PRESIDENT'S OFFICE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
JUL 30 1975
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Dear Jack:

Let me express my deep appreciation of the time and interest which you and Nate Pusey gave to our recent annual review of Columbia's problems and opportunities.

We are enmeshed in the struggle thrust upon the entire private sector of higher education as all of us attempt to cope with continuing inflation, greatly increased federal regulation, and growing internal conflicts caused by diminishing resources. Hence, Ted deBary and I welcomed an opportunity to discuss our prospects extemporaneously and in detail. University life is now changing so rapidly that none of us finds it easy to be confident about defining courses of action protective of our institutions and at the same time guiding the evolution of what is increasingly a knowledge-based society. A sympathetic and professionally trained ear such as yours helps us to articulate half-formed conceptions.

I would now like to wrap up these discussions by describing two of our most pressing needs as we see matters at this time. It is my frank hope that the Foundation might be in a position to assist us in addressing these urgent problems. Of course our most critical immediate need is the funding of the remaining $5-million of the Fairchild Life Sciences Center now in preliminary stages of construction. We understand that the Foundation is not presently in a position to help in this matter.

1. Development of Centralized Academic Planning

We reviewed with you our administrative and budgetary efforts during the past five years. They have produced a remarkable improvement in Columbia's handling of its fiscal affairs. We have moved from an operating deficit of $15.5-million in 1970-71 to one approximating $3.5-million as our books closed on June 30, 1975. We had expected to be under $1-million deficit (in a total budget approximating $200-million) for the year just past,

but renewed inflation, recession and the escalating costs of energy defeated our expectations.

Realistic projections of cost inflation over the next five years forecast a funding gap of more than $30-million by 1980. Hence, we must conclude that we are at the end of our first five year austerity effort which concentrated on administrative reforms and universitywide pressure to contract the size of our faculty. We believe that we must now move quickly to a more sensitive form of academic planning in order to enable the University successfully to predict and to deal with the 1980 operating environment. We cannot afford to drift.

Our major planning problem at Columbia is to address the predictably harsh operating conditions of the 1980 era without either debilitating surgery or a rapid slide into institutional mediocrity. In effect we must try to rebalance Columbia's principal educational components so that they are more efficient in educational terms and more mutually supportive. Although the data are not all in and we do not have internal agreement as to the validity of our premises, my impression is that the Graduate School is badly proportioned in the critical areas of the Social Sciences and Humanities. Similarly, undergraduate responsibilities at Columbia are divided among four partly overlapping and partly redundant jurisdictions: Columbia College, the School of General Studies, Engineering and Barnard College. The question then is what we can do to adjust the components, assuring a more effective commitment to undergraduate teaching, and economies of scale in undergraduate instruction in order to achieve crucial support for graduate departments?

In the area of continuing education we now operate diverse programs in the School of General Studies, the School of the Arts, Health Sciences, Business, Engineering, and Summer Session. Could we not amalgamate many of these scattered efforts into a better organized and potentially remunerative center for continuing education?

In the Health Sciences we receive polyglot support from federal, state, philanthropic, and tuition income sources. Can we work out long-term assured sources of public funding that will help us to meet the growing costs of operation in these areas? Our main concern, of course, is not Medicine, but Dentistry, Nursing, and Public Health. How are they to be funded? How are they to

be integrated within the disciplinary specialties of the Health Sciences? And how are the Health Science professions to be linked to the Arts and Sciences? The very large current demands for premedical education at Columbia College and Barnard College are but one part of such needed linkage.

All these questions are urgent; they are difficult; and they are sensitive. We need to plan quickly and to do it well. We have established Dr. James Young as Vice President for Academic Planning, and we have brought in Ms. Linda K. Morse from Princeton as Assistant Provost. These are the key initial appointments in our new central planning effort. The office reports to Ted deBary, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. I have charged it with the development of a university-wide academic plan based upon the rebalancing I have described. At the same time we are moving toward a Second Arden House Priorities Conference, building on last year's successful move to involve all constituencies in our attempts to confront our problems realistically. This will require a renewed effort to secure understanding and compliance with the need to plan and eventually with the plan itself.

It is a big job. We are forecasting a deficit of approximately $3-million for 1975-76 when we finally wrap up this year's push for short-range savings. I have said to you that if $500,000 were allocated to resources for underwriting our central academic planning effort, the funds would be prudently spent. I am asking the Foundation for $500,000, spread over a three-year period, to help us with the creation and early development of this new central planning office.

