Lafayette Faculty Passes Co-Ed Plan; Trustee Decision Awaited

Conversion of Lafayette College into a coeducational institution was overwhelmingly endorsed by the faculty late yesterday but it appeared that the proposal for a sexually-integrated campus faces a close scrutiny by the board of trustees.

The faculty passed a resolution recommending admission of women to all degree programs "as soon as practical" 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.

1,150 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 1,150 men.

Dr. K. H. Reidinger, 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 for 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. Gochenau, 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 motion."

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," Gochenau 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.

"The question must be studied not only in light of the educational proposals," he said. "It is to be expected that the committee responsible for the physical plant and the increase in endowment for this purpose would be involved.

Laub said the college is a $24 million development program and hopes to raise all the money in "three or four years."

Alumni Comments

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

"There are a great many women in the Easton area who could afford it 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. "Women are entitled to the same education that men are getting.

Physical Needs

He asked that the physical demands of accepting women will have a "considerable impact" on the campus and urged the college to reveal its plans as soon as possible.

The question of housing and the dormitory plans 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. Cod, executive director of the Downtown Improvement Group, said women at Lafayette would be "terrific" and would help downtown business.

To Help Economy

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

Lafayette, founded in 1836, held its first classes in 1837. It has a 100-acre campus and owns 215 acres in Forks Township.

Muhlenberg College, Allentown, became coeducational in 1857. 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 be given the entire faculty at a meeting this afternoon.

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

The committee was prepared to more 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. Gendron, 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 2,300 to 2,500 by 1975.

Of that total, 239 to 469 would be females, the committee said. Few adjustments would have to be made, the committee said in its 13-page report. "To incorporate female into this plan would be the least drastic and least costly change that could be made to the present campus, and that the cost would be less than the cost would be less than the cost of any other possible solution, and that the cost would be less than the cost would be less than the cost of any other possible solution.

The view was expressed that high admission standards could be maintained in science programs if their enrollments were limited to the number of female students interested.

It was felt that coeds would "indirectly help solve the problem of the present career problems in the science programs and standardize and costs."

Consultation with the committee on student affairs brought the conclusion that coeds would benefit most extracurricular activities as follows:
- A more diverse student body would have a positive effect on its social life, with a "more relaxed and natural" atmosphere.

The committee recommended the adoption of the "educational desirability" of admitting coeds.

The committee found an increasing trend toward sexually-related education, citing the fact that 2,232 institutions of higher learning in the country, only 55 are private, non-denominational liberal arts institutions for men and 40 are for women.

Only 11 of 370 Presbyterian-related liberal arts colleges are limited to men. Of the 30 Presbyterian-related colleges, 45 are coeds, Lafayette and Westminster are for men and Beaver, Lindenwood and Wilson are for women.

"Our judgment," the committee wrote, "would 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 coeds would "no longer have to compete with other schools for freshners, the report continued, and it would be able to select and choose "those driving desirable applicants away."

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

Of applicants accepted last year, not one went elsewhere instead, 75 indicated they did so because Lafayette was all-male.

The caliper of entering freshman classes at Lafayette has been increasing for 15 or 16 years, the committee pointed out, but warned that the rate of improvement is tapering off.

"If 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 liberal arts and engineering than for all other liberal arts, the committee said. Last year there were fewer potential engineering students admitted than had been planned for.

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

"The educational desirability of mixing the sexes in all campus, and particularly in the school of pharmacy, is a topic of lively discussion.

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

The committee recommended that coeds at Lafayette would probably do better in the arts programs more than engineering and science."
Lafayette To Go Coeducational Soon As Feasible, Trustees Rule

Coed Decision Is Hailed By LV Residents

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 A. Ashton Jr., a 1913 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, favored the decision.

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

"With women gaining increasing importance in business, political and social situations, there is no reason why they should not be admitted to educational institutions."

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

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

"In another generation, how rapidly Lafayette is moving in the world ahead, it's time Lafayette was modern and moving along."

Study Groups To Recommend Specific Plan

BY MADELEINE B. MATHIAS

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 urged to 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 decided that during the period of time women will be enrolled in the Lafayette program, 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 a department in a government or held similar important positions that have remained confined to men's departments. Lafayette, with 1,500 unall-male enrollment, has had only a few women among its all-male student body since it opened in 1832, except during World War II when some women were admitted as special students.

Primary Resistance

In its action yesterday, the board noted that it must face "right of necessity, place primary reliance upon recommendations duly adopted by the faculty and administration of all resources and activities 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 conclusion the question of coeducation which has been

Ralph K. Gottshall

The Trustees have favored coeducation since June 1932 when faculty committee first began studying a possible change in enrollment.

In April 1936, the faculty recommended to the board that women be admitted "as soon as practicable."

Since 1832

Lafayette, 1,500 unall-male enrollment, has had only a few women among its all-male student body since it opened in 1832, except during World War II when some women were admitted as special students.

Joseph A. Grazer, vice president of the board, presented the resolution, which began with this: "As trustees of a college dedicated to the development and promotion of learning and to the education of youth, and in the interest of the welfare of the students, the trustees have decided to open Lafayette College to all qualified students, both men and women."

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 committee, in the discharge of their responsibilities under these resolutions and to treat their actions and responses in care.

List Conditions

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

1. A model for ultimate college and departmental committee organization and administration and "appropriate faculty committees" to achieve these objectives.

2. The standing of trustees, faculty, and students.

3. A state of economic health of the school and the world. "The school's position is not as strong as it might be and the world situation is not as favorable as it should be."