

# At the University

by the Editors

## The University Dips a Toe into Coeducation; 500 Women to be Admitted Next Year

Late in the afternoon of November 14, the faculty of Yale College met in an upstairs room of Connecticut Hall and voted overwhelmingly to admit women beginning next fall. The vote, which surprised no one on campus, followed approval of the coeducation plan by the Yale Corporation, which had met the previous Saturday. But if the vote served to end formal debate on bringing women to Yale, it also opened a Pandora's Box of problems on how best to go about accommodating the ladies.

Prefacing his proposal to the faculty with the acknowledgment that it was already late in the year to consider changes in the admissions process, Brewster set forth three steps:

First, admit 250 women freshmen in the fall of 1969, reassigning to other colleges the residents of one of the smaller colleges and using the facility to house the freshmen women in 1969-70.

Second, admit 250 transfer women students and house them within walking distance of classes.

Third, affiliate all women transfer students with residential colleges.

In setting forth the proposal, Brewster stressed its flexibility and its experimental approach. "Yale has almost no practical experience to go on when it seeks to determine what type of arrangement would best be suited for undergraduate women at Yale," he said. "What Yale most needs in order to determine the optimum pattern for women undergraduates at Yale is some experience with women undergraduates at Yale."

He outlined two alternative plans for gaining that experience: first, a sampling of opinion among potential candidates, or second, proceeding at once to bring to Yale a sufficient number of women undergraduates so that their experience and their views could provide the basis for the evolution of full coeducation. Explaining his choice of the latter, Brewster said: "Delay will leave us up in the air just that much longer on the question of long-run strategy. Also, it will fail to capitalize on the very high motivation and energetic responsibility of present Yale students."

The expected student enthusiasm for Brewster's proposal did not materialize immediately. The students in Trumbull

College—which had been selected as the facility for housing freshman women—were vigorously opposed to the idea of giving up their college to women. Also, they were upset that the President had not consulted student opinion before formulating his coeducation plan. In a three-and-a-half hour after-dinner meeting at Trumbull, about 400 students peppered Brewster with complaints concerning the proposed housing for both freshman and upperclass women, asserting that the arrangements seriously compromised the value of coeducation.

Following the uproarious Trumbull meeting, several days of discussion ensued during which the administration worked to find a compromise housing arrangement. On November 19, a final agreement was reached and the University officially announced its intention to proceed with coeducation.

Under the revised plan, the freshman women will be housed together in one of the dormitory buildings on the Old Campus rather than in Trumbull College. They, like other freshmen, will be affiliated with residential colleges, but in an attempt to keep the women together in groups of substantial size, only a few colleges will have freshman women affiliates.

Housing plans for upperclass transfer women were also revised. Rather than provide them with automatic off-campus housing, the plan calls for finding means of allowing some women the option of residential college housing.

At first, the apparent suddenness of Yale's move brought charges that it was a hasty reaction to Coeducation Week (which had concluded the previous week); in fact, only the timing of the announcement made it seem so. Behind the decision was a considerable period of discussion on the advisability and feasibility of women at Yale.

The question of coeducation was first confronted institutionally when the Freshman Year Report of 1962 recommended that Yale consider admitting women. In the spring of 1966 the Yale Corporation went on record as favoring a coordinate approach to women's education over any expansion of Yale College to include women, and within the year Yale and



Vassar were jointly studying the possibility of relocating the women's institution in New Haven. When Vassar finally decided a year ago it was not interested in moving, President Brewster announced that he would continue to explore alternative means of bringing women to Yale.

In the year since, consideration has been moving away from a coordinate approach to women's education and toward full coeducation for Yale College. At its October meeting this fall, the Corporation directed the President to prepare detailed cost estimates and a coeducation plan for faculty consideration. Emphasis was to be placed on preserving the 4,000 male enrollment figure while at the same time bringing enough women to Yale to provide them with a sense of identity and community in a traditionally male institution. The cost studies revealed that absorbing 1,500 additional students—all female—would take approximately \$55 million of capital expenditures. Not having the necessary funds to undertake full coeducation immediately, Brewster drafted his "experiment" on the assumption that all operational costs for 500 women could be met by tuition and fee charges. At the November meeting, the Corporation approved the proposal, believing that the chances of finding funds for coeducation would be improved if Yale were to have some actual experience with coeducation.

