

September 1966

To: Alumni Interviewers

From: Fred Hargadon, Dean of Admissions

Well, the Class of 1970 has arrived and after a five-day orientation program they began classes on the 26th. I think they're great (naturally) and I am sorry that each of you could not be on hand to see them get their feet wet (quite literally true, as on the day they arrived we had a real Northeaster). Not only are they bright, but they seem unusually poised and good-looking. The physical education department, having run all of them through their tests, assures me that as a class they are also unusually healthier and well-fit. At any rate, more of them can swim.

There are 269 of them, and their academic laurels include 19 National Merit Scholarships, 4 National Achievement Scholarships (these are awards by National Merit to exceptionally promising Negro students), and 2 Presidential Scholarships. There are 31 children of alumni in the class, and 14 Quakers. On the athletic side, 23 of the 147 men captained varsity squads in high school.

(Additional statistics are appended.)

Admissions Procedures. There have been no significant changes in the forms for this year. Both the application form and the interview report form seemed satisfactory. We did make a change in the procedure of the admissions committee, however. In the first place, rather than having the committee read summaries of each candidate's application, we asked them to read the full folder. We also had them read all of the folders with the exception of those where the application was clearly unrealistic. An additional significant change was having them read the folders before looking at the candidate's college board test results. In the past the results of these tests were prominently displayed on our summary cards and it seemed to us that there was too great a chance that a glance at the scores would predispose the reader toward the rest of the candidate's application. Each member of the committee read about 125 folders, and, instead of grading the application for "acceptance" or "rejection," the reader wrote out comments on the folder, pointing out particular strengths or weaknesses, unusual qualities, and so forth. It was left to those of us in admissions, based on our overview of the entire applicant group with respect to the needs of the College, to put the class together.

School and Scholarship Committees. Last Winter Joe Shane and I made a rather hectic trip of a week's length beginning in St. Louis, through Denver, L.A., San Francisco, Portland, and ending in Seattle. We talked with alumni interested in forming School and Scholarship Committees to aid us in the interviewing and recruitment of good students. The response was extremely good, and we are at present working out the formal arrangements, necessary publications, and so forth. We have been unable to move as quickly on this as I had hoped, primarily because we have had to shift out attention to the needs of the newly formed Academic Commission (discussed below). This past summer we have been involved largely in conferences having to do with a re-appraisal of the College in all of its aspects. And since the Admissions Office is the major repository of educational data having to do with secondary schools, their curricula, their products, and the whole range of testing data, we shall be engaged in processing such data for the use of the new Commissions. I nevertheless hope to get the School Committees in these six cities off the ground this year, and to initiate such committees in several other locations. Their three basic aims will be: (1) to improve and extend our communication with secondary schools and prospective applicants; (2) to improve our arrangements for the scheduling of alumni interviews, hopefully using a team method wherever feasible; and (3) to help us pinpoint outstanding candidates for the Swarthmore National Scholarships. I will try my best to fully develop this program throughout the year, although right now I am not sure where the necessary time will come from.

Swarthmore National Scholarships. These are explained in the latest edition of the catalogue. They replace the Open Scholarships (which were not only confusing in their nomenclature, but which also became increasingly the preserve of students who lived close enough to the College to come to campus for the competition and interviews), and there will be a greater number of them. They will be awarded on a national basis and an Award Committee will hold competitions (interviews) wherever there are a sufficient number of potential National Scholarship candidates to warrant them. You might want to review the criteria for these awards in the attached announcement. I hope you will make every effort to get us outstanding candidates for them.

The College. This promises to be one of the most provocative and exciting years in the College's recent history. Late in the Spring Courtney Smith announced the establishment of three Commissions to take a searching look at all aspects of the College and to make recommendations concerning our role in higher education in the decade ahead. The full details are explained in the new (October) issue of the alumni magazine. Among the other features of the College which you will discuss with candidates, an explanation of the Commissions should prove interesting to them.

The McCabe Library is on its way up and the contractors (Turner Construction Company) are still optimistic about having it ready for use by September, 1967. Also, ground has been broken and the foundations are being laid for the two new men's dormitories (Dana and Hallowell), the work also being done by Turner, and there is a slight chance that these will also be ready for occupancy by next Fall.

