

WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY
LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

February 13, 1984

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees
FROM: John D. Wilson *John Wilson*

I write on the weekend which marks the beginning of the Washington Week break. Students began leaving on Friday afternoon, some for sun and others for snow and most, I think, for home and the chance to catch up. I will visit four of our western alumni chapters during the course of the week and want to get this note off before Tuesday's departure.

Following the Rector's determination to use our standing committee structure for further study of the coeducation question, I will set out below each committee and the alignment of potential topics associated with its charge; I say "potential" only because each committee may wish to take up some of these topics and not others. But here is the way the matter looks to me at this juncture.

I. The Executive Committee (augmented)

Members: Messrs. Ballengee, Clarke, Compton, Hough, Kopald,^{Leggett} Shannon, Smith, South, Wilson

Topics: The character and special attributes of Washington and Lee; the statement of institutional purpose; the ambience of the all-male undergraduate experience; strengths and weaknesses of our all-male character; the place of our all-male character in the context of the Law School and the valley colleges; the impact of all-maleness or coeducation upon the traditional strengths of the University e.g., the faculty-student relationship, the honor system, the pre-professional cast of our programs and ambitions, our high standards and expectations.

Staff Liaison: Mr. Wilson

Relevant Contacts & Resources: Alumni Faculty, the Student Executive Committee, the Alumni Board, relevant studies from other institutions, certain letters received from key alumni and faculty.

II. The Academic Affairs Committee

Members: Mrs. Lewis, Messrs. Shannon, Branch, Compton, Harte, Keller, Kopald, Millhiser, Wolfe, Young

Topics: Current and prospective course enrollment patterns; how coeducation might modify these and what the staffing implications would be; a review of current classroom and laboratory space utilization; a consideration of the question of how large our undergraduate enrollment should be; a review of male-female ratios in colleges which became coeducational in the past 15 years; the pedagogical, social and legal implications of ratios; a consideration of the impact of coeducation upon the classroom experience; a review of current admissions practices and programs; an analysis of student qualitative trends and prospects; a consideration of the impact upon the Law School admissions effort of our current undergraduate admissions policy.

Staff Liaison: Dean William J. Watt

Relevant Contacts & Resources: The Registrar, the Committee on Courses and Degrees, the Faculty Advisory Committee, the Admissions Staff, the Dean of the Law School, relevant reports from other institutions, national data collection agencies (NCHEMS, College Board, Department of Education et al), key faculty letters.

III. Planning and Development Committee

Members: Mrs. Lewis, Messrs. Kopald, Benton, Compton, Keller, Philpott, Rowe, Young

Topics: An examination of current alumni attitudes about the Washington and Lee experience; development of a systematic method of inquiry to ascertain alumni views on the possible impact of coeducation; an assessment of how coeducation might influence long and short-term giving to the University; the development of a total communications plan; a review of the campus master plan to ascertain whether current ideas about sector development (e.g., where housing is anticipated) would have to be changed were women admitted to the undergraduate schools; considerations of security, lighting etc.

Staff Liaison: Messrs. Hotchkiss and Parsons

Relevant Contacts: Alumni Board of Directors, Alumni office staff; other institutional studies; outside consultants; foundation staff.

IV. Committee on Campus Life

Members: Mrs. Lewis, Messrs. Gallivan, Keller, Leggett, Millhiser, Touchton

Topics: An assessment of current on-campus residential facilities; a review of off-campus housing patterns; an assessment of how these interrelated patterns would have to change or should change, if women are admitted; a sense of how, if at all, they should change should we remain all-male; how the fraternities might change if women are admitted; the accommodation of national fraternities to changes instituted at other colleges undergoing the change to coeducation; the capacity of University dining facilities to take enlarged enrollments or enlarged on-campus housing units; what the advent of sororities could mean to undergraduate life here; how fraternity structures and fraternity life were altered at places that insisted upon converting these organizations to coeducational housing/social units (e.g., Amherst); how women in residence might alter the shape of social life; the possible impact on the number of independent students and the increased demand for more all-university social events; whether the physical side of the Student Center would have to be changed; the changes to be anticipated in our athletic programs at all levels (i.e., physical education classes, intramurals, club sports, junior varsity and varsity); the adequacy of our playing fields and indoor athletic facilities, the impact (if any) on all on-going student organizations and agencies of student government.

Staff Liaison: Dean Lewis G. John

Relevant Contacts: The Student Executive Committee, the Student Activities Board; the Student Center staff; the IFC officers; the ad hoc committee on fraternity affairs; the Faculty Fraternity Advisers; the Athletic Committee; the Resident Hall Counselors; other institutional reports; the athletic staff.

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The summary assessment of the financial implications of a coeducation decision would be the responsibility of the Budget and Audit Committee. This assessment would have to take into account the operating cost implications of expanding the size of the student body or contracting it, if contraction seemed necessary or desirable. It would, further, make judgments about renovation and new construction costs required by a coeducation decision and would relate these to capital costs otherwise anticipated. Such assessments and studies would, I think, be impossible to conduct prior to the completion, or roughing out, of the work of the other standing committees. I therefore must assume that Budget and Audit will accept a charge at the May meeting for reporting out in July. In the meantime, of course, Mr. South, working with Mr. Epley and his colleagues, can refine our financial forecasting models.

There is much work indicated in the above outline--and I've probably left out a good deal. Still, the University's prior studies are ready to hand and they supply methods and results which, even if dated, are not without value. We also have access to the reports of other institutions (most of which, but not all, accompanied coeducation decisions with the decision to become much larger). I think our staff liaison people can help the committees, through the chairmen, to refine the areas for examination and to supply relevant information.

There is another note worth sounding before I close this long memo. Clearly the vagaries of committee assignments will cause an unequal load to fall upon our various members.* The Rector is very much aware of this and is anxious to make modifications as necessary. Persons with three key assignments may be especially strained and the reverse may well be true of members whose chief committees are the financial ones. Please call Jim directly to see if some smoothing out can be accomplished.

I take it that the next step will call for a conference (by phone or otherwise) between the committee chairmen and the staff liaison officers to set out a plan of work and to set out, especially, the topics and materials which ought to be taken up first. I hope this step can be taken before February is out. I should think, too, that each member of a committee might communicate promptly with the chairman with any suggestions for topics not now included or topics warranting special consideration. I should hope that this might be accomplished also by the end of the month.

In the meantime I will turn to the details associated with the formulation of the 1984-85 budget, the appointment of Dean Watt's successor, the pavilion question, the recruitment of a new computer science chairman, etc. etc. Life will not be dull for the next several months.

*In addition to their regular committee assignments the Rector is asking Mr. Keelty to serve on the Academic Affairs Committee and Mr. Steuart to serve on the Planning and Development Committee.