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SWARTHMORE COLLEGE  
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

To the Members of the Swarthmore College Community:

I would like to share with all members of the College community a number of thoughts which I expressed to the Faculty at its meetings on January 24 and 27. I hope that this communication will be helpful to our total understanding.

We all know that we are deeply troubled at this time. The events and conditions which we have experienced during the recent weeks have affected each one of us in many ways and have put a very real strain on our College community. I further know and recognize that each one of us must regard his own thoughts in his own way but I do believe that at such a time as this it may be helpful for all of us to look to our basic purposes and principles.

The basic purpose of the College as expressed in its charter is the imparting of knowledge in the various branches of science, literature and the arts, and we are organized as a separate, relatively small, residential, undergraduate liberal arts college. There must be no diminution of our fundamental purpose.

We must recognize that our College is an organized body of men and women brought together for a particular purpose. Each person who is a part of the College has chosen to become a part, and the College as a whole can properly look to each member for support of the basic purpose and principles of our undertaking. I feel we must give full support to our fundamental purpose and principles. The success of any such body of human beings rests on cooperative effort. Men can do much more by working together than individually and cooperation is the creative process by which we can hope to achieve our purpose and be guided by our principles.

But these are general considerations which I feel we must all recognize at this time; and in addition, there are certain other matters which I believe require our particular consideration in what I choose to call the immediate and intermediate future, which means the remainder of this college year.

First, I feel that we have a particular need at this time for communication and understanding, and this means two-way communication so that in addition to understanding, we can be understood. We must remember that we need communication and understanding among those here on the campus and we need it, too, with the others interested in the College such as the Board of Managers, our Alumni, and the public. Communication is always needed by an organization of human beings and indeed we must recognize that it is one of the most difficult principles of human relationship to make effective. We have a particular need for communication and understanding now and I hope that each member of our community can do his part in this important matter.

Secondly, I feel a particular need for what I call a recognition of reality. By this I mean recognizing and committing ourselves to what we can do most effectively in this immediate and intermediate period.

Our academic program is the primary exemplification of our basic purpose and our great strength, and there should be no diminution of the effectiveness of this program in the period ahead. In fact, I feel that we should make a particular commitment to lead from strength and assure that our academic program functions with optimum effectiveness, and I hope that all of us will commit ourselves to this purpose.

In further recognition of reality, it is clear that, at best, our administrative arrangements for this intermediate period will be below optimum effectiveness. We therefore must recognize that it will not be a period for innovation, major new programs, or major program changes -- all of which means that we can best direct our efforts to our basic program. This does not mean, however, delaying consideration and action on those matters already before us.

I do feel, however, that the period ahead can be a good and useful period for a careful, analytical and evaluative examination of our organization, our arrangements for decision making, and our definitions of responsibility and authority. I would feel definitely that some outside objective examiners should be a part of the process. It seems clear to me that the new president must be a direct party to any significant rearrangement of our structure but an analytical and evaluative study done during the intermediate future should be a valuable basis for consideration. Courtney Smith had very much in mind proposing that we undertake a study of the type I have referred to.

In this respect I can also say that the Board of Managers has discussed the advisability of such an analytical and evaluative examination of our structure, communications, and decision making arrangements and feels a particular responsibility to arrange for a study involving all constituencies of the College. The Board wishes to determine the structure for such a study and Mr. Browning will be conferring with others on this matter. It seems clear that objective observers from outside the College will be an important part of the arrangements.

In closing I can only say that the College will greatly benefit from the cooperative support of all of us and I hope that together we can create a positive atmosphere of understanding for the future.

Edward K. Cratsley  
Acting President

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