



# Haverford College

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

HAVERFORD, PA. 19041 215-649-9600

October 19, 1976

TO: The Haverford Members of the Joint Cooperation Committee  
The Committee to Study Admissions Policy

SUBJECT: The Bryn Mawr Trustees' Proposals

FROM: John R. Coleman

To aid your analysis of the proposals transmitted to our Board of Managers by Bryn Mawr's Board of Trustees on October 2, I have prepared this administrative analysis. It represents our best judgment but clearly commits no one here to anything except to continue the discussion.

The numbers preceding each item correspond to the numbers in the Trustees' "Proposed Agreement." The main part of this analysis focuses on the admissions implications of the proposals; other implications are discussed tangentially here and will surely get further attention -- but the immediate concern on campus and in our Board of Managers is with an admissions question.

## 1. A FORMALIZED CONFEDERATION

The use of a name to describe our unique relationship is desirable. We prefer a short name such as "The Bryn Mawr-Haverford Consortium", and specifically urge that the title not be one using the words "university" or "graduate schools" in ways that might lead a stranger to link Haverford with work beyond the B.A. or B.S. Much as we like this idea of putting a label on what we now normally agree to do, we doubt that it will have much of a favorable admissions impact. Guidebooks will still describe us as admitting freshmen men.

## 2. JOINT COUNCIL OF MANAGERS

We welcome this idea. There are sufficient joint concerns which trustees share to make desirable some formal way of communicating with one another. Further we accept the desirability of better communication between the two board chairmen -- but we wonder if this isn't better done through channels other than ex officio board memberships. We assume that the aim of the Joint Council is not to plan an eventual merger of two proud, distinctive colleges. We assume further that the Council is not designed to realign the basic and separate responsibilities of the Board, the faculty, the student body or the administration on the Haverford campus.

## 3. JOINT FACULTY COUNCIL

We welcome this too, but might prefer earlier draft wording in which there was no reference to "supervising" the joint degree program. We think it best to leave it to the respective faculties and administrations to work out in time whether or not they wish to delegate supervisory responsibility to the Council. Whatever the decision there, the Council is a constructive idea. Its direct effect on admissions however will be small.

## 4. CROSS-MAJORING AND JOINT DEGREES

It is inappropriate for this administration to anticipate our faculty's reaction

to this suggestion, the topic clearly being one that is within the faculty's jurisdiction. But even if the reaction there is strongly favorable -- and we hope it is -- we do not imagine that the admissions impact will be strong.

We did not have the joint degree possibility before 1976, but we in effect had the cross-majoring possibility for men prior to 1976. It did not prove a major drawing-card for men even though we welcomed it as an enriching option. Few men have availed themselves of the option, and still fewer came here because of it. We do not see why it would be significantly more attractive in the future if we advertise this option. Not many people are likely to enter one college for the privilege of majoring at another.

## 5. GRADUATE ENROLLMENTS

We thought this was the current policy and hope very much it will continue to be so, regardless of our admissions policy. We feel that the opportunity to take graduate courses at Bryn Mawr under the same limited terms as Bryn Mawr undergraduates is a distinct plus in our admissions work, but, once again, few students avail themselves of this opportunity.

## 6. UPPER DIVISION TRANSFERS OF EITHER SEX

This is the core of the proposal so far as the admissions issue is concerned. The key question is not, "Are transfers of either sex desirable beyond the freshman level?" for in reasonable numbers they clearly are. The issues are rather, "Will this route bring in sufficient students to meet Haverford's goals?", and "Will Haverford's need to attract substantial numbers of transfers from Bryn Mawr be seen as imperilling the cooperation we seek?"

A reminder about numbers: we estimate a need for 100 transfers a year to meet our enrollment goals if we do not admit freshman women. (The source of that number: experience with the class of 1980 leads us to expect a shortfall of 75 freshman males each year if we do what we've done. For four years that's a short fall of 300 students. But since the transfers are confined to the three upper years, we need 300 divided by 3 transfers each year.) We believe we'd do well to attract an extra 25 male and female transfers from outside of Bryn Mawr, over and above the 15 or so males we now attract each year. That leaves 75 women per year who would have to come through the Bryn Mawr transfer route.