In the middle of last March we moved the Admissions Office (without losing a folder) to our new location in the old dining room. Needless to say, the area has been completely renovated, and we have gained much in the way of office space and lounge facilities. The students think it looks like a bank (it does), but we are all used to it now. Parents no longer are stacked up in the halls of Parrish, and the entire staff is appreciative of the more efficient arrangements of files, etc.

Admissions Staff. Peggy MacLaren has moved out of admissions, and has become Associate Dean of Students, working with both Dean Lange and Dean Barr. She will continue her duties as Director of Financial Aid. John Shuchardt, who was with us for a year, is now with the Experiment in International Living. Two new Assistant Deans of Admission have been appointed: Edith Twombly, who graduated from Swarthmore in 1964, and Doug Thompson, who graduated in 1962. Edie, after leaving Swarthmore, received her M.Ed. from Harvard and taught last year at the International School in Frankfurt, Germany. Doug, who graduated with a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from Swarthmore, was working as a junior physicist with the Bartol Foundation here on campus. He also spent over two years with the Bartol Cosmic Ray Laboratories in Antarctica and the South Pole. Doug will have primary responsibility for the recruitment of engineering students.

Problem areas.

- A. Engineering applicants. This remains a critical area for us. We simply do not get a sufficient number of applicants who expect to major in engineering. Consequently, we are under-enrolled in this division of the College. We are not interested in lowering the standards of admission for such candidates, nor can we afford to have candidates indicate engineering as their likely major if they are doing so because they believe it's more likely that they will be accepted for admission. We need good, solid, qualified engineering candidates sufficient in quantity, and sufficiently interested in "engineering in a liberal arts college" program, to enroll at least 30-35 freshmen engineers now, and 40 when we have completed the men's dormitories and increase the number of total men enrolled accordingly. Please do all you can to foster interest in our engineering program. We have sufficient scholarship funds, also.
- B. Negro male applicants. While we do not accept Negro students according to any quota system, we have made special efforts the past three years to increase the number of such students enrolled in the College, and have had the generous support of a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. Our policy has been to accept the Negro students on almost the same basis as all other students, expecting a certain minimum academic ability but also recognizing reasons for less than excellent academic achievement in the past. As far as Negro males go, we were

taken to the cleaners this year. We enrolled only 3 out of the 12 we accepted (last year we enrolled 8 of 12). Our scholarship offers were more than competitive, but the social status (in contrast to the academic status) of the Ivy League apparently clobbered us. Interestingly enough, many of those we lost were not only bright, but also athletic - the first such group of Negro scholar-athletes that we have had apply to us ever. Since these young men seemed to have the leadership qualities the Rockefeller grant sought to recruit and develop, it is all the more disappointing to have lost them. We still have considerable Rockefeller funds and I hope that you will devote whatever efforts you can toward helping us find (and enroll) such students.

- C. Scholar-Athletes. The philosophy of the College with regard to the proper role of an athletic program is well-known and need not be restated. As with all other major extra-curricular programs (e.g. music), we do seek students of good academic quality who have ability and interest in athletics. As with all other conceivable categories in admissions, it is necessary to have a sufficient number of qualified applicants from which to make selections each year. Our particular program should be attractive to those qualified students with athletic ability who are interested in an excellent education and participation in an amateur (but excellent) varsity sports program. Because of our small size, freshman are eligible to play on the varsity in all sports. An increase in the number of applications from scholar-athletes is necessary to assure the continuation of our present athletic program as a vital part of the extra-curricular program of the College. I trust this need can be stated frankly without engendering false beliefs (or hopes) that the College is going "big time". It is not. Our only hope is to maintain a high quality applicant group in all respects. As amateurs, our record in varsity sports over the past few years is unusually good. With your help we should be able to attract scholar-athletes of high quality.
- D. Public Relations. We have noticed over the past year that many applicants mention (adversely) the write-ups about Swarthmore College in various guidebooks of college and universities. One in particular is a real problem: the Cass and Birnbaum Comparative Guide to Colleges, in which the authors give subjective interpretations of the various schools. The fact that neither of the authors has visited the College does not deter them from drawing all sorts of inferences from various statistics, old copies of the Phoenix, etc. We think that terms such as "extraordinarily intense pressure for academic achievement" are somewhat overdrawn, and statistics (e.g. those for academic attrition) are simply false. President Smith wrote them a four-page letter suggesting that their picture was somewhat less than accurate, included the correct data on a number of points (e.g. attrition,

