



HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES

GENEVA, NEW YORK 14456 • TEL. 315 789-5500

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Fellow Parents:

I hardly know whether the current disturbances on the Hobart campus are the result of incitement by a vocal and radical minority or represent the deep convictions of a significant majority. Both views are widely held at the present time. William Smith College is not involved.

In any event, President Holland on Sunday, Feb. 5, withdrew a grant to the Hobart Board of Control under which they were to exercise the same powers over Hobart student social life that were to have been exercised by a new student government. This triggered resignation of the Board of Control, Hobart's formal student government, and a week of non-cooperation by students. President Holland gave as his reasons for withdrawal of control from the old Hobart student government its failure to cooperate with the dean's office and with a special committee he named to work with them, failure to establish effective controls to cover possession and use of alcoholic beverages, and an irresponsible action by one of the dormitories calling any bedroom from which sheets and pillows had been removed a lounge and permitting women visitors therein, in defiance of college regulations.

President Holland's original grant of power to the Board was based on his conviction that the students should administer control over their own social lives so long as they do so with a sense of responsibility, with due regard for the reputation of the college, and in cooperation with the administration and faculty. He made the grant to the Board because students were increasingly impatient with their own inability to organize an effective government at Hobart.

Approximately one week after the student board's resignation and adoption by the student body of the resolution of non-cooperation, the Rev. Channing Johnson, dean of Hobart, resigned because of his inability to reconcile his primary interest in teaching and counseling with the making and enforcing of rules and regulations. His letter of resignation, dated, Feb. 11, asked for relief from his duties "this day." With no alternatives possible, President Holland accepted it with regret.

On Sunday, Feb. 12, President Holland named assistant dean Harrison R. K. Jahn acting dean, and here matters rest on the campus today.

The enclosed editorial from the Rochester Times-Union puts things so aptly I thought you would be interested in seeing it.

I shall report to you further when everything is resolved.

Sincerely yours

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Clifford E. Orr'.

Clifford E. Orr, Executive Secretary
The Parents Association

THE TIMES-UNION

An Independent Newspaper

As We See It

A College Must Protect Its Moral Integrity

The ruckus at Hobart College in Geneva points up again the difficult question of who should bear ultimate responsibility for rules of moral conduct at any college or university.

At Hobart, the dispute revolves around drinking in rooms and bringing girls into dormitory lounges. On some other campuses, the furor might arise over whether students should be able to "turn on" with LSD, or take dope, or enjoy "free love" escapades. The addition of "the pill" to college life has brought new moral issues.

As young men and women just out from under parental wings, most students believe that they should be allowed to make their own decisions in their personal lives. The university should provide education, they feel, but it shouldn't be a "Big Daddy."

Most parents take a different view. They want some assurance that their children not only are getting a good education but that someone is keeping an eye on their moral behavior as well.

At Hobart, men in one dormitory stripped the sheets and pillowcases off their beds, called the bedroom a lounge, and invited girls into the room.

College President Albert E. Holland considered that incident a violation of the "girls in dormitory lounges only" rules. He rescinded an earlier agreement giving the student board the responsibility to govern "visiting" and drinking activities in the dormitories. Student protests predictably followed.

No administration spy would or should follow a couple to a drive-in movie or an off-campus party, or peer into the backseat of their car. And if the students are so foolish, they can discard moral principles in any of these places.

At the same time, a university cannot permit on-campus incidents which in all good conscience it feels are harmful to itself or its students. If the moral integrity of the institution is at stake, the administration has the obligation to protect it.

Thus if students at Hobart or elsewhere do not exercise their freedoms responsibly, it then becomes the college's responsibility to make some rules of its own and see to it that they are enforced.

Freedom of speech does not give anyone the right to subvert a government. Nor can moral freedom for students give them the right to undermine their school with fun and games.

This is probably as clear a statement of the principles involved as is likely to appear. It is also, so far as I have been able to determine, a fair statement of public reaction in the present situation. I need only add that the colleges have no intention of abdicating the responsibilities here so clearly presented. We thank the Rochester Times-Union for its presentation.

Clifford E. Orr