Although the basic format for coeducation has been established, most of the details have yet to be worked out. High on the list of priorities is the problem of housing. Some University-owned buildings will have to be remodeled to provide quarters for those transfer women who will be housed outside the residential colleges. To accommodate some women within the colleges, doubling up of male students may be required, although crowding is expected to be less than it was before Morse and Stiles Colleges were built.

In terms of physical space other than housing, women should present little difficulty. Although library space, particularly in the reserve reading room, is now strained, additional facilities are being constructed in Connecticut Hall. The Payne Whitney gymnasium, despite its size, will be hard pressed to accommodate

500 additional users; the resolution of that problem may depend on how athletically minded Yale's women will be.

Further problems include matters such as possible additions to departmental faculties and staffs. For some courses, such as English, where enrollment of substantial numbers of women is almost a certainty, more teachers will be needed. And non-academic departments, like University Health, are also likely to require additional personnel. But the full scope of these needs will not be apparent until after the women arrive.

The central problem around which much of the planning now revolves is the admissions process itself. And, at present, the admissions office has little if any idea of what the female applicant pool will be like. The day following the faculty vote, the admissions office was swamped with telephone inquiries from across the country; one secretary estimated the number of calls at more than 300. A torrent of letters requesting application forms has flooded the office, but by the last week of November the admissions office still had not received female application blanks from the printer. To date, there are more than 2,000 requests for applications for the freshman class and more than 800 transfer requests.

Because the coeducation plan calls for 500 women in addition to the normal entering class of 1,000 men, the admissions staff has found itself sorely overworked on several fronts. Besides the expectation of having to review thousands of additional applications, the staff is now having to schedule interviews with students at girls' schools never before canvassed. Normally, the admissions office sets an early January deadline for applications and begins reviewing candidates shortly thereafter. But because of the late start this year, the female application deadline has been extended to January 20. Notifications will be mailed out, as usual, in the middle of April. In the admissions office, as elsewhere in the University, staff additions are anticipated, but how many new people will be needed and how quickly they can be mobilized is as yet unclear.

The mammoth job of coordinating the

whole coeducation effort has fallen to a special planning committee headed by Mrs. Elga Wasserman, former assistant dean of the Graduate School, and Henry Chauncey Jr., special assistant to President Brewster. Chauncey, a former assistant dean of Yale College, described his first meeting with Mrs. Wasserman this way: "We spent the whole day just thinking. And the more we thought the more confused we became. There are so many factors to be considered that at first glance the whole job seems overwhelming."

A high priority item for Chauncey is the question of financial aid to women. For several years Yale College has had a policy of providing necessary financial aid to all students admitted, but whether that policy can be continued for women is a difficult question. Since present plans call for meeting coeducation expenses from tuition and fee charges, financial aid awards must also be drawn from these funds. But until an applicant pool is established it will not be clear exactly how much money will be available.

"What we must keep in mind," says Chauncey, "is that we are bringing women to Yale not because it will be good for men but because we feel women have a right to a Yale education. We cannot invite them here and then treat them as second-class citizens, but when you stop to think about it, the whole Yale experience is geared toward men." For women to be fully integrated into the mainstream of Yale life will require adjustments in nearly every social organization on the campus. Secret and senior societies, for example, will feel pressure to admit women. Even Mory's will have to accept the idea of female members.

Chauncey continues: "We've never before had large numbers of women at Yale, and trying to make plans for them requires a new way of looking at things." Dwelling briefly on what a "new way of looking at things" means, Chauncey says: "Everyone knows that women prefer to take baths rather than showers, but in all of Yale College there is only *one* bathtub. It's in Vanderbilt Hall on the Old Campus. But there is little prospect at present of our being able to do anything to help that situation."



## Elga Wasserman to Head Planning for Coeducation

In an institution which for 267 years has been dominated by men, the list of such problems is long indeed. Are campus streets adequately lighted for night-time use by women? Can the dining halls handle the additional people? What revisions will have to be made at the University Health Service to handle increased numbers of women? How many of these problems the committee can solve by next September is open to speculation. But at some point the planning will cease and the committee's focus will shift from short-run preparation to long-term planning and evaluation.