Bryn Mawr admits over 55% of its applicants today. Of those admitted, approximately 40% come. So, to produce the 60 transfers we'd hope to get from Bryn Mawr each year, it would have to have 340 additional applicants with its current acceptance ratio. (Put another way, if its pool did not rise and it wanted to produce 75 transfers for us, it would have to change to at least an 80% acceptance ratio.)

Why should we expect Bryn Mawr can achieve such a dramatic rise in women's applications (that's almost a 30% jump) in the face of the same demography, comparative costs, and doubts about liberal arts education that we face?

Suppose however that Bryn Mawr does experience the big increase in applications which they assume once the Proposed Agreement is announced. There is no assurance that 75 would want to transfer to Haverford. The competition and pressure that would develop for transfer students would, in our judgment, be the unhealthiest imaginable. Any competition between the two colleges that Bryn Mawr feared over relatively unknown high school seniors (or that the Bryn Mawr faculty feared last spring when liberal cross-majoring was rejected) would surely be pale compared with competition to get or to hold able first-year women already here. The pressures and counterpressures of loyalties and cross-loyalties would surely strain the students -- and, in turn, the total cooperative effort.

But set that aside. Suppose it worked and Haverford had, say, 700 men who had been here from their freshman year and 300 transfers, mostly women who came thereafter. Most men would be well established before any women came; what chances would there then be for men to meet women on fully equal terms in the internal life of the College? The first year at college is critical for most students in making friends and finding a role for themselves. We assume too an integrity to our educational program, built in part on the freshman advising and the freshman seminar. That integrity is not disturbed by small numbers of transfers. But what happens when many students get one education and many others get another in the course of pursuing the same Haverford degree?\*

We wonder too about the kinds of students we would get through the transfer process. Will Bryn Mawr be able to meet the first-year financial needs of the extra 75 Haverford-bound women on at least the same terms as apply to today's students? Will Bryn Mawr be able to help us recruit the sort of mix-- in economic background geography, race, likely majors-- that we'd seek if we had free choice among women applicants?

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\*Some of these same arguments about the workability and the cooperation impact of the "transfer model" were suggested by Harris Wofford in his letter of December 2, 1971 at a time when Haverford had suggested transfers as a way to bring more of a coeducational environment here:

"The same points, however, apply to the proposal that Haverford accept transfer students. If the number of transfer women is very small, the effect on cooperation will, of course, be less, though some confusion and competition between your own women students and Bryn Mawr students at Haverford will be inevitable. It sets up two very distinct classes of women at Haverford. We saw some of the difficulties in this with the visiting students you had from other colleges. If the numbers are small, I do not see the gains, from your point of view; if the numbers grow to substantial proportions, then the losses in terms of cooperation will be larger....

"I note with pleasure that the Green Committee report does not include the idea Bill Ambler proposed, that women students would be encouraged to apply to Bryn Mawr as a way of getting to Haverford. We would not want a group of freshmen at Bryn Mawr who came for the purpose of transferring to Haverford. That kind of compulsion would hardly be conducive to a happy community here or to two-college cooperation."

But why do we feel it is unlikely we'll draw large numbers of women transfers from elsewhere? The stumbling block there is that we're likely to run into a storm of protest from competitors if we try to lure many sophomores here. Moreover, the success of such a drive is likely to be severely limited; women are surely likely to have relatively little interest in a college that wouldn't take them in their first, exciting, and formative year of college but that urges them to come in the second.

There is yet another problem with the transfer model. If it achieved the numbers we seek, it would give Haverford a disproportionately large number of students at the sophomore level and above. That has academic and/or economic costs associated with it. On the average, the cost per student of freshman classes is lower than that of upper classes because of typically larger enrollments. We imagine therefore that, with fewer freshmen and more upperclassmen here, either the most popular of our upper classes will be expanded disproportionately, to the detriment of the educational process, or our costs will escalate, to the clear detriment of our financial position.

In sum we do not see the transfer model as working. We don't see it producing all the students we need. We don't see it giving women equal status with the four-year men. And we don't see it letting us foster either the cooperation we seek outside or the educational integrity we seek inside.

