

## Letters To The Editor:

# Reader Feels 'Pressing Need' For Coeducation

Dear Sir:

I write this letter to add my pinch of salt to the seething mixture of opinion regarding the desirability of coeducation at this University. Others have presented objective analyses of the problem, touching on everything from its legal aspects to its possible effects on our honor "system." I do not herein pretend to treat the problem objectively. Indeed, given the length of time I have been immersed in the social setting here, I am probably incapable of divorcing myself from the effects of that environment to an extent which would allow me to attempt objective evaluation. At best, I can provide some subjective reactions to non-coeducation in Charlottesville. I cannot claim that my experiences are of a typical nature, but hopefully some students, particularly those in their first or second year of school here, can benefit from my testimony.

The greater part of my last seven years have been spent at this university. The four undergraduate years of many students are devoted, as were mine, to developing a broad, albeit too often a shallow understanding of the world in which we live. I now find it sobering, and sometimes painful, to realize that I was deprived, in those four years, of the opportunity to develop an adequate understanding of one half of this world. I find the value of many insights gained in my undergraduate years diminished halfway, as a result of the warped setting plight of victims of environmental and cultural deprivation. Yet many students right here in Charlottesville are, to my way of thinking, just such victims (in degree, if not in kind).

Some will deem my portrayal of the social picture at this university as unrealistically bleak. Perhaps some practical considerations are in order. How often can the supposedly serious student afford to take a weekend trip of one hundred miles or more in order to preserve his "femininity," or to compensate (inadequately) for the deprivations of the preceding week? How often must one choose between being a serious student and being a normal person? I haven't read the literature from our admissions office recently, but it is saying "Go to L.V.A. and see the girls." That's what it should say: "Go to give an accurate picture. And even if it does read that way, its parallel, "Join the navy and see the girls" evokes a more favorable response. I've been faced too often with the choice cited above to feel

that the alternatives exist only in my imagination. That my environment should necessitate such a choice sometimes (when my sense of humor is lacking) generates within me an almost disemboweling hatred of the forces (blind adherence to tradition is one) which allow the present social environment here to endure.

Some will say my discontent results somehow from having stayed "too long" in Charlottesville. In response, let me testify that my three years in graduate school here have been more bearable than were my undergraduate years. The ratio of graduate women to graduate men seems considerably higher (I possess no statistical proof of this assertion) than does the corresponding undergraduate ratio. For me, this has meant increased exposure on a daily basis, both in the classroom and out, to the "other half" (and in many ways, I feel, the distinctly better half) of humanity. Such exposure has served, on the one hand, to alleviate my discontent and, on the other, to reveal the woeful shortcomings of my one-sided undergraduate education.

There are, finally, a few faculty members whose stay at this university has far surpassed my own in duration, and whose feelings regarding coeducation, derived from their own experiences as students here, contrast sharply with my own. I can but suggest, rather tritely, that the key to our differences lies in the changes of society; and of the roles of women therein, during the years which span their experiences as a student and my own. I feel a pressing need, which students of yesteryear may not have felt, for the opportunity to deal with women on a day-to-day basis, and to pursue both academic and non-academic subjects in their (not "separate-but-") equal company.

Keith R. Allen  
Graduate Mathematics

### Student Hostility

Dear Sir:

After I had written the enclosed editorial, I thought perhaps it warranted an explanation. I am a registered nurse, a graduate of a three year nursing program, desiring a B.S. in nursing. I came to the University of Virginia from Pennsylvania, quite ignorant of the amount of hostility that the male student seems to have for the coed at the University.

This University was recommended to me as an excellent institution of higher learning. As far as the excellence of the professors and classes go, I have not been disappointed, however, I am beginning to wonder whether the students live up to this degree of excellence.

Diane M. Fager

To whom it may concern

The only truth I found in the article written by the "ad hoc committee" was that they are "truly befuddled." I could give substantial evidence to refute their hyperbolic arguments, but I feel it is unnecessary to do this for the educated reader.

It seems, no matter how prejudiced the students of the University are against women, they could find better arguments against coeds than the ones currently appearing in The Cavalier Daily. It's rather sad that the "Jefferson ideal" that they defend is the supposed inferiority of women, rather than Jefferson's high regard of education for as many of his countrymen (should I include women?) as possible.

Diane M. Fager  
Jeanne D. Boener