Hampshire College

PLANNING BULLETIN

Bulletin #2
THE HOUSE PLAN AT HAMPShIRE COLLEGE
by
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Dean of the School of Social Science
The Planning Bulletin series is intended to convey to the public a sense of the steps Hampshire College is taking toward its opening in September 1970. Each Bulletin represents present thinking in a specific area of concern, and is thus more likely to be an approximation of what Hampshire will be than a final portrait. But the intended direction of such steps is clear: the creation of a high quality college, using the most promising ideas to redefine the nature of liberal arts education. The ideas contained in these Bulletins reflect the thinking not only of the author indicated, but also of the Hampshire planning staff.

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Amherst, Massachusetts
Background and Philosophy of Hampshire College

Hampshire College is a new, independent, experimenting liberal arts college which will open for students in 1970; it is intended specifically as a national pilot enterprise for innovations in American higher education. Hampshire was brought into being through the initiative of faculty and administrative leaders of four institutions in the Connecticut Valley of Massachusetts: Amherst, Mount Holyoke, and Smith Colleges, and the University of Massachusetts. It is the result of planning begun in 1958, and its establishment was approved by the Trustees of its four neighboring institutions. In 1965, the new college received a pledge of $6 million from Harold F. Johnson, an Amherst alumnus, and was incorporated under a charter granted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Exemption from federal income taxes as a charitable institution was granted in December 1965, and eligibility to borrow or receive grants-in-aid from the federal government was established in January 1967. In addition to Mr. Johnson's original gift, the most significant support has come from the Ford Foundation, which has given Hampshire a $3 million grant on a two-for-one matching basis, the largest Ford Foundation grant ever given to a college, and the only one given to a college not yet accepting students.

The College now owns 500 acres of land in the towns of Amherst and Hadley, and is in the process of planning a campus and buildings.
Construction of the first academic building, the first residential and dining unit, and the Hampshire College Library has begun. The architects, master planners, and architectural consultants are Hugh Stubbins and Associates; Sasaki, Dawson, DeMay Associates, Inc.; and Pietro Belluschi.

Hampshire plans to have a student body of approximately 1500 by the middle of the 1970's, and may expand in time to 3600 students. The history and character of the early planning for Hampshire College are detailed in Working Paper Number One, The Making of a College, by Franklin Patterson and Charles R. Longsworth (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1966). This volume, which elaborates the intentions of Hampshire College, is not considered a static blueprint, but a thorough approximation of all aspects of the College's planning.

The Hampshire College program, as presently planned, introduces a number of departures from conventional academic procedures; among them a three-School academic structure instead of the more fragmented departmental arrangement, a flexible time schedule of three sequential Divisions in lieu of the usual four-year rule, and replacement of fixed graduation requirements based on prescribed course credits by a system of comprehensive examinations and independent research or creative projects. Time off campus will be encouraged for travel, work periods, independent research, and community service.

Hampshire College will undertake an innovative role in several broad interrelated realms of higher education. The College will seek, through continuing experiment, consultation and review, to redesign liberal education so that it
better serves the growth in every human dimension—intellectual, emotional, intuitive, sensuous—of those who comprise its community, and thus offers a more substantial ground for continuing self-education and self-expression; becomes a more effective intellectual and moral instrument of responsibility for the quality of life in America. Hampshire will seek new ways of securing the economic viability of the private liberal arts college in an era in which the demand for quality education is confronted with rapidly rising costs. And Hampshire intends to spur the further development of interinstitutional cooperation in education in the Connecticut River Valley of Western Massachusetts—thereby serving the interests both of educational vitality and sound economy. Hampshire hopes to demonstrate nationally the advantages of a regional complex of closely cooperating public and private institutions.

Hampshire College is explicitly designed to serve as a source of innovation and demonstration for American undergraduate education. The implications of this fact are threefold. First, while determined to avoid the kind of "laboratory school" role which so often compromises the institution's primary responsibility for its own students, Hampshire intends to develop and conduct its programs with a careful eye to their transferability: many of the lessons learned should be applicable to other settings. Second, the College will develop new techniques for institutional self-evaluation, so that its experimenting character does not devolve into just one more narrow, rigid "experimental" orthodoxy.
Third, through a continuing series of conferences, consultations, and publications, Hampshire will solicit other relevant experience and make widely known the results and review of its own efforts. The subtitle of The Making of a College—Working Paper Number One—implies a series of monographs dealing with different and successive aspects of the College's life as it unfolds.

