormitories, a grill, intermural sports, weekly movies, a concert