

Dear Dr. Broady:

Now that I am about to leave the Extension Division I would like to review for you my experiences of three and a half years there. Perhaps my opinions and the conclusions I have drawn as a result of my work there will seem gratuitous to you, but I feel I must express my views frankly so that you do not misconstrue any attitudes I held while I was employed by you and any that I hold now.

You may recall that when you urged me to accept this position I made it perfectly clear to you that had had no experience in this field, that I was very happy in the teaching I was then doing in the English Department, and that I could give you no assurance that I could assume the responsibilities you might expect of me. You seemed confident that I was the ideal person for this position. How you reached this conclusion I do not know. After some deliberation I decided that the position might be interesting and challenging and, feeling that I was welcomed and needed, I accepted your offer.

When I arrived I expected a rather intensive period of training for this responsible job but in that I was disappointed. My predecessor departed in great haste after a few days of offering me bits of unrelated information that were not only useless but confusing. I was given an office, a desk, files full of material that meant nothing to me, and an office staff of four clerk-typists. For months I floundered about trying to make sense of office procedures and policies in two different and two very important areas. I hesitated to bother you with many of the details that came up. Some of the time you and Dr. Childs were not in your offices and I was never told where you were or when you were expected to return. Consequently I was often forced to turn to my office staff for advice about problems that came up. In the course of administering these programs. They were most helpful and kind and I owe them my thanks for seeing me through a trying period so patiently. They have been consistently loyal to me throughout my stay in the Extension Division and I found most of them dependable and alert.

Perhaps my complete ignorance of extension work had, some advantages. I came to it unprejudiced and innocent. Some of the situations I confronted soon after I arrived appalled me. There seemed to be in the college correspondence area a general acceptance of lax methods in administering courses and for this I could see no excuse. As time went on I realized that the number of incompetent and dishonest students who were getting college credits sometimes with spectacularly high grades was alarming. This laxness I could not condone. I felt sure that if this were going on without your knowledge you would want it stopped, no matter how drastic the measures taken might have to be. You assured me, when I reported some of the most flagrant cases that you were all in favor of high standards. But some of the changes in policy that I suggested did not meet with much consideration and some were dismissed as being unrealistic.

Thus there was much that was frustrating to me in my attempt to correct some of the remiss practices and I had no difficulty understanding why some departments on the campus were uncooperative and unsympathetic with correspondence study as a bona fide method of obtaining college credits. I saw the fine possibilities correspondence courses could offer to those serious students who had no other way of taking college work. But I was disturbed anew each time I became aware of the advantage that was taken by many correspondence students to obtain credits they neither earned nor deserved.

This problem has so many ramifications that I will not attempt to go into further detail. However, I do think that some of the changes in the supervision of the program that have taken place since I came might be worthy of your attention. They involve such things as course production, relations with department chairmen and instructors, with high school administrators

who are given the responsibility of proctoring examinations, with students and their varying problems, and with other administrative departments on the campus. They involve the whole area of policy making that is so important if a program is to have a sound reputation academically.

I tried my best to correct some of the policies and procedures that I felt were weak and ineffective or that failed to prevent unscrupulous behavior on the part of students. I felt we must be doubly careful in a program that offers so much freedom and independence as correspondence study does to safeguard the standards of the University. I have not lost faith any more than you have in the essential integrity of most human beings, but I will not shut my eyes to flagrant dishonesty in order to preserve good will. If enrollments dropped partly as a result of my vigilance I cannot be too deeply concerned over that. I say "partly" because I am not convinced that enrollments have dropped solely because of my actions. There are number of factors like the new certification laws which emphasize matriculation, that have had a great impact on the correspondence program. And if there was any personal animosity involved in this particular area I can assure you that I was not the cause of this resentment.

