

Lafayette Faculty Passes Co-Ed Plan; Trustee Decision Awaited

Conversion of Lafayette College into a coeducational institution won overwhelming endorsement of the faculty late yesterday but it appeared that the proposal for a sexually-mixed campus faces close scrutiny by the board of trustees.

The faculty passed a resolution recommending admission of women to all degree programs "as soon as practicable" and calling the step "educationally desirable."

The faculty also recommended to the board that an appropriate committee be established to develop a program of implementation giving consideration to two faculty suggestions:

1. That the college first admit women on a commuter basis and that appropriate changes to campus facilities be started as soon as possible to permit the admission of coeds on a residence basis.

2. That women be added to the student population over the next few years with no diminution in the size of the male student body "as presently planned."

1,750 Male Students

These suggestions were part of the report of a special faculty committee which recommended coeducation for the Easton college, which now serves about 1,750 men.

Dr. K. Roald Bergethon,

president, said any final decision must come from the board.

"The question of coeducation at Lafayette is not one of desirability, but of feasibility," he said. There are sound educational reasons for admitting women. But, unless this decision is accompanied by provisions of facilities and financial support, there can be a loss in education quality because of the inability to recruit and pay high level faculty."

Dr. Albert W. Gendebien, head of the history department and chairman of the special faculty committee, said he was "gratified at the overwhelming support of the

report and the motions." The action was by voice vote in the faculty meeting.

Hopes For Action

"I hope that action can be taken soon to implement the proposals," Gendebien said.

George C. Laub, a 1933 Lafayette graduate who is secretary of the board of trustees, pointed out today some of the matters it must consider in relation to the coed proposal.

"This must be studied not only in light of the educational proposals," he said, "but insofar as expansion of the physical plant and the increase in endowment for this purpose would be involved."

Laub said the college is in

a \$24 million development program and hopes to raise all the money in "three or four" years. This program envisions a male student body of 1,900 to 1,950.

350 to 400 Women

The proposal to add 350 to 400 females, suggested by the faculty committee, must be studied by board committees on educational policy, financial policy and development, he said.

Laub, said coeducation had been discussed at an informal gathering of trustees and some students at Skytop some time ago but has not come up at an official board meeting.

Ralph K. Gottshall, Wilm-

ington, Del., president of the board, was reported in Florida and unavailable.

Alumnus Comments

John V. R. Bull, president of the Easton Area Alumni Association, agreed women undergraduates would be an asset.

"There are a great many women in the Easton area who would attend if they could," he said. "Many now go to other Lehigh Valley colleges."

'Out of Date'

"All-male colleges are out of date," he added. "Taking women as undergraduates at Lafayette would be a step in the right direction."

"If the college wishes to

expand its community participation, this is one good way to do it."

Physical Needs

He noted that the physical demands of accepting women will have a "tremendous impact" on the area, and urged the college to reveal its plans as soon as possible.

"The questions this raises as to the College's land needs and the resulting effect on the public tax base are important," Bull said. "The college will have to recognize the impact of its actions on the general community."

Henry W. Codd, executive director of the Downtown Improvement Group, said women at Lafayette would be "ter-

rific" and would help downtown business.

To Help Economy

William C. Sigal, chairman of DIG's retail committee, said the change would help the economy but also would make the college a "stronger institution."

Lafayette, founded in 1824, held its first classes in 1832. It has a 100-acre campus and owns 250 acres in Forks Township.

Muhlenberg College, Allentown, became coeducational in 1957. Moravian College, Bethlehem, also is coed. Lehigh University, Bethlehem is for men only while Cedar Crest College, Allentown, serves only women.

Women At Lafayette? Faculty Group Favors Plan

Will Lafayette College some day accept women as undergraduates?

Admission of females to historic Lafayette was recommended today by a special faculty committee which has been exploring the subject since last fall.

The recommendation that the college "on the hill" become co-educational was to go before the entire faculty at a meeting this afternoon.

The Express has learned that the committee planned to recommend a "modest transition to a sexually mixed and therefore healthier" campus.

The committee was prepared to move that the faculty recommend these steps to the board of trustees:

- That females be admitted to all degree programs.
- That, as soon as practicable, the college admit females on a "commuter" basis.
- That appropriate changes to campus facilities be initiated as promptly as possible to permit the admission of females on a residence basis.
- That females be added to the student body over the next few years with no diminution in the

size of the male student population as presently planned.

Dr. Albert W. Gendebien, head of the history department, is chairman of the committee which recommended the sharp break with the past at the Presbyterian-related college.

