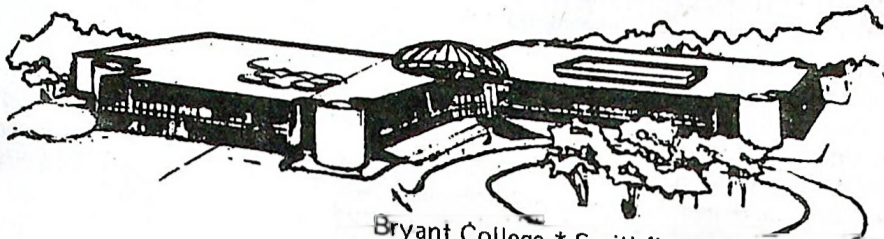


THE ARCHWAY



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The Charge

As an independent study group, we are commissioned by the Trustees of Bryant College "to study and make recommendations concerning the administration of the College as it is affected by and affecting the function of the trustees, faculty, and students," and particularly to "examine the impediments to communication and trust among the college constituencies." We were asked (on March 24) to begin this undertaking "immediately" and to submit a written report within two to four weeks. Within these constraints of time and the corresponding limitations of the scope of the report, we have attempted to review the present problems of Bryant College and to make certain recommendations. In the development of these recommendations we have sought first to inform ourselves, both by careful study of a mass of written materials - news accounts, position papers, opinions and arguments - and by listening. The committee made itself available, through two full days, to every member of the Bryant community who wished to meet with us - something more than sixty individual students, faculty, administrative officers, and trustees. Although these conferences were necessarily brief, views were freely and frankly expressed, and we believe that we were able to get representative views and to arrive at an essentially accurate overall impression.

Introduction

There is little need to review the events which reflect the evident problems - the strike of the maintenance staff, the student boycott, the demands of the Faculty Federation. A number of the trustees shared in almost twelve hours of dialogue with faculty, students, and others; trustees not present then have had access to the

REPORT PREPARED FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF BRYANT COLLEGE

taped record of these meetings. Students, faculty, and staff have been so intimately involved in the events of the past six weeks that, while interpretations and reactions undoubtedly differ, there is general agreement as to what was said and done. This committee, therefore, assumes the familiarity of the reader with recent occurrences at Bryant, and accordingly confines itself to the attempt to see a pattern, to interpret in the light of accepted administrative practice and of experience at other institutions, and to develop a basis for recommendations.

Urgency

We consider the problems of Bryant College to be urgent, complex and serious. We consider the present situation of the College to be one of real gravity, demanding prompt and understanding action by the trustees, restraint and sensitivity on the part of administrative officers, maturity and forbearance from the students, and recognition by each member of the faculty of the deep professional responsibility which rests with them if their college is to endure. We find fear and suspicion among the members of the college community; the educational process has been disrupted; teaching and learning have been not only interrupted, but stunted and subverted by the loss of that sense of security and faith in each other that is essential to the health of the academic community.

Like most problems of people and communities, this one, we believe, can best be understood in terms of its historic roots. Some attention to what the College has been may be helpful in assaying what

it is and may become.

Historically Proprietary

Bryant has a long history of private ownership and many of its basic procedures and its ways of thinking about itself were established when it was a proprietary institution. Its major leadership was rooted in this period and many of its present members joined the College when this meant going to work for the owner. Furthermore, the owner-presidents were strong leaders, dominant figures; even in the absence of the president a strong surrogate, as vice-president and/or treasurer, exercised the same type of control.

When the president is the "owner", a distinctive relationship is created. At Bryant, in law and in fact, that relationship no longer obtains. The faculty, through the Federation, now holds a contract with Bryant College which governs much more than simply the conditions of employment - teaching load, salary, schedule, promotions procedure, and the like. The contract does, quite properly, cover these matters, but it includes also many of the relationships fundamental in the governance of the College - matters such as the organization of the College or curriculum policy - and provides, in case of disagreement with the position taken by vice-president or president, for direct dealings with the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees by the Faculty Federation.

This new relationship is a matter of contract between faculty and trustees. Even if such a relationship were not now legally established, your consultants would argue that the enlightened administration of a college

or university requires not only lip service, nor merely passive acceptance, but the whole-hearted belief in and practice of the participatory process that this contract seeks to make explicit. Colleges and universities are not businesses and cannot properly be administered as is a business. The industrial model may at times appear appealing, but it is inappropriate to the academy. The shift in the relationship rooted in Bryant's history and compatible with the business tradition is not to be made without stress, but recognition of its necessity is essential.

