

ANNUAL REPORT
1928-1929

A. Report of the Secretary of the Board of Admission

Since the Secretary of the Board of Admission has many duties not connected with the admission of students, it seems best to divide the report of the year's work into separate sections dealing with the various duties. Since the report covers the period beginning June 15, 1928, the first statistics to be reported are those dealing with the students admitted in the fall of that year.

Students admitted in September, 1928

Reentering	4
Advanced Standing	2
Freshman	
Plan I	15
Plan II	21
Plan III	82
	<u>118</u>
	124

The number of new students admitted in September 1927 was 171. The shrinkage in 1928 was due to the new admission requirements. In view of the opposition to College Board Examinations in northern New England it is probable that the announcement of our new requirements kept many students from applying for admission who could have passed the examination and who would in former years have been admitted without examination. The small number entering in September 1928 was due, therefore, both to a falling off of applicants for admission and also to the failure in the examinations of a considerable number who did apply. Rather than to have a large number of vacancies, the Board admitted a number of candidates who were obviously rather poor risks. Some of these candidates have done better work in college than others whose records appeared to the Board to be more promising. In the report of the Adviser of Freshmen, reference is made to the unusually large number of withdrawals from the class of 1932.

Change in Subject Requirements

Soon after the opening of college the question of possible changes in subject requirements was raised at a meeting of the Board of Admission. It was necessary to decide in the fall on any changes which should appear in the catalogue issued the following January. In order to find out what changes were being contemplated at other colleges, the Secretary visited Miss Knapp at Wellesley and Miss Newhall at Mount Holyoke. In order to get a consensus of opinion from representative schools, the Secretary wrote to four private school principals and four public school principals. She also visited Dana Hall and Central High School in Springfield.

As a result of these visits and this correspondence the Secretary proposed that we make a change in our policy in the direction of more flexibility in the matter of subject requirements. This suggestion was adopted and the changes are reflected in the two following statements which appear on page 36 of the catalogue:

- (1) "With the consent of the Board of Admission the privilege of some substitution within the regularly prescribed courses may be extended to candidates of exceptional ability."
- (2) "The other three units are elective, but must consist of subjects accepted for diploma credit in the secondary school."

Soon after the booklets issued by the Alumnae Council were ready for distribution, copies were sent by the admissions office to approximately 160 schools, one half of them in New England. Letters were sent to 66 public schools and to 6 private schools calling attention to the changes in our subject requirements. The results have been gratifying. A number of unusually good candidates have been enrolled who would not have been eligible for admission under our old requirements. It is probable that we will see the good results of our new policy even more clearly at the end of another year. It is recommended that we feature these characteristics of our requirements more prominently in the next catalogue.

School Visits

The following schools have been visited during the year:

Public Schools	Private Schools
Adams High School	Abbott Academy
Foxboro High School	Buffalo Seminary
Hartford Public High School	Dana Hall
Meriden High School	Germantown Friends School
No. Adams High School	Northampton School for Girls
Springfield High School	Oak Lane Country Day School (Phila)
Wilmington High School	

Most of the public schools were visited in connection with "College Day" programs and in nearly every case the Secretary talked with some students interested in Wheaton. In some cases, however, it was doubtful whether there was enough interest shown to justify the time spent in making the school visit. This was particularly the case in connection with the Berkshire County Conference in the spring. A number of representatives from other women's colleges also questioned the advisability of attending such a conference every year.

Since Wheaton draws many of its best students from Maine and since there is some confusion in the minds of some of the Maine principals regarding our new requirements, it seems probable that it would be wise to put more time in the visiting of Maine schools next year and less time in visiting schools in Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Buffalo Conference

Early in the spring Wheaton was represented at the conference between representatives of the National Association of Principals of Schools for Girls and the nine Colleges for Women requiring examinations for admission. A full report of this conference is on file in the office of the Board of Admission.

