

# RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN

To: All students, faculty, administration and trustees

We all had hopes that the negotiations between administration, and faculty and the "Concerned Students" would produce a meaningful set of proposals. It was further the hope that we would be able to secure approval of these proposals by all groups comprising the Rhode Island School of Design community. Unfortunately, this does not now appear possible.

I have come to believe that reconvening the large meeting of last Thursday evening will not help us in working out the best possible course of action in the area of scholarships.

There are two reasons for my belief:-

1. Such a large group makes it impossible for all to be heard, and their opinions made known.
2. A vote, if it is to be taken on the motion made and seconded, to create a new college-wide body is best taken by secret ballot.

Therefore, this letter with its attached ballot is being made available to all concerned. Voting lists and a ballot box will be placed in Memorial Hall near the Benefit Street entrance and voting will take place on Friday, May 1, 1970 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. The procedure will be to have your name checked off on the voting list and to put your unsigned ballot in the box.

The large meeting on Thursday, April 23rd was unable to make a decision concerning the formation of a college senate composed of students, and faculty from each department with four administration members.

In order to be fair to all concerned, I am putting forth for your vote the following proposal:

That we form an ad hoc committee for the purpose of creating a senate. This committee will set up a composition of the senate, draw up its responsibilities and authority. It will spell out in detail exactly how it is to elect representatives and exactly how it will operate.

That this ad hoc committee be composed of one faculty, and one student from each degree-granting department, plus four students, and four faculty from the Freshman Foundation.



That this committee also contain four administration and two trustees.

You will find on the ballot attached herewith an opportunity to vote as to whether you wish trustees included on this ad hoc committee.

When this committee meets, it will appoint ten additional students and/or faculty with a specific goal in mind of achieving representation for all points of view including that of the "Concerned Students."

This will be a large committee of approximately 40 people and I further propose that they break into two sub-committees by its own action after it is constituted.

The first sub-committee would consider the whole subject of scholarships and having received all of the relevant data, make an effort to arrive at a satisfactory plan of action that will be acceptable to all elements of the college community.

The other sub-committee would work at the longer range problem of setting up the senate, addressing itself to the following problems:

1. How many members should it include from the student body, from the faculty body, from the administration and from the trustees if their presence is considered desirable?
2. What should be the relationship of the senate's review and findings in reference to situations which are already under the policy control of standing committees of the college on which sit both students and faculty?

For instance, if admissions was being studied, what would be the relation of the senate's findings to the operations of the Admissions Committee?

The impact of the senate would be very great and its prestige would be considerable. If the senate voted a new policy in respect to the responsibilities of the faculty, then the faculty would be influenced very heavily to approve the new educational policy, particularly in those cases where the faculty members of the senate express their approval of the idea proposed by the senate. If the trustees discovered that the senate was proposing a new course of action following within the general responsibilities of the trustees, the Board of Trustees would be very influenced by their recommendations.



No one group of students, faculty or trustees have absolute power in any area of the college activities. Students could and should participate in the deliberations concerning the most important question of the school's affairs. The faculty has the right and obligation to maintain the highest standards of educational excellence. The trustees have legal responsibility for the maintenance and preservation of the property of the school, both tangible and intangible. They are legally responsible for the money which has been given to the school and the buildings that have been built with some of this money.

Each year at this time the budget of all income and expenses of the college is reviewed by the trustees. They have authorized me to tell you that review has begun and they are giving careful consideration to increasing the scholarship funds for next year, above the \$33,000 previously authorized.

It has been proposed that a larger amount of money be made available from the endowment in order to make possible more scholarships. The following facts are relevant:

1. The total income and capital appreciation since August 1, 1969 (the date on which the funds were put in the hands of the four investment firms) is a minus figure of
2. The value of the endowment on March 31, 1970 is 14.2 million.
3. The 5% paid out of the endowment is based on an assumed value of 16 million.

Thus, our endowment this year is being invaded to pay the 5%. This means the sale of securities to finance the payments. Unfortunately, such sales have been taking place in a depressed market.

It is obvious in the entire discussion that more money is urgently needed. Careful planning by skilled fund raisers must precede successful drives. Timing and choice of goals must be picked with care. The recent publicity has not made the task easier. However, efforts are being planned to improve the finances, and as we are successful, scholarship monies will continue to be considered as one of the most important priorities of this school.



Any program involves a choice of alternatives. If you put time or effort or money into a certain action, you can't expend that particular amount in another direction. The choice of the priorities given, and the alternatives supported must meet the needs of all groups who comprise the RISD community. It must be so balanced that the students benefit, faculty are attracted to it, and trustees can support it.

The first priority must be to so conduct the affairs of the college that the students who come here receive the best possible educational experience in the visual arts. As an art and design school, with the highest reputation in the country, we must strive for excellence in our field. We should do the most we can do to make our type of education available to students of talent from all backgrounds, from all income levels, and from all states without any regard for race, color or religion.

I urge you to vote so that we may have an expression of opinion from the largest possible group.

Sincerely,

Talbot Rantoul  
President

Attachment