Historically Non-degree, Then Undergraduate

For about nine-tenths of its corporate lifetime, Bryant was sub-collegiate and unaccredited; even after it had state authorization to grant degrees in business it was essentially a technical institute. A friendly historian acknowledged that it was - in the mid-50's - still a vocational school, "getting girls ready to take dictation and pound typewriters and boys ready to keep accounts and assume beginning managerial jobs." Only comparatively recently has the College developed an accredited undergraduate degree and work at the graduate level is still very new.

This change in the mission of the College, especially in the past ten years, has put an obvious strain on the capacity of the faculty to adapt. Their accomplishments have been remarkable. They have faced the task of adjusting the undergraduate program to serve the requirements of an accredited degree while they developed a new program, leading to the

M.B.A., which will substantially alter the character and function of Bryant College. They have needed to do all this while carrying major overloads in their teaching, in part to supplement their salaries, but especially to meet a genuine community need for advanced programs of study.

The necessity of adaptation to major changes in program means additional stress for the faculty. This faculty makes up in practical experience and dedication to teaching what it clearly lacks in academic preparation through degree work in their fields of teaching specialization. The faculty knows this; the administration knows this. It should also be clear that the faculty cannot change itself rapidly or, indeed, that it cannot change itself to any great extent regardless of time. Many of the senior faculty, with family and other commitments, simply cannot return to the university for a residential year or two for doctoral study. Yet the administration, if it is committed to the development of Bryant College as an accredited academic institution, faces the necessity of upgrading the faculty. The faculty faces the necessity of setting standards for new appointees and for all tenure appointments which are not only higher than they could meet themselves now but largely unattainable by them in the future.

Historically Urban-Commuter

An urban, commuter college does not need to provide a full range of student services facilities. As a relatively isolated, suburban, residential college, Bryant faces the problem of providing not only facilities but programs, of student counselling, of athletics at club and intramural level, of instruction in physical education, of recreation, for a diversity of types and needs. To attempt to maintain a student community without

outlets for extra-curricular pursuits is to produce student impatience and frustration, and to invite destructive behavior.

Summary

Bryant College, then, is in our view subjected to three-fold strains:

The shift in its purpose, from proprietary to eleemosynary, involves more than a change in charter; as the purposes shift from profit-oriented to service-oriented, the administration of the College must reflect this shift in its organization for governance and especially in its style of administration.

With a faculty largely unchanging, the College is still transforming itself from a non-degree pattern to full college status, and now assumes greater responsibilities as a graduate institution while supporting a teaching overload of evening courses.

The move to a truly beautiful new campus poses a new set of needs of students for social and recreational space and facilities, and for programs which utilize these meaningfully.

Recognition of these stresses, we feel, is essential for an understanding of Bryant's present problems and our proposals for their relief.

Recommendations

Although the three members of the study group represent somewhat different backgrounds and avenues of experience, we find themselves unanimous in the following observations and recommendations:

1. The Board should accept the resignation of Dr. Evarts which is already in their hands, effective as of the close of the current academic year. Despite Dr. Evart's many significant contributions to the development of Bryant College, he has not developed the necessary base of support on the campus. Lack of confidence in his leadership has, we believe, passed the critical stage; we do not consider that it is possible now for him to operate effectively at Bryant.

2. The Board should act promptly to designate an Acting President. The manner in which the Board discharges this legal responsibility will be important in setting the tone for the new administration and thus for the College. We urge that the committee to recommend candidates, as a subcommittee of the Board, comprise equal representation of trustees, faculty, and students; that faculty and student members be designated by their respective organizations; and that every effort be made to assure that all members of the subcommittee participate fully in the deliberations leading to the recommendation of candidates to the Board. The consultants do not recommend a candidate. We do suggest certain obvious qualifications which should characterize the successful candidate.

He should be thoroughly familiar with the institution. An Acting President needs to be able to move into his duties with a minimum of orientation and error. He should have been at Bryant for a reasonable period - several years as a minimum - so that he is familiar to the institution as well as with it. He needs, of course, to be liked and respected by the college community. He should not be an aspirant for the presidency, whether by reason of age or some other.

Because of the need for the prompt appointment of an Acting President, it is clear that if the committee for any reason finds itself unable to recommend at least one candidate within a reasonable time the Board must then act without their recommendation.

3. The Board should appoint as soon as possible a search committee to find and recommend to the Board candidates for the presidency of Bryant College. Such a search committee should be constituted in the same manner as that already recommended for the committee for the Acting President. Announcement of the membership of this search committee should

be made soon, and the committee should be organized to begin its work before the end of the current academic year.

