

## WEBSTER COLLEGE

### REPORT ON COEDUCATION STATUS OF THE COLLEGE

Prepared at the request of officials of the Monsanto Fund  
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For the past ten years, Webster College has experienced a strong movement away from the concept of higher education exclusively for young women, upon which the College was founded, and increasing favor among faculty and students for full coeducation. As a result, in the same period the institution moved from enrollment of no men to a full-time, undergraduate men-women ratio of approximately one to five. All available evidence, including board, administration, faculty, and student expressions of intent, indicate that the College will continue in the direction of achieving a balanced student body as soon as possible.

#### History of Coeducation at Webster College

The change of status of Webster College from an institution for young women to a fully coed college has been a gradual evolutionary process. The College has deliberately not announced at any point that it has ceased to exist as a "women's" college and begun to function as a coed school.

In the early 1960's, as Webster's reputation dramatically increased both locally and nationally, a number of men students began to petition the institution to be admitted. Viewed as special students with special interests, some of these students were permitted to enroll, generally as part-time students in programs or courses for which Webster possessed unusual reputation, especially the fine arts. As the trend increased, the College

was pressed to the enrollment of these men students. As a result, in the fall of 1964 young men were admitted as full-time regular undergraduate students in the fine arts area, taking other courses on campus as required or as electives.

The next step occurred when some men who were admitted to the fine arts programs wished to change their majors to one of the College's other degrees before graduation. The College agreed to their request, resulting in other programs granting degrees to men students.

At this point, although the College did not press the movement, other men high school graduates applied for admission to various programs. They were accepted as individual cases and enrolled. This "permissive" policy continued through the academic year 1968-69 when the Admissions Office was authorized to recruit actively men students for all areas in the College for enrollment in academic year 1969-70.

#### Resume of Deliberations and Action

In November, 1963, the decision was made by the Board of Trustees to admit men students to the fine arts programs.

On November 19, 1965, following an extensive series of faculty meetings and consultations with students, a faculty recommendation was presented to the Board by President Grennan and approved: "that Webster College proceed cautiously toward extension of co-education; that prior to any decision, however, a thorough examination be made of potential problem areas; and that the possibility of a project of continuing education for Peace Corps returnees be considered as a way of implementing coeducation that would leave Webster free to evaluate the decision after having experienced it in operation."

As a result, the College's Master of Arts in Teaching Program and Continuing Education courses were conducted as fully coed.

On December 18, 1967, the Executive Committee of Webster's new board of directors expressed their approval of the trend: "The consensus of the Executive Committee is that the extension of co-education as it is taking place incrementally at the College is a good and proper procedure. Recruitment for the academic year 1968-69 will be permissive relative to male students requesting admittance to areas other than Fine Art. Miss Grennan expressed the hope that recruitment for 1969-70 will be active and aggressive. When the latter course is taken, adequate facilities and service must be available. It was agreed that no public announcement was necessary for the permissive policy."

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## Analysis of Enrollment

### Undergraduate Students

Academic Year	Total Students	Full-time Students	Total Men	Full-time Men
1962-63	641	600	7	--
1963-64	656	586	14	6
1964-65	777	684	31	22
1965-66	894	798	66	46
1966-67	904	768	65	53
1967-68	873	726	81	68
1968-69	849	702	149	127

Departmental enrollment of full-time undergraduate men in academic year 1968-69:

Art	15
English	5
History	4
Math	1
Music	23
Science	3
Social Science	1
Theatre Arts	27
Other	9
Undecided	8
VAULT (special Veterans Program)	31
	127

### Graduate Students

Men in graduate courses (all part-time):

1967-68	42
1968-69	72