The committee recommended a gradual transition from the present all-male student body of 1,700 to 1,750 to a coeducational campus of 2,200 to 2,300 by 1975.

Of that total, 350 to 400 would be females, the committee said.

"Few adjustments would have to be made," the committee said in its 13-page report, "to incorporate females into this planned number; and the cost need not exceed by great amounts those now planned for this period."

The committee said that faculty and curricular expansion would be "in those areas as required by the academic interest of the females admitted."

Founded in 1824, Lafayette has a 100-acre campus on College Hill. In 1962 the college bought a 250-acre tract in Forks Township for future expansion. The privately endowed college offers courses in arts, science and engineering.

The faculty committee said

that most females who would be admitted in the immediate future would be in liberal arts courses.

The committee foresaw a "more equitable distribution" in these departments between freshman - sophomore enrollments and advanced enrollments if women are admitted.

In the foreseeable future, the report stated, engineering programs "would not be measurably increased" by the addition of coeds.

The view was expressed that high admission standards could be maintained in science programs if their enrollments stayed about the same as they are while the number of arts students increased.

It was felt that coeds would "indirectly help solve two of the pressing problems in the science programs — standards and costs."

Consultation with the committee on student affairs brought the conclusion that coeds would benefit most extracurricular areas as follows:

- Females on campus would have a positive effect on its social life, with a "more relaxed and natural" atmosphere, elimination of the feeling by many

students that they must "jam everything into a party weekend," and development of a "more positive and beneficial attitude towards the opposite sex."

- Females would have a significant effect on such activities as choir, glee club, theater, clubs and the church, which would show "marked improvement" and be "greatly uplifted." Female cheerleaders may evoke more spirit.

- Females would serve as an extra incentive for many male students to remain on campus, reversing the trend for Lafayette to become a "suitcase college."

- "The impact on student-town relations is questionable. Perhaps many local girls would not be sought out as dates and many students would now devote time to campus activities rather than wander around town."

- Merchants would favor the addition of coeds.

- The fraternity system will not be strengthened or weakened.

The faculty committee was formed on motion of Dr. James R. Vitelli, of the English department, at a meeting last May.

Beginning its work in the fall, the committee limited its exploration to the "educational

desirability" of admitting coeds.

The committee found an increasing trend toward sexually-mixed education, citing the fact that of 2,252 institutions of higher learning in the country, only 35 are private, non-denominational liberal arts institutions for men and 40 are for women.

Only 11 of 259 Protestant-related liberal arts colleges are limited to men. Of the 50 Presbyterian-related colleges, 45 are coed, Lafayette and Westminster are for men and Beaver, Lindenwood and Wilson are for women.

"Our judgment," the committee wrote, "could be that finally, if we continue as we are, Lafayette . . . might achieve a unique status — the one remaining all-male campus in the country."

Such a status could mean that Lafayette would "no longer have to compete with other schools" for freshmen, the report commented, and it would be able to pick and choose "even driving desirable applicants away."

The committee said it could not determine whether the college is "at a competitive disadvantage right now because of its all-male condition."

Of applicants accepted last year who went elsewhere instead, 75 indicated they did so because Lafayette was all-male.

The caliber of entering freshman classes at Lafayette has been increasing for 12 or 15 years, the committee pointed out, but warned that the rate of improvement is tapering off.

"Will we hit a plateau soon; will the academic quality of our candidates decline?" the committee asked.

Recruiting females might help Lafayette keep up the quality average, it explained, by doubling the "pool" from which students are recruited while only slightly increasing the size of the freshman class.

For several years it has been harder to maintain quality standards for students admitted to science and engineering than for liberal arts, the committee said. Last year there were 40 fewer potential engineering students admitted than had been planned for.

The committee found that it is possible to admit females of higher average intellectual aptitude than males.

"The educational desirability of mixing the sexes in class and on campus is fairly obvious and elementary," the report went on. "Sexually-segregated colleges came into being in a male-dominated society,

"They never possessed any inherent virtues as segregated schools and there are no sound educational arguments to support their continued existence in a society that is no longer so extremely sexually-segregated."

Factors in the admission of coeds which the committee said would help to enhance the academic quality of the college include:

The number of women students entering college has been increasing faster than has the number of men. The same disproportionate acceleration is showing at the graduation level.

Even more significant is the quality of the female "pool" entering colleges.

Women are more likely to place academic reasons for going to college first, and occupational reasons second. Men reverse this order, the committee held.

