

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE
SWARTHMORE, PENNSYLVANIA 19081

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

26 November 1968

Dear Courtney:

This letter sets down some considerations the Council on Educational Policy may wish to keep in mind when they weigh Upward Bound along with the various possibilities for summer programs at Swarthmore.

To me the strongest reason for continuing our Upward Bound program for the present is that it lets the College be a good neighbor in our own community in a way that is sorely needed locally, and is at the same time part and parcel of what many judge to be the biggest national problem of our time. What we do is small, but it is concrete, and it is increasingly effective (especially since we included a residential component). It helps individual slum young people (six Swarthmore Upward Bound students have moved out to be resident students in ABC programs, one at the Waynflete School in Portland, Maine, one at Appleton High School in Wisconsin, one at Mercersburg Academy, one at Solebury School, one at Dana Hall School, Massachusetts, one at Maumee Country Valley Day School in Ohio, where they will be for their junior and senior years; one is at Germantown Friends School on scholarship raised from individuals at Swarthmore, another is at George School on the same basis; two will go to George School on foundation money, another to Westtown on the same basis; and of the eight Upward Bound 12th graders, seven are expected to go to college -- one we hope to Swarthmore, another to Hofstra, another to Oberlin). And after having been "shut out" years ago by the Chester schools, it is now welcomed and praised by the Chester school people (about a week ago 20 of them, including 5 principals and 10 guidance counselors) visited Sharples for supper and an evening of discussion about admissions and activities of the program).

To put the above briefly, we are close to Chester's woes, and they are our country's woes. But one needs to ask, too, whether Upward Bound is relevant to our capacities as an institution, and whether it helps our students.

Both of these latter seem to me, also, to be plusses. Others, for example, Fred Hargadon and Lee Bramson, point out (and I agree) that an intellectual college has a special capacity for motivating high capacity young people drawn from limited backgrounds. But for my part, though I would welcome

moving out as we can to some of these functions too, I keep thinking about these plain poor kids on our own doorstep; and I keep thinking maybe in this activity we should not seek out the special and the gifted, but should use whatever gifts and acuity we have for a place nearly without hope (we all drive through Chester every now and then, and "nearly without hope" does not seem like an exaggeration) that is "neighbor" to us in the Good Samaritan sense. I do believe the talent of our students and faculty can sometimes succeed, even in this harder and local chore, because the talent is high, and there can be a contagion of ideas from people who find ideas compelling. How different a bright Swarthmore student would seem, in doing this for a slum youngster, from the child's standard fare in the classroom. Consequently I do not feel "what a waste" when I think of our very able people helping in this kind of a service.

Again on the favorable side, I would point out the relevance and interest of this experience to our students. The CEP has proposed that more encounter with practical problems may be expected in some cases to be educationally relevant for our students. We continue to draw interest, for the jobs of tutor or counselor, from students who are strong both intellectually and in other ways. The series of student "heads" includes people like Phil Grier, Jack Nagel, Steve Hamilton, Muffin Reid, Ray McClain, Dan Nussbaum. For some there has been professional relevance -- for example Steve Hamilton and Muffin Reid (teaching); also for Bob Cooter (psychology); and for Diane Batts (sociology). Participating students have worked hard, and do not wish to continue forever; but they gain, and there is a continuing supply of students from among our best (50 applicants last year for 12 places). One student, speaking of his UB work last spring as tutor, called this activity "an oasis."

It may be commented that students are more drawn to this than faculty members. One can see that younger faculty members (who are also those with whom our student participants feel most rapport) are busy with responsibilities such as thesis completion, research, teaching and so on. But one should also notice, I think, that our summer full-time faculty participants have been the people we "set our cap" for, and there have not been difficulties gaining their help for that limited period, nor in gaining the help of a large number of committee participants who have generously spent time and effort on working subcommittees, such as counselor recruitment, admission, facilities, program, and so on. The specific role of Project Director is so strongly administrative that it is perhaps not a matter of surprise that young faculty members have hesitated

to be that much diverted from the academic side; and one wonders whether, through current interest in an increase in black studies, or interest in counselling for black students, the personnel picture might suddenly develop in a way that would be helpful on this score.

One further favorable consideration is to my mind the one of tradition. I heartily support the present "rational look" at comparative reasons, and do not think it a sufficient reason that we should continue with Upward Bound simply because "we are in it." But I do value the fact that before it was Upward Bound, it was initiated by Swarthmore students and operated two years independently of any federal program -- indeed experiments like ours may have had some relevance in persuading the country that this kind of effort on the part of colleges should receive federal support. So it is "our own" in a sense it would not be if we had only begun by accepting federal dollars.

In a word let me mention some of the negatives. Some will say, not without some justification, that Swarthmore's role for helping in minority education should be to choose the most promising country-wide and help them toward leadership roles (and I have given my reactions to this, above). The share of college dollars to federal dollars has increased from 10% to 20%, and I have myself worked against the view, sometimes heard from Washington, that if colleges want this, they should be willing to pay part of the bill. (As we know, most of college support comes from gifts, and gifts for this special purpose have become increasingly difficult since there is a government program.) We cannot be sure that the college share of support, already significant, will not be required to increase (present indications are it will not increase for next year). Further, we have sometimes wondered whether the federal "guidelines" would restrict us -- for example in asking us to take part in an extent and style of college placement of UB "graduates" which we would not ourselves welcome. At present, our experience is that our relations with Washington are good; we think they like what we are trying to do and are understanding of our need to deviate from some of their standard practices (for example, our students in a significant sense plan and carry out the Swarthmore program).

Once more on the plus side. I note that Upward Bound is a going thing, has an organization, student interest, present activities, even a fair amount (though we do not promise more than we can deliver) of expectation and anticipation from Chester young people and teachers (and it has been hard to earn!). Therefore it seems to me to be desirable to continue for the present, hoping this would not rule out other possibilities that are being considered.

Sincerely,

Gilmore Stott

President Courtney Smith