To develop these plans, Hampshire College is assembling a small academic and administrative staff. Its most recent additions include the Dean of the College, Richard C. Lyon, formerly the Chairman of the Program of American Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Francis D. Smith, newly appointed Dean of the School of Humanities and Arts, formerly the Community Relations Director of the Massachusetts anti-poverty program, after an extensive career as a novelist, playwright and teacher; the Dean of the School of Social Science, Robert C. Birney, who was Chairman of the Department of Psychology at Amherst College; and the Dean of the School of Natural Science, Everett M. Hafner, formerly Professor of Physics at the University of Rochester.
The House Plan at Hampshire College

The planning of Hampshire College reflects our conviction that residence is one facet of the total educational environment.

The goals we seek in creating an educational environment at Hampshire are the enhancement and deepening of learning. We believe that can best be done by bringing living and learning together, not by compartmentalizing learning as something that stops outside the classroom or away from the carrel. We aim to create a living-learning environment in which intellectual curiosity and development will thrive as part of moral and aesthetic growth, a setting where students and faculty alike will see themselves as part of a common enterprise in which all have a stake and a continuing part. A goal of such a community has been well stated by Ernest Becker in Beyond Alienation (p. 188). Its aim is to "fight against all forms of action that make men petty, mean, grasping, selfish--'unsocial,' in a word. Instead of each individual pursuing his own brand of pleasure, the society as a whole seeks to assure shared meanings, communal good, the highest possible social morality."

One inference that Hampshire draws from this goal is a requirement of participation in the creation and maintenance of the community. Although this in no way is inconsistent with respect for a wide range of personal interests, the community we hope to encourage will be one which focuses on and fosters the self in society, and which evokes all the energy needed to maintain community support for both parts of that focus.
To encourage effective individual participation and growth, the College is organized into units called Houses, each of 250-300 students, and each with its own living, dining, and academic facilities. The first House at Hampshire College will be named Merrill House to honor the late Charles E. Merrill, founder of Merrill, Lynch, Pierce, Fenner and Smith, as a result of a gift to Hampshire College of $1 million from the Charles E. Merrill Trust.

Each House will have in residence a Master, who will be a senior professor on the Hampshire faculty. The Master and his family will be very much a part of House affairs, academic and otherwise. The residence of the Master will provide a commodious and attractive family home integral to the House community. Closely related to the residence of the Master will be an apartment residence for the Proctor, who will serve as his full-time assistant. The residence of the Master and of the Proctor will be connected with office space for administration of House affairs, and the Master's residence will provide accommodations for special guests of the House. The House academic building, located adjacent to the residence building, will contain faculty offices as well as instructional space. Professors who have offices in the House academic building will be affiliated with the House community as faculty fellows.

In addition to staff support by the Proctor, the Master will have the assistance of several Hampshire Fellows, very able Division III (senior) students who have been awarded Fellowships because of their achievements and their interest in college teaching. A further feature
of the House plan is the intention to extend membership in the House across all the major roles to be found in the College. It is our hope that professors, staff, students, and service personnel will accept active and full membership in the various House communities. By so doing, we feel that governance of the House will better reflect a proper respect for the sensibilities of all those who live and work there.

It is intended that the House government shall have the power to tax and spend. It is intended also that the House unit of government shall be the means by which all members of the House are able to participate actively in the life of the College as a whole. This suggests the organization of a council body to coordinate the activities of the Houses. It is, however, expected that each House will create its own means of developing intellectual involvement, community service, and a stimulating social life.

Up to this point, this statement has concentrated on general aspirations of the College and the outline of those living, learning, and governmental arrangements which, it is hoped, will serve these aspirations. But we feel it important also to speak to those specific issues which are currently most confused and disputed on campuses everywhere. The statement on rights and freedom of students produced in 1966 under the auspices of the American Association of University Professors asserts:

The institution has an obligation to clarify those standards of behavior which it considers essential to its educational mission in its community life. These general behavioral expectations, and the resultant specific reg-
ulations, should represent a reasonable regulation of student conduct; but the student should be as free as possible from imposed limitations that have no direct relevance to his education.

The House plan at Hampshire College reflects the fact that we conceive education broadly and feel that the definition of what is private most usefully exists in the context of public policy openly arrived at in a broadly educational community.

The tensions between the private will and public policy being played out today in a wide variety of college settings are familiar to everyone. Some of these involve the dissident minority that finds it cannot in good conscience abide by a policy democratically arrived at by a sizeable majority. Others involve the individual who chooses to experiment with the wide range of stimulants and drugs in the belief that here is an arena of human experience that he is free, privately, to explore. Others reflect a conviction that a new morality is appearing to regulate the most intimate human relationships between persons. Others involve the notion that one may properly express his stance regarding issues he feels vital through "symbolic" acts of property destruction and public disorder. And a good many come back to the issue of determining how a college, as a corporate entity, shall conduct itself vis-à-vis the laws of the state and the nation.