The most important fact brought out at the conference was the need for greater flexibility in subject requirements and for greater diversification among the colleges. The private school principals appeared to be looking for just what Wheaton now offers and many of them said that they expected to send candidates to Wheaton in the near future. Within a few weeks after the conference, one candidate from Buffalo Seminary was enrolled and soon after that two candidates from the Albany School for Girls.

Interviews with Candidates for Admission in 1929

Plan I	12
Plan II	36
Plan III	76
Adv. Standing	7
	131

Most of these interviews took place in Norton. The principal exceptions were the interviews which the Secretary of the Board had with candidates in New York during the Christmas holidays and during the Easter vacation, and the five interviews which were arranged with alumnae. The alumnae who were asked to interview candidates at distant points made full and valuable reports and it is suggested that more use be made of alumnae in this way another year.

Although occasionally the net result of the interview is negligible, as a rule the interview is throws a good deal of light on the candidate's attitude toward college and is particularly helpful to the Secretary of the Board in connection with the assigning of room-mates.

13. Report of Registration

(Known at Wheaton as "Classification")

During the first semester all the work connected with registration was carried on in the Office of the Board of Admission, but beginning with the election of courses for 1929-1930 the work was transferred to the Office of the Registrar with the exception of the registration of new students. Although it is too early to draw any conclusions as to this new division of functions, it is clear that the work can be carried on in the Office of the Registrar without the duplication of records which was formerly necessary. The new arrangement also does away with the inevitable division of responsibility which was a bad feature of the old plan. The chief difficulty which remains has to do with the sectioning of courses in which freshmen are enrolled. The English and History departments have requested that freshman courses in these departments be sectioned according to ability. Consequently, this sectioning work in English 1 and History 13 cannot be done until all College Board reports have been received. This means that the sections of other courses must also be post-

poned. This makes a difficult situation in the Registrar's office since there are some courses, such as the elementary courses in science and languages, which are composed of freshmen and members of the upper classes. The final arrangements for sectioning of these courses depend upon the freshman sectionings. There seems to be no way of completing this work before August and under the present system it must be done jointly by the Registrar's office and the office of the Board of Admission.

C. Report of the Adviser of Freshmen

The freshman class was unusually small, due to the new entrance requirements, and an unusually large number of students withdrew in the course of the year. By the end of the first semester, thirteen members of the freshman class had withdrawn from college voluntarily. Since this is an unusually large number, the reasons for withdrawal may be of interest:

Poor health	8
Homesickness	1
Lack of interest	1
Poor academic work	3

No freshmen were asked to withdraw at the end of the first semester. This situation was due largely to the fact that most of the students whose work had been the poorest had withdrawn voluntarily. By the end of the second semester three other low grade freshmen had withdrawn voluntarily and five low grade freshmen were dropped. In May two students were suspended until February, 1930, and their return is doubtful. Eileen Walker, the treasurer of the class, was killed in the Poland Springs accident. Consequently, of the one hundred and eighteen freshmen admitted in September, only ninety-four now remain on our roll.

The Adviser of Freshmen talked at the end of the six weeks period with all freshmen who were in academic difficulty. Just before Christmas, she sent for reports of those whose difficulties had been the most serious. The members of the Board of Admission were asked to meet to consider these reports and asked to consider whether parents should be advised to withdraw students at that time. At this meeting the Board

voted to secure the services of Dr. Sullivan, who had acted as consulting psychiatrist for a number of Boston social agencies. Dr. Sullivan came to the college just before the Christmas vacation and had conferences with four students. As a result of these conferences, Dr. Sullivan made very definite suggestions concerning each case. At her recommendation we advised the parents of Priscilla Lord and Catherine Jose to withdraw their daughters at the time of the Christmas holidays. In both cases the parents were not willing to follow our advice, but Priscilla Lord did withdraw voluntarily at the end of the semester. Catherine Jose would probably have been dropped at the end of the semester had it not been for the difficult family situation, both parents being in Florida at the time. In the cases of Louise Cannon and Doris Livingstone, Dr. Sullivan recommended that they be kept at the college for further observation. In each case she found unfortunate home situations, which might easily have accounted for the unsatisfactory academic work. Louise Cannon was particularly helped by her interview and her academic work improved noticeably. Although she was in the fourth quarter of her class at the end of the first semester, she had improved sufficiently to rank in the third quarter at the end of the second semester. Like Catherine Jose, Doris Livingstone would probably have been dropped at the end of the first semester had it not been for the home situation. Mrs. Livingstone was critically ill at the time.