number of Ph.D's on the faculty), and invited them to visit the College themselves. There has never been any reply, although they were willing to make some corrections in a rather contentious fashion in their second edition. Unfortunately, we have had candidates with excellent academic records and abilities who have withdrawn their applications after reading this particular summary of the College. Our academic attrition in the past five years has varied from 2.5% to 2.9%. The fact that 77% of the men and 83% of the women graduate in four years is of course attributable to a host of factors other than that of academic failure. The percentage who do graduate in four years is quite high for a college of this calibre, or any calibre, for that matter. And it is interesting to note that in a recent study of all the National Merit Scholars since 1956, some 15% do not graduate in four years, although 95% eventually do.

The problems of the subjective analysis are apparent in the following two excerpts from Cass and Birnbaum:

Swarthmore: "Despite the most careful selection during admission process, one out of every four students fails to graduate (an even higher figure was reported in the student newspaper in 1962)."
(77% of the men and 83% of the women graduate in four years.)

Pomona: "Despite a competitive student climate, only a small percentage of students fail to graduate". (71% of the men, and 70% of the women graduate in four years.)

I would not belabor this point if it were not for the accumulated mail on the subject from candidates who could do well at any college in the country. And I think you ought to be prepared to answer such inquiries yourself. Our program is as rigorous as any in the country, but it has also been shown that we take in students of a wider variety of academic abilities and graduate a higher percentage of those students than similar colleges throughout the country. It would be particularly useful if Cass and Birnbaum could sit in on the Committee on Academic Requirements and learn that many of those who do fail out of Swarthmore do so not because they lack the ability (many of them have the best high school records) but rather because they don't do any work at all, have personal problems, and so forth.

I would appreciate all you can do to allow the Admissions Office of Swarthmore to make the determinations of whether a candidate "can do the work" here. Self-selection by students is probably the key factor in college admissions everywhere, and it is obvious that if they do not apply to Swarthmore we cannot accept them. And if only those who are first in their class, or who have very high college board scores, apply, it will reinforce the erroneous idea that we only accept such students.

Otherwise we're all healthy and ready to start all over again. We do need a selective increase in applications, as many of our applications look alike. If we are to maintain the diversity of the College, we need more diversity in the application group, particularly among the men! Many thanks for all you have done and will do on our behalf.

Applications last year

Men: 1,092
 Women: 1,187
 Total: 2,279

Acceptances sent out

Men: 247
 Women: 201
 Total: 448

Enrolled

Men: 147
 Women: 122
 Total: 269

The schools to which we lost the largest number of those we accepted but who went elsewhere were:

Harvard	28	Radcliffe	34
Yale	10	Wellesley	6
Princeton	11	Stanford	6

Negro Acceptances and Enrollment

Of the 12 male Negro applicants accepted only 3 enrolled.
 Of those who went elsewhere, 6 went to Harvard, 1 to Princeton, 1 to M.I.T., and 1 to Earlham.

Of the 12 female Negro applicants accepted, 8 enrolled.
 Of those who went elsewhere, 1 went to Radcliffe, 1 to Mount Holyoke, 1 to Cornell University, and 1 whose College we do not know.

Two of the Negro men and two of the Negro women we did enroll are National Achievement Scholarship winners.

B

Interviews for Applicants Accepted for Admission

		<u>Enrolled</u>
Interviewed by Staff:	309	185
Interviewed by Alumni:	119	76
Interviewed waived:	<u>20</u>	<u>7</u>
	448	268

Scholarship funds

Offered: \$189,950

Accepted: 127,550

Loan Funds

Offered: \$7,600

Accepted: 6,900

(This is for the freshman class alone.)

Scholarship offers to Negro students (included in above figures):

Offered: \$36,100

Accepted: 15,500