

*A not-unbiased report from Caltech's undergraduate
Ad Hoc Committee on the Admission of Women
which says, in effect:*

Bring on the Girls!

On October 9, 1967, the faculty Ad Hoc Committee on the Freshman and Sophomore Years presented a proposal to the Faculty Board to admit women to Caltech as undergraduates. As soon as this news reached the students, several independent organizations sprang simultaneously into action, each trying to figure out how to ensure that the faculty would become informed about student opinion on the proposal. The most notable of these organizations were the ASCIT Educational Policies Committee (whose title describes its function) and the ASCIT Executive Committee (charged with the investigation of major problems facing Caltech undergraduates). Before long the resources of these two groups were combined into a student Ad Hoc Committee on the Admission of Women.

Every Thursday afternoon the group met to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the admission of women and the means of making the proposal more attractive and more practicable. It is rare that student interest can be mobilized and concentrated at Caltech, and the speed with which this mobilization and concentration took place after October 9 is unambiguous testimony to the urgency of the problem involved.

The great bulk of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Admission of Women was concerned with such practical considerations as housing and a Dean of Women. But the committee also discovered

a number of *need areas* to bring to the attention of the faculty.

The principal arguments of the committee in these need areas are: The systematic discrimination against all females in the admission policy at Caltech is morally unjustifiable. If we were living in the Middle Ages, it would be easy enough to understand this discrimination—it would simply be a product of our unshakable conviction that women are second-rate human beings, merely a derivative of a man's rib. But to carry the trappings of monasticism into the 20th century and to impose them upon an institute which purports to be in the vanguard of scientific knowledge is surely an intolerable anachronism.

Many people seem to feel there is something fundamentally wrong with life at Caltech; but, like the weather or an act of God, no one seems to do anything about it. They simply shrug their shoulders and say that the excellent education makes up for it. But this is the worst sort of insensitivity. The monastic environment at Caltech has a chronically depressing effect on many—perhaps most—of the students.

To expect a normal 18-to-20-year-old young man to live in isolation from womankind and to be happy is the most foolish thing imaginable. Yet the Caltech admissions policy systematically augments this isolation.

Not only does the absence of femininity at Caltech make its students unhappy; it also acts as a positive deterrent to their social growth and maturity. If one looks around, he may conclude that freshmen have more social grace and appear a lot more "normal" than seniors. To take the attitude that it does not matter whether Caltech students mature or grow socially, as long as they can solve partial differential equations, is as myopic as it is commonplace.

The admission of women would help students learn how to deal with other people—a trait for which Caltech students are not renowned.

Not only would it be more equitable, not only would the happiness and social maturity of students be enhanced, but, if women were to become a part of Caltech undergraduate life, the Institute itself would very likely begin to reap benefits. At the present time qualified high school graduates sometimes elect to go to other schools because Caltech is not co-ed. Unquestionably the greatest cause of attrition during the undergraduate years at Caltech is the dissatisfaction with a monastic environment when other schools offer a good education and, in addition, a normal male *and* female environment. Caltech loses graduate students it might otherwise gain from its own undergraduate population because it is not co-ed. And, of course, Caltech completely ignores the pool of high school talent which happens to have been born female. All of these effects decrease the over-all quality of the students Caltech gets.

Women would add a new dimension to class discussion at Caltech. At the present time discussion is lopsided. Girls would bring a new viewpoint.

Finally, with improved student morale, the Institute could expect better academic performance—if not in terms of grade-point average, then certainly in terms of enthusiasm and interest.

In fairness to everyone—the girls, the present undergraduates, and the Institute—women should at long last be admitted to Caltech.

—Richard Flammang '68

On November 27 the Institute moved one step closer to admitting women undergraduates when the faculty voted, by a large majority, to "recommend to the Administration and Board of Trustees that the Institute proceed with all deliberate speed to the admission of women to undergraduate work at Caltech."

Though the faculty thereby indicated its approval, in principle, of women undergraduates, specific suggestions for the implementation of this proposal must now be worked out before the recommendation is sent to the Board of Trustees. —Ed.

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In providing for his daughters, John B. Kelly stated in his will that what he was about to give them would *"help pay dress shop bills which, if they continue as they have started under the tutelage of their mother, will be quite considerable."*

For information on how you can provide for Caltech and pay for the dress shop bills as well, contact:

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