It did not occur to me that an increase in figures could be more meaningful than quality administration. Out your statement, the day you dismissed me, that "enrollments must go up and not down" has left me with the unmistakable impression that the number of enrollments is for the Extension Division the symbol of success. That statement, as well as the manner of my dismissal, was shocking to me then and in retrospect becomes more shocking. I was distressed to learn that matters of this kind would be handled in this inept way, especially in the civilized milieu of our University community. Never once, prior to this, was I called in to discuss seriously what apparently seemed to you an alarming situation. The matter of falling enrollments was mentioned a few times but never explored with my cooperation. Instead, Mr. Downing, without any assistance or advice from me, spent months working out a questionnaire to send to students of correspondence study asking them to tell us what were the weaknesses of the program. This kind of questionnaire is meaningless and almost ludicrous unless it is followed up by a similar one that is sent to instructors and department chairman. Perhaps their Ideas of how their courses might be administered and taught would have a little more value than the suggestions of students, some of whom (judging by their replies) were obviously never meant to take college work of any kind.

I had no indication from you whatsoever that you were displeased or unhappy with what I was doing. In fact, the constant refrain throughout the years of my stay was, "We're so glad to see you raising the standards." These are empty and meaningless words unless they are supported by action. Perhaps if you had called me in to give me your opinion of how these programs should be handled, and allowed me to express my views about them, you might have had the "booting out" less conspicuous and startling to me and to those on the campus who have some interest in and concern about the Extension Division. I do want to assure you that if any of the methods I used to bring the administrative procedures of my office to a higher level had been openly questioned or opposed, or even if you had just been candid enough to make it clear to me that you were unhappy with my work, I should not have hesitated to submit my resignation at once.

This I was given no opportunity to do. I can only conclude that you did not wish to give me this opportunity. Perhaps it is better thus-- it gives me and others a clearer picture of the general structure of the Extension Division and adds a significant light.

In spite of the drop in enrollments, the correspondence program continues to be financially sound--much more rewarding in terms of money than some other areas in extension

which apparently would not be able to function were it not for the college correspondence dollars and other internal and external help. As for the evening class program which I also supervised, you have perhaps noticed that the income within the last year has risen almost spectacularly. A little unconcern or carelessness on my part in making decisions might have told a different story. For about two years I, with the clerical help of any evening class secretary, have handled almost the entire program without benefit or advice or assistance from any of our superiors. This has included such organizational and administrative details as contacting departments, instructors, bookstores, devising brochures and cutting stencils for them and other promotional materials, mailing them, arranging for newspaper ads and news stories, gathering material for the bulletin, proof-reading and editing, registering over 1500 students on the campus each semester (this with the help of others in the office), taking registrations at the Air Base, visiting classes for the first two weeks and making any arrangements necessary for their operation or cancellation, keeping records of all students, clearing scholarship enrollments, making billings for all campus students, completing and recording drops and refunds, requisitioning laboratory fees, making up payrolls for evening class instructors and distributing checks, and making semester tabulations before the same routine is again set in operation for the following semester. There are many other details I shall not take the time to mention. Besides seeing that these office operations ran smoothly I tried to make as many contacts with individual instructors and department chairmen as seemed necessary and profitable. I cannot feel that I have neglected my duties in this area.

The document you drew up for my perusal in January that listed the work of the supervisor of Evening Classes and College Correspondence Instruction struck me as being not only belated (this was the first indication in writing, in three and a half years, of what you consider these duties are) ,but a completely new conception of what the position demands. Whoever accomplishes those goals will certainly not be tending to the multitudinous office details that at this time are the responsibility of the supervisor. The position is clearly resigned for a man of particular and special talents-talents which I do not possess and do not aspire to possess. I hope you are successful in finding the ideal person.

I must admit frankly that I do not regret having had this experience In the Extension Division. Much of the work was interesting in spite of the frustrations and problems. I now have a fairly good -idea of the total operation and philosophy of your organization--- your procedures, your attitudes, your goals.

I am looking forward with a renewed zest to my future work and to coming back to friends whom I respect and trust and who have confidence in my ability to do an important job well.

Sincerely,

Olga Stepanek