4. We recommend no change now in the organizational structure of the College. The administrative organization, though perhaps overdeveloped, is not, in our view, an "impediment to communication and trust." Rather, the style and the intention of the people who operate within the organization are the key to its success. The apparent overstaffing in some areas of administration, the signs of empire-building, we should leave to the new president to correct. The existing patterns of organizational relationships are adequate; emphasis should be on making them work. The Visiting Committee of the New England Association observed that "the faculty seem to have firm guidelines for the participation and involvement in governance and a significant role in curriculum and personnel matters, all of which are spelled out clearly in the Federation Agreement; Students also have a real opportunity for involvement and participation on curriculum committees, teacher evaluation committees, and advisory councils." Every care needs to be taken that this pattern of participation not be subverted--that committees, for example, have real functions and that membership on them be thus responsible. We recommend here that most difficult of changes, a retention of the present form and a basic change in its real intent and meaning. To accomplish this will call for continuing and genuine dialogue.

5. The Board should act promptly to dispel the suggestions made in some quarters concerning conflict of interest. One of these pertained to the management of the College's investments. This criticism would be rendered groundless by the Board's adoption of the usual board procedure of naming a committee of the Board to formulate investment policy and to review the performance of

the designated agency, and to report on these matters to the Board, the committee, of course, not to include a representative of the operation of the organization. Similarly, the Board should move to put out for open competitive bid the various college services to be contracted - as, for example, the food services. Such a practice provides protection for both the institution and the provider of the services.

6. It is our understanding that the Board has already acted to make full disclosure of audited financial statements. We agree that this is an important step in the restoration of confidence and the development of a climate of mutual trust. We urge that the Board continue this practice as a matter of policy.

7. We recommend that the Board, through the Acting President, encourage the Vice President for Student Affairs to develop a program of student activities and student services.

8. We urge that the Board give highest priority to the development of a student union or student activities building. We place this recommendation in the final position not because it is of lesser importance but because it gives us opportunity to repeat and summarize the direction of our comments. The proper development of the student union would give opportunity to serve two major needs of the College. The first and obvious opportunity would be to provide a social and recreational facility in which a program of student services could be centered. The less obvious but even more important opportunity would be that of asserting a new style of participation. Surely there should be participation by students in the planning of this center. The building cannot be truly useful unless it reflects student input; more important, the process and practice of student participation will strengthen the program and the College.

We speak of the student union because this

planning committee has already been partially subverted and thus provides us with an example of our thesis. Merely to name a committee of faculty and students and administrators, which is then handed plans of the building is demeaning and dysfunctional. We hope that this process can be seen as reflecting the problems our recommendations are designed to ameliorate.

Our one most compelling observation is apparent at numerous points throughout this report. We believe that in many respects - whether mission or program offerings or facilities or resources, both material and human - Bryant College has the potential of being a strong and effective institution. And it seems clear that under the conditions that now prevail this potential will not be realized.

The nature of the academic enterprise is such as to require special forms of interaction and mutuality. Here, perhaps more than anywhere else, adversary relationships destroy the communality of effort that is imperative if the institution is to survive. All of the constituencies that make up the Bryant College community will have to resolve that the advocacy of their special interests - however legitimate these may be - will not be carried to the point of subverting the welfare of the institution-as-a-whole.

Finally, we would be remiss if we did not express our appreciation to all the members of the college community who gave of their time and effort to help us gain some insight into the problems confronting Bryant. Despite the great differences in viewpoints on various issues, nowhere did we find anything but a common interest in the future wellbeing of their college. With sound leadership, this bodes well for the future of Bryant College.

Submitted by:

Evan R. Collins
Henry A. Kriebel
J. Garton Needham,

on April 19, 1975

The Faculty Federation's Preliminary Statement

The Executive Committee of the Bryant Faculty Federation is extremely satisfied with the report submitted on April 19, 1975, by Drs. Collins, Kriebel, and Needham to the Board of Trustees.

This report has accurately explained the problems and fears that the faculty and students have expressed repeatedly to the Administration and

Trustees.

We urge the Trustees to accept all of the recommendations listed in this report. The Executive Committee of the Federation gives urgency to the following:

1. The immediate acceptance of the resignation of Dr. Evarts.
2. The immediate appointment of a committee to quickly

designate an interim President from within the college who is acceptable to and respected by the faculty and students.

3. That Dr. Smith is not an acceptable candidate for interim president.

4. The immediate action by the Trustees to remove any possible conflict of interest situations.

5. That a student center be built without delay and with meaningful student and faculty input.

6. We ask for the immediate resignation of Dr. Smith. This report implies what the faculty had long known, that Dr. Smith's philosophy and style of management are incompatible with good academic governance.