An important factor in that evaluation will be the cost of coeducation for 500 women. As an aid to analyzing the cost, coeducation income and expenditures for the coming year are being isolated from the general University budget. "If we find that our projections are off the mark, we will know exactly where they were, and why," says Chauncey. "We will keep a separate budget and will be able, therefore, to make accurate projections for the following year. We'll know where we came from and where we are going."

If Yale's experiment with coeducation has the markings at present of "muddling

through," it is because the University is breaking new ground in a field where it has little if any experience, and because the planners are being forced to build guidelines as the planning proceeds. Plans and decisions hinge on information not yet available, and in some instances information will not emerge until plans are formulated and decisions are made. Nevertheless, a certain institutional momentum has developed on behalf of coeducation, and as the months pass the experiment will begin to assume a distinct shape.

In large measure, the whole undertaking rests on the active engagement of energies throughout the University. Said Brewster to the faculty meeting: "Because this decision is late and somewhat precipitate it involves many risks and burdens to everyone concerned. Like Coeducation Week, this course of action will work only if students, faculty, and administration voluntarily assume its risks, burdens, and responsibilities."

Given the flexibility of the plan, it is fairly certain that broad support can be sustained throughout this year and next. Because the plan is clearly an experiment, because it avoids the rigidity of a fixed formula for coeducation, there is room within it for a wide variety of opinions on how to pursue coeducation most successfully.

Meanwhile, University officers are continuing the search for the \$55 million needed for capital expenditures to make coeducation—with a full complement of 1,500 women—a permanent part of Yale.

The chairman of the newly formed Planning Committee on Coeducation is a housewife, mother of two, skating and skiing enthusiast, sometime interior decorator, chemist, teacher, and former assistant dean of the Graduate School.

Elga Wasserman is also a lady with a quick, disarming smile and some sharp ideas on the probable needs of Yale women. Along with her 11-man committee (which includes presidential assistant Henry Chauncey Jr. and John A. Wilkinson, dean of undergraduate affairs), she is being asked to coordinate all the administrative and planning efforts involved in bringing 500 women undergraduates to Yale next September.

A long-time champion of coeducation at Yale, Mrs. Wasserman began a campaign last year to mix the sexes in on-campus housing for graduate students. Under her plan, which now awaits final student approval, the all-male Hall of Graduate Studies and all-female Helen Hadley Hall would exchange 80 students next year. Says Mrs. Wasserman: "The first thing a woman graduate student at Yale notices is that the institution has a masculine orientation which can be extremely depressing for females. Women are in a minority here to begin with, but what is worse, their minority status is underscored by Yale's tendency to segregate them from the mainstream of community life. Helen Hadley Hall is the obvious example. By bringing females into the Hall of Graduate Studies, we hope to help break down some of the barriers here between women as people and women as objects."

The distinction Mrs. Wasserman makes is, for her, an important one and it shapes much of her thinking about the role of her committee. "Yale men are going to have to accept women as classmates and colleagues rather than just as dates," she says, "and much of our work on the Planning Committee is being directed toward that end. The committee is planning to consult with every department head, every program director, every counselor who expects to be affected either directly or indirectly as a result of coeducation. I personally plan to devote a large amount of time and effort to consulting



Elga Wasserman: Wrestling with the problem of 500 women in a male community.



## Graduate School Dean Steps Down after Eight Years

with female graduate students, female instructors, and other women who might have advice or experiences to offer the committee."

Of major concern to Mrs. Wasserman is the problem of providing for a sense of community among the women themselves without compromising the idea of an integrated undergraduate body. "If we assign only a few women to each college, the sense of being overwhelmed by a masculine environment can easily make the whole Yale experience unbearable for women," she says. "If we are going to commit ourselves to making *all* University facilities open to women, we must at the same time recognize that unless those facilities are opened in a way that is not psychologically inhibiting to women, they will be virtually meaningless. Residential colleges, for example, are one of the hallmarks of a Yale education, but they will be of no use to women if they find them intellectually inaccessible. Therefore, it is tremendously important that each college that has women has *enough* women for a sense of feminine community. We cannot invite women here only to make them feel isolated and alone."

