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## Haverford College

HAVERFORD, PA. 19041 215-649-9600

January 7, 1977

Dear Haverfordian:

Sending you a copy of our news release was the fastest way I could think of to transmit the basic facts on the Board's December 10 decision about admitting women. But I promised myself that I would take time later to write a more personal report to you and here it is.

The Board's decision, as you know, was to admit women as transfer students in the upper three years, but not as freshmen, and to further develop the unique Bryn Mawr-Haverford relationship through joint intercollege committees at both the board and campus levels.

As simple as the decision may seem, it was not easy to make. The Board had to balance many considerations, some of them in conflict:

1) An overall Haverford constituency divided on the issues, with feelings running deep on both sides. Among alumni, while no definitive analysis of opinion is available, it is clear that a significant number are concerned that the admission of women would upset cooperation with Bryn Mawr,

2) A virtually united campus community in support of the admission of women, with a parallel commitment to continuing close cooperation with Bryn Mawr, which was seen as based on such compelling mutual self-interest that cooperation was assured regardless of the admissions policy of either institution,

3) A virtually united Bryn Mawr community opposed to the admission of women to Haverford as likely to lead to a withering of the present relationship,

4) A desire on the part of both colleges to retain their distinctive character, which requires that cooperation not impinge on the essential freedom of each college to govern its own future.

The Board's solution represents a middle position among those varied views. As far as I've learned, Bryn Mawr has accepted the decision, although they may have their own reservations. I've been closer to the Haverford scene, and I know that a rather wide spectrum of opinion has been expressed by Haverfordians.

The most structured response has come from the faculty, which had initiated this fall's discussions, and which united on two statements following the Board's decision. The first approved of initiating joint talks with Bryn Mawr aimed at further development of the two-college relationship. It listed priority areas for committee consideration: cross majoring, coeducational freshmen classes, coeducational senior conferences, a joint Haverford-Bryn Mawr faculty council,

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and the removal of all restrictions on free access to the undergraduate educational resources on both campuses. The second faculty statement accepted the transfers-only decision as a temporary policy, but reiterated the faculty's view that women should be admitted to Haverford on the same basis as men. This view has been maturing on the campus for a number of years, and was widely shared well before the issues of admissions and economics gave urgency to the discussion. It rests on the twin convictions, held by a large majority of the faculty, that coeducational classrooms at all levels, and a fully shared campus life, offer a richer educational experience, and that a college with Haverford's Quaker roots should not continue to bar women from equal access to its education.

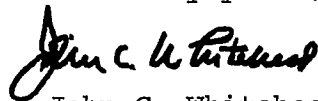
Alumni reaction to date has been varied and reflects no trend. Perhaps this is not surprising when it is recalled that the Board first discussed coeducation at Haverford in 1870, and has at various times approved the admission of women for specialized purposes - to graduate programs in 1920, and to relief and reconstruction training in the late 40's and early 50's. I suspect alumni weren't united then, as they are not united now. Some like the Board's recent decision, and some don't, with those who don't divided between one group that thinks we've gone too far, and another that thinks we haven't gone far enough. One thing that is clear from my mail, however, is that Haverford alumni care about the college, and that, to me, is the most important and encouraging message in your letters.

Looking back, it's been a difficult fall, and a difficult decision-making process - and the burden of it has fallen most heavily on Jack Coleman, who, while he did not raise the issue on this occasion, has, as president, inevitably been the focal point of the debate. It is Jack who has been placed in the most difficult position by the outcome, and I know he still feels under stress. Indeed, he may well want to communicate with you about this in the near future.

Finally, I would say that in deciding as it has, the Board is attempting to steer a course toward the best of all possible worlds: one that preserves the distinctiveness of our college, builds on the mutually beneficial aspects of our relationship with Bryn Mawr, offers an answer to the educational and fiscal questions we face, and maintains the loyalty and the interest of all our constituents - students, faculty, administration, alumni, parents, and friends.

It's an idealistic goal. But for me that always has been the appeal of Haverford.

Sincerely yours,



John C. Whitehead

P.S. One last word: There is real enthusiasm at the college for welcoming women transfer students to Haverford next fall, and I would appreciate your help in making the new admissions policy regarding transfers known in your local area. And keep in mind, too, the continuing need for alumni help in recruiting male students as well.