

LETTERS

Grad students' views on "The Caltech Undergraduate"

Concerning "The Caltech Undergraduate—and What You Can Do with Him" (*E & S, May 1956*), we should like to voice our objection to the *apparent* meaning of this letter!

One point of contention is the objection to the uniqueness of Caltech, and the statement that the outside world thinks that if you go to Caltech you're queer unless proven otherwise. Who is the outside world to Mr. Trapnell? Is it the technical community into which he will undoubtedly be received very eagerly when he completes his education at Caltech?

Furthermore, if a student at Caltech can get by while participating in a "fantastic" number of social events and studying as little as possible, then he is undoubtedly living up to the expectations of the faculty

at the time he was accepted—and *God knows they expect plenty.*

As for what the school is doing for the students, the list is far too long and well known to reproduce here. Leave it be said that the Institute's policy of financial aid to the students is unparalleled in any university known to us. Caltech's student houses are the finest example we can find of giving a group of young men complete freedom to work and play and learn to live in tune with their fellow men.

Finally, we conclude that Mr. Trapnell is merely indulging in one of the Caltech man's favorite sports—griping—when he says, "Where in the hell am I going anyway?" This problem is universal. Does *anyone* know where he's going?

Have faith, young man, have faith!

Bob Perpall '52
Jim McCloud '55

A reply from Mr. Trapnell

I think you missed the point!

In the first place I like it here at Caltech; I would hardly give thought to going anywhere else. As you point out in your third paragraph, this is a wonderful place to go to school—and this is, in fact, "what all the shootin' is about."

However, if you don't think that a lot of graduate and undergraduate students share the views expressed in my article, then you just haven't been around long enough—or haven't kept your ears open. On the other hand, you are apparently familiar enough with the fact that griping is "one of the Caltech man's favorite sports." Now, if you will take another look at my article, I think you will find that what I was trying to do was raise the problem out of the "favorite sport" level so that we can take a look at what's underneath.

Fritz Trapnell '56

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