A 1945 graduate of Smith College, Mrs. Wasserman holds a doctoral degree in chemistry from Radcliffe. She met her husband, Yale chemistry professor Harry Wasserman, when they were lab partners in a Harvard chemistry course. According to her husband, Mrs. Wasserman is an excellent cook, "as an organic chemist should be. She uses the experimental approach and rarely cooks the same thing twice." It may be that the tendency dates back to her days as a graduate student in chemistry. Her husband also tells the story of a rare chemical compound Mrs. Wasserman created quite by mistake. She had been struggling for weeks to produce the compound and finally gave up to take a two-week vacation. She returned to find that the compound had synthesized accidentally in a test tube she had forgotten about. The compound now bears her name—Elga's Dimer.

John Perry Miller, 57, dean of the Graduate School since 1961 and one of the nation's leading spokesmen for graduate education, will retire from the deanship at the end of this academic year.

In an announcement that came as a surprise to most members of the Yale community, Miller cited the need for "self-renewal of the mind and spirit" and "a change of role to remain effective as an educator" as his main reasons for resigning. Speaking to a *Yale Daily News* reporter, he elaborated a little further: "When your guts say you're no longer getting any fun out of it, you quit."

In general, Miller says, he had "no disappointments" in his eight years as dean. In fact, he adds, he enjoyed it very much. But he feels that the continued momentum of the Graduate School requires "the attention of a dean in residence who has the zest to push forward."

President Kingman Brewster Jr., commenting on the resignation, said, "I have been terribly lucky in the quality of my administrative colleagues, but none of them has contributed more to Yale than John Perry Miller."

Miller has also drawn praise from members of the faculty because, as one man

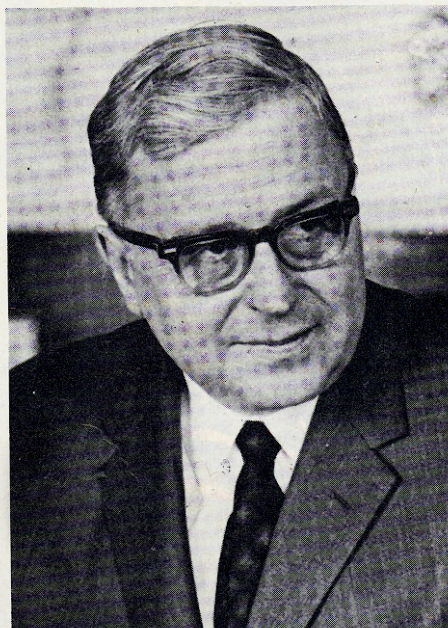
expressed it, "He defends his own terrain, his own faculty, very strongly." He has been respectful of departmental autonomy while managing to push through a number of major innovations in the Graduate School. Among the new programs he has helped to establish are the master of philosophy degree (awarded after two years of study and completion of all the Ph.D. requirements with the exception of the dissertation); the joint M.D.-Ph.D. program; a series of new interdepartmental Ph.D. programs; the combined B.A.-M.A. program; and the graduate affiliates program in the residential colleges.

When Miller became dean, the Graduate School was the only school in the University which did not have its own alumni association. He quickly established one, then initiated a special publication, *Ventures*, for alumni of the Graduate School.

Perhaps most significantly, the Graduate School has undergone a period of major expansion during Miller's tenure as dean. In his most recent annual report, Miller shows that in the past eight years enrollment has increased 50 per cent, applications have increased 122 per cent, and financial aid to students is up 169 per cent. During the same period, federal funds to the Graduate School increased 566 per cent and outside fellowships increased 127 per cent.

While Miller has been popular with administration officials and faculty, students have occasionally complained that he was not as partial to their concerns as he might have been. His policy of allowing less time than in the past for the completion of theses was one target of student criticism. The students charged that the policy would turn Yale into a "diploma mill," while Miller contended that the quality of graduate education is compromised when students move through so slowly that they become tired of it.

While at times Miller's deanship has sparked controversy and debate, there is little question that he has been one of the strongest and most innovative deans in the history of the Graduate School. Next year he plans to take a leave of absence (his first in 14 years), and then return to his post as professor of economics.



John Perry Miller: The need for self-renewal of mind and spirit.