Before the faculty met ^{at the end of the first semester} to take action on freshmen reports, Dr. Sullivan's services were secured for interviews with four freshmen. One, Doris Livingstone, she had seen before. While Dr. Sullivan did not feel optimistic regarding Doris' chances of doing work of graduation grade, she recommended that, if possible, the college keep her until June because of the unfortunate home situation. Dr. Sullivan felt that by June we might be able to make constructive suggestions as to the type of school for Doris. As in a number of other cases, in the case of Cecil Barber Dr. Sullivan found factors in the home situation which might well account for poor academic work. The chief difficulty seemed to be undernourishment and at Dr. Sullivan's suggestion, the college required that Cecil take her lunches in a college dining-room for the remainder of the academic year. Cecil did no work of credit grade during the first semester but received C in

three courses in the second semester. Her general average went up seven points. In view of this improvement, the committee on low grade students voted to allow Cecil to return although she had not quite met the requirements for continuation. Dr. Sullivan was asked to talk with Eunice Hamilton and Louise Hartshorne because we felt that neither girl was doing work which indicated her real capacity. Dr. Sullivan was of the opinion that Eunice Hamilton had minimum ability but that Louise Hartshorne could do creditable work should she be willing to make the effort. She found Eunice very dissatisfied with life at Wheaton and believed that the two girls would be better in separate dormitories. Her advice was followed, one girl being placed in Everett and one in Stanton. They continued to spend as much time as possible together but at the end of the year Louise reported that she would undoubtedly have done better work had it not been for the fact that she and Eunice each had a bad influence on each other.

Although among the freshmen interviewed by Dr. Sullivan there have been only two cases of marked improvement (Louise Cannon and Cecil Barber) it seems to the Adviser of Freshmen that the interviews were all well worth while. In most cases the parents were grateful for the constructive advice which we were able to give as a result of Dr. Sullivan's diagnosis.

In the spring the Adviser of Freshmen talked with each member of the class concerning her choice of courses for the sophomore year. In many cases the students were very uncertain as to the choice of a major and it seemed advisable to work out a program which would make it possible to defer the final decision concerning a major until the end of the sophomore year. In some cases the students had very definite plans concerning her major work and the proper courses for the sophomore year were so obvious that it did not seem necessary to refer the student to the head of the department concerned. In other cases, the student was advised to consult the head of the department concerning the best combination of courses for the sophomore year.

Although all these interviews took a good deal of time it seemed time well spent and it is recommended that the practice be continued another year. In some cases, students are uncertain as to the advisability of returning to college after the freshman year and they appreciate an opportunity for discussing their problems.

D. Report of Assistant Professor of Economics

It is a question whether the person who is acting as Secretary of the Board of Admission and Dean of Freshmen should attempt to teach even one course. However, there are certain advantages in the combination of administrative work and teaching and it is suggested that the combination be continued for at least one more year. The elementary course in Economics has been the subject of experimentation during the last few years and it seems advisable to have as much continuity as possible in the group teaching the course. A full account of recent experiments no doubt are included in the report of the head of the department.

Possibly after one more year it might be wise for the Dean of Freshmen to give up her section of the elementary course and take merely a semester course in the department. There are a number of new semester courses under consideration. It would be far easier for the Dean of Freshmen to teach a first semester course rather than a course running throughout the year, since the heaviest office work comes in the spring.

Respectfully submitted,

Edith M. White