We conclude that transfers of either sex should be accepted, but not as an alternative to Haverford's admission of women as freshmen.

#### 7. JOINT RECRUITMENT

There is always more we can do together, and there will always be better ways to present the unusual story of our two-college cooperation. But we are not as optimistic as Bryn Mawr is that just trying harder and more cooperatively will bring us the much larger numbers we need.

To begin with, our story is rather well known to the guidance people at the Friends' schools nearby. They've seen how much more we do together in the past few years. Yet Haverford is drawing no more applicants or matriculants today than in the past from these feeder schools, and Bryn Mawr is actually drawing fewer.

Moreover it is our feeling here -- and we believe that we have heard the Bryn Mawr admissions director express this same feeling -- that the joint efforts to date have been of limited value. The two college option impresses some people before they get here to see us, but it doesn't appear to impress nearly enough.

Haverford continues to face the fact that full coeducation is preferred by the vast majority of high school seniors. Any story to the effect that we have a somewhat coeducational environment through our relations with a sister institution is bound to be harder to tell than is the simple story that we treat men and women on an equal basis.

Yet we believe that the intense academic cooperation, and the choice of living arrangements here, will always be a story worth telling to prospective students even if Haverford admits women. It may not excite large numbers of students until they get here and experience the richness of the options, but it will continue to have some advance appeal.

We have quite different reservations on the subject of participation by the representatives of one college in the selection of students for the other. Our colleges have many similarities; they also have differences in what they are looking for. We

believe that the criteria for each college fit it well and see little to be gained by cross-pollinization in selection processes. Our joint arrangements are healthier and more interesting if we preserve this one area of difference.

#### 8. CROSS REGISTRATION IMBALANCE AND THE TERMS OF TRADE

The two Presidents have already acted on the major point here and have instructed the Provost at Haverford and the Dean of the Undergraduate College at Bryn Mawr to come up this year with a plan either to erase the imbalance in registrations or to reflect its true cost realistically in our budgets. We welcome the extension of this search for realistic terms of trade to other areas. This effort, necessary for both colleges in times of economic stress, will however have no positive effect in attracting more students.

#### 9. ECONOMIES OF MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

This area should be explored once again. It is so long since the McKinsey Report came to us that it is time to go back to the same areas (and others) and ask what can be done to combine parts of our business operations. Places where cooperation or even selected mergers of business functions can achieve true economies should be explored regardless of admissions policy at Haverford.

#### 10. JOINT FUND-RAISING FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS

We welcome this but must point out one limitation on Haverford's ability to put much development effort into fund-raising for joint projects. Bryn Mawr has just completed its \$21 million campaign. But we have only begun ours for \$20 million, and that effort must have top priority on our time and energies.

We welcome the opportunity to explore joining the Associated Fellows Program as partners and will be happy to meet at any time to discuss this.

#### 11. LENGTH OF AGREEMENT

We do not see how Haverford can prudently bind itself to one particular pattern of admissions for as long as four years. Even if we were to accept the transfer model under Point 6, we would surely have to remain ready to reconsider the admission of women or other policies if the model produced as few students as we believe likely. The timing of Haverford's discussions this fall is dictated by economic realities, and our Board must remain ready to face new choices at any time as the economic story unfolds.

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In conclusion we recommend:

(i) an acceptance of all but Points 6 and 11 in the "Proposed Agreement" with such modifications as are suggested above.

(ii) an expression of strong misgivings that the transfer model proposed by Bryn Mawr's Board will give us anything like the number of women students we will need, or that it will foster healthy cooperation.

(iii) a rejection of a four-year moratorium on any revision in our admissions policy.

We believe Bryn Mawr's Trustees have offered helpful, forward-looking suggestions to make still better what is already a remarkable story of inter-college cooperation. We believe most of their ideas are workable regardless of our admissions policy. And we urge our faculty, students and Board to embrace these proposals while still keeping open the option of admitting freshman women to Haverford in the fall of 1977.

*Jade Elman*

JRC:nc

cc: Board of Managers  
The Faculty  
Harris Wofford