Each and every one of these issues is now actively under consideration on campuses all over this nation. We feel it important that Hampshire College state clearly its convictions regarding the proper
course to be taken by an educational community on each of these topics. Only through such clarity can the House plan sketched above take hold and thrive and genuinely contribute to the development of a fully educational environment.

As a step in the direction of clarity, it needs to be said that the College is committed to democratic process, and it needs to be understood what this means. Certainly it means, in the last analysis, that the College must be prepared to stand behind and administer community policies democratically arrived at, including the application of sanctions to those who choose to violate such policies. Any other course would undermine the very openness of the institution by exposing it to capricious or arbitrary actions and leadership imposed by minorities on the community as a whole. Moreover, it means that major decisions about college will require the involvement of opinion from all parts of the Hampshire community.

It is also our conviction that the College must be deeply committed to the principle of personal human development through education, rather than any commitment to the notion that such development should be sought through artificial means. The evidence regarding drugs and stimulants clearly points to the need for careful professional regulation in their use and in the pursuit of knowledge about their effects. It is our conviction that the College has an obligation to evoke in students those qualities of mind and experience which provide them with the kind of intellectual, emotional, and physical life which will prove far more attractive, because more genuine and human, than the
kind of experience that can be bought by artificial, chemical means.

The character of close human relationship, both sexual and non-sexual, between the sexes and between members of the same sex, tends to unfold as a function of changing culture and major social conditions. That process itself is worthy of intellectual study. It is our conviction that if Hampshire, as an intellectual and educational community, can bring to bear capacities for frank and open examination of such societal changes, the quality of our society itself will be improved. The terms of intimacy for which the College stands may be briefly stated. They are, of course, familiar. The College wishes to support those conditions which provide people with an opportunity to learn and mature in their emotional relationships with others at a rate which most suits the individual’s needs. We are dedicated to the development of nurturance, sensitivity, and that special form of patience with others which stands against the too-ready acceptance of one’s own appetites and an exploitive view of other human beings. We are interested in fostering maturity in close human relationships rather than fostering interchange with others as objects. It is our conviction at Hampshire College that students may be helped to achieve maturity in their human relationships by free and open discussion of this area of their own growth and development. It is also our conviction that the very heart of liberal studies needs to include and contribute to the understanding of the most passionate human problems. Therefore, we stand ready to support programs of education, information, and maintenance of health which provide for
this kind of growth.

We believe that each House must meet the challenge of regulating its own internal affairs. It must do so as a part of the total educational process as this is understood at Hampshire, and the members of the House need the support and guidance of the College leadership in understanding the nature of the challenge they face, the possible consequences of various policies they may or may not adopt, and the responsibilities of the College in the larger society.

Officials of institutions sometimes find themselves torn between the practices of their students and faculty on the one hand, and their corporate obligations to bodies of state and federal law on the other. For example, there are laws in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts which state that anyone who "knowingly permits" properties for which he has responsibility to be used for a variety of illegal sexual behaviors may be held liable. The law is broadly drawn, so that it extends far beyond the maintenance of houses of prostitution and the like. So, too, in the case of marijuana, there are some who are convinced that the law is wrong and who are in a position to counsel young people. We are well aware that the law is not perfect, but it is our conviction that the College must participate as a responsible corporate citizen, both toward its own members and the larger community of which it is a part. To this end, we intend to support the law and the enforcement agencies attached to it, and in those areas where we feel legislation should be changed, we accept the responsibility for working for change. We recognize that those charged with law enforcement
can only perform their duties with maximum benefit to all citizens if the citizens, in turn, honor their obligations to support such enforcement. At Hampshire College, we intend to strive to make clear the complementary relationship between cooperation with the law and improving it.

We hope that, by this discussion, the reader may gain not only a view of the structure of the House plan at Hampshire College but also a sense of the relationship we see between the aspirations we have for an educational environment, and the policies we find flowing from those aspirations in dealing with concrete contemporary issues. We are confident that, in time, the issues themselves will change. But we hope that the stance the College takes in creating a living-learning environment through the House plan, and its refusal to accept the easy disjunction between public and private, between educational and non-educational, between corporate and personal, will survive. The abiding task of the College is to contribute to the creation and re-creation of society through the personal growth of its members. The House plan is intended to serve in that task.