2. Junior Faculty Development in the Humanities

The Foundation's support of young faculty at leading private universities is one of the most constructive undertakings by a major foundation in recent years. It permits these institutions to manage the contraction necessitated by fiscal stress while providing the means to retain the best young academic talent. The fiscal stress at Columbia has been very deal during the period 1968-75. We have had to enforce widespread contraction and this policy has had an obvious impact on the careers of junior faculty. For example, from 1968-69 to 1974-75 the total size of Columbia's

faculty in fifteen departments in the humanities has been reduced from 368 to 297, i.e., by 71 persons or 19.5 per cent. The reduction in tenured faculty was 21 or 10 per cent, and of non-tenured faculty 50 or 31+ per cent. Thus the ratio of relative attrition was 1 to 3 against the non-tenured faculty. Not only has the shrinkage in faculty size been heavily at the expense of the non-tenured faculty, but the prospects of the latter's attaining tenure have diminished in view of a projected further reduction in tenured faculty positions in the humanities from 297 in 1974-75 to 274 in 1980.

Despite these changes Columbia is one of a handful of national institutions which has a distinguished humanities faculty surrounded by professional school faculties of similar excellence. As you know, we believe that it is in the cross fertilization of these two resources that we see the best opportunity to preserve and strengthen "liberal learning".

In our efforts to renew the spirit and content of general education at Columbia we are concerned that general education in the humanities be regarded not simply as the opposite of professional specialization, but as complementary to professional knowledge and skills. The technical aspects and the humane values implicit in the practice of the professions should complement each other, rather than conflict. To coordinate the methods of professional education and the perspectives of "liberal learning" in a curriculum may be an ambitious undertaking. We are confident, however, that we already have developed a mechanism to achieve this and a model for collaboration across disciplinary lines in new joint degree programs and interdepartmental cooperation.

What we are now building at Columbia is the structure of a small community of scholars composed of pairs of senior and junior faculty, for example, a talented junior faculty member teaching in the humanities and a distinguished senior professor in another department or in one of the professional schools. These teaching fellows will work together in teams of senior and junior scholars, and meet together periodically to share their learning experiences and to discuss current scholarly issues. Their purpose is to develop new courses of instruction, to enhance the research and writings of each member through their collaboration, and to provide opportunities for young faculty members to raise their initial

teaching experience well above the level commonly associated with teaching assistants.

To illustrate, we might cite our efforts in the field of law. The history of legal institutions is connected with the history of man's human thought and experience, and the law's increasing concern with minority problems, civil liberties, urbanization, and international affairs is placed in a humane context. Undergraduates who have no intention of making a career of law can be exposed to the study of law from this broad humanistic aspect more usefully than from the conventional law school casebook approach. The humanities are in turn enriched by the precise, factual approach of the professional lawyer.

The health sciences offer a fertile field for the humanist. The ethics and values implicit in health care raise questions about the nature of man, and the quality of his life and human relationships. Realization of the consequences of health care decisions brings alive the consideration of human values in the teaching and practice of health care. After all, the health sciences today cannot be isolated from the critical issues of a technological society -- population growth, drug abuse, environmental preservation, and genetic manipulation, health insurance, among others. We are developing courses in the philosophical, political, historical, and social implications of health care. A casebook on ethics and values in health care based on clinical situations and plans for a new journal to deal with values and ethics of health care by health care professionals, humanists, and natural and social scientists are also being developed.

The General Education seminars already in progress represent an example of the kind of all-University activity we want to expand. The Kenan Teaching Fellowships, established recently through the generosity of the William R. Kenan Trust, developed to upgrade the quality of instruction in the humanities, are another building block in this process.

A program of two-year postdoctoral fellowships would provide opportunity for outstanding young men and women to collaborate with distinguished senior faculty in related fields of the arts and sciences and with those in the professions. We believe that an

endowment total of $2-million would be necessary to establish and sustain the kind of highly visible program that would attract junior faculty of outstanding promise to Columbia when there will be relatively few tenured positions available during the course of the next decade. This would enable us to demonstrate the relevance of specialized and humane knowledge to learning basic human needs and the interdependence of disciplinary knowledge in meeting these needs. Perhaps only in this way can human concerns and humane learning permeate the spectrum of specialized competences as they should.

I look forward with pleasure to discussing with you further ways in which we might collaborate to strengthen the University's commitment to the humanities in the years ahead.

With warm personal regards,

Cordially,

William J. McGill
President

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