The presence of women in college exerts pressure chiefly upon liberal arts studies.

A subcommittee concluded that coeds at Lafayette would probably strengthen the arts programs more than engineering and science.

Lafayette To Go Coeducational Soon As Feasible, Trustees Rule

Coed Decision Is Hailed By LV Residents

Study Groups To Recommend Specific Plan

By MADELEINE B. MATHIAS
Express Staff Writer

Reaction of Easton area educators and public officials was generally favorable today to the announcement that Lafayette College will become a coeducational institution.

Although a few alumni said they would have preferred the college to maintain its traditions, they felt the change would benefit the area.

Easton Mayor Fred L. Ashton Jr., a 1952 Lafayette graduate, said, "From an alumni standpoint I'm very disappointed, but from a community viewpoint I think it's fine."

He said as a graduate he thinks the traditions should remain. He added he was disappointed when women were accepted for enrollment in summer school.

"But times change and we have to keep up with them," he said.

However, John V. R. Bull, immediate past president of the Easton Area Alumni Association, lauded the decision.

"Keeping Lafayette all-male would merely perpetuate an artificial situation," he said.

"With women gaining increasingly important positions in business, political and social situations, there is no reason why they should be denied admission to educational institutions."

"For those of us in the Easton area, particularly, this decision is welcome. There are many local women who would love to attend Lafayette."

"Denying them admission has deprived them of an excellent educational opportunity."

"This is another instance of how rapidly Lafayette is moving to assume a new position of relevance in the world about

Lafayette College—an all-male institution for 137 years—is going coeducational.

The decision for the enrollment change was made by the board of trustees meeting yesterday in New York City.

The trustees said they approved in principle a faculty recommendation for the admission of women to Lafayette.

No date was set for the admission of the first women. However, the administrative officers and faculty were instructed to develop plans for implementation "as quickly as feasible."

Faculty and administrative committees are expected to be set up immediately to work throughout the summer on plans for coeducation so they can be presented to the trustees at their September meeting.

One of the key points of the decision is that the trustees accepted the reasoning and thinking of the faculty, which had recommended the change to coeducation.

The faculty report had been criticized by some alumni for not being complete in detail on how the change from an all-male institution to a coeducational one would take place. The report centered mostly on the educational aspects of the change.

The trustees decision means that within an undetermined period of time women will be living on the Lafayette campus. They will be taking classes in all departments and will be sharing in all social and college activities.

One of these days a woman might be head of student government or hold similar posts that have remained in the hands of male students for more than a century.

Primary Reliance

In its action yesterday, the 31-man board noted that it must "of right and necessity, place primary reliance upon recommendations duly adopted by the faculty and administration of the college" in setting educational goals and policies.

Ralph K. Gottshall, board president, said after the meeting: "The trustees have accepted the recommendation of the faculty because of its merit."

"As trustees of an educational institution it is only logical that we have respect for faculty judgment in educational matters."

The board action brings to a conclusion the question of coeducation which has been con-



RALPH K. GOTTSALL
Trustee Chairman

sidered since June 1967 when a faculty committee first began studying a possible change in enrollment.

In April 1968, the faculty recommended to the board that women be admitted "as soon as practicable."

Since 1832

Lafayette, with 1,850 undergraduate students, has had an all-male enrollment since it first held classes in 1832, except during World War II when some women were admitted as special students.

Joseph A. Grazier, vice president of the board, presented the resolution, which began with a reminder that Lafayette is chartered "to dedicate all of its resources and activities to the education of youth" and had an all-male enrollment only because of "history and tradition."

Lists Conditions

The board said final acceptance is subject to board approval of:

1. A model for ultimate college and department enrollment by sexes which this board determines, under all relevant circumstances, is reasonably attainable within the near future and is economically sound.

2. A time schedule and procedure for accomplishment thereof which are determined by this board to be appropriate.

The board asked two of its committees—educational policy and financial policy—to work with the administration and "appropriate faculty committees" to achieve these objectives.

The committees have been instructed to develop "as quickly as feasible... programs designed to fulfill the provisos of these resolutions to the end that the decision to admit women... can be instituted as promptly as possible under the circumstances."

Complex Problems

The resolution noted the decision involves "many difficult and complex problems."

It suggested, "All such persons (trustees, faculty, students, alumni) are requested to cooperate fully with the officials of the college and the committees... in the discharge of their responsibilities under these resolutions, and to treat their actions and responses in carrying out their responsibilities