

WILL RICE PRESIDENT

College 'babysitting': a wasteful business

The initial reaction to our preliminary statement and proposal on the relation between the colleges and the university has shown that the section on faculty involvement may not indicate clearly enough the role of faculty involvement with the colleges and that the intention of the section on the regulation of conduct may not be sufficiently explicit.

I would like to amplify these points and indicate a direction for future action along these lines.

Differences Recognized

The function of the college within the university is derived from the university's commitment to education rather than training. One difference between education and training lies in the recognition of the importance of values—esthetic, ethical, social—as well as factual material; for the student seriously seeking an education, the question "What is worth doing?" is at least as important as the question "How is it to be done?"

(A recent questionnaire in Will Rice revealed that between a third and a half of the members have changed their minds at least once about their intended career since coming to Rice.)

Worth Doing?

A university interested in helping its students answer questions like "What is worth doing?" will see that they have opportunities for personal contact with faculty members on a more significant level than incidental chit-chat or arguments over grades; it will also have an interest in the character of the student community, and particularly daily life in the colleges.

For both these reasons, the question of faculty involvement with the colleges, particularly the question of offices within the colleges, concerns matters more basic than mere considerations of space and cost.

Communication Lacking

We had assumed that, since close daily association of faculty and students was the essence of the other college systems of the world, the rationale behind it was already a com-

mon basis for communication, and that it was necessary only to point out that Rice's college system is still deficient in this area.

It often appears that the essence of Rice's college system is the regulation of student behavior, more so this year than in previous years, it seems.

Our statement attempts to show how the maintenance of order and a civilized atmosphere relates to the colleges' purpose; but it also suggests that the regulation of individual morals is an unproductive area for the college or the university.

Individuals Freed

We would prefer to adopt the position of most landlords in the larger community and leave individuals free to make their own decisions in this area so long as order is maintained. When we are put in the position of being proxies for parents in seeing

that their children are protected from the possibility of misbehavior, we cannot help feeling like babysitters, and we have better uses for our time.

Protecting others from the dangers of freedom is always a tempting task for compassionate and sincerely motivated authorities. For a counterargument to this position, I would recommend Dr. Kolenda's essay on the Grand Inquisitor in the *Thresher Review*. (I should add that Dr. Kolenda has not been involved in the formulation of our statement.)

Stereotypes Formed

One danger to be guarded against in matters of this sort is adopting stereotypes of the people one is dealing with, thereby excluding the possibility of real communication.

For example, the group which prepared this statement and proposal (presidents, PBK's, a court chairman, etc.) has been

stereotyped now and then as an assemblage of radicals and anarchists; similarly students and faculty members have sometimes stereotyped the administrators as people without principle, concerned only with community reaction. Both are false.

After Friday's Student Affairs Committee meeting I have the impression that the problem of community pressures is highly exaggerated.

Maintain Civilization

In fact, we were all in very

close agreement on the need to maintain a civilized pattern of life, relying on what students have already learned about what is socially acceptable behavior.

A suggestion has been made that the colleges should each draw up their own rules of conduct which could be discussed in greater detail. We intend to follow this suggestion, working within the context of our statement and proposal.

—TOM SCHUNIOR

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