

FINDINGS 'DIFFERENT AS.

Foreign Student Reviews Campus Social Structure

By Achim Jurchen

German Student in Journalism

These lines are jotted down long after midnight, the time at which you cannot sleep anyway in a dorm of the U of O. Doors are slammed, somebody is hooting down the corridor, and an especially smart fellow gives the latest hit song a dress-rehearsal, the song that he is going to serenade to his date tomorrow night.

While the approaching finals add some more gray hairs to a few students, I realize that a quarter of a year of study abroad has passed for me. What were the things that bewildered me most, were completely new and made thorough adjustment necessary?

Not too many of the foreign students had figured out before, the amount of red-tape they would have to fight at an American university. The registration week caused some faces to grow grim at bureaucracy, but more so with the questions one had to answer in questionnaires:

Questions

How do you spend your leisure time? What is the education of your mother? etc. The first reaction: "That is not your concern!" It took some time to make us believe that those answers might be useful for instructors or advisers to understand emerging difficulties of the individual student.

When we had passed this 'ordeal' of registration with one laughing eye, the next difficulties that needed adjustment turned up: living in a dormitory. To be frank, I have not yet succeeded in making this adjustment. When you have lived in youth-hostels all over the world, you are shocked by the noisy, uncouth and boisterous behavior of a great many American students.

The first week I enjoyed water-bagging, playing pranks of various kinds, noise, parties and honking around. But when I found out that it is always going to be this way I became a little bit afraid of the future.

Regulations

There are regulations for not keeping empty luggage in your room, of not damaging the walls by thumb-tacks, but there is no effort made to make the stay at a dormitory a pleasant one by urging people to care a little bit about the other guy. I can hardly get any sleep before 2 a.m. That is true for many students, too.

Valuable energy, sleep and time are lost, and your hair stands on end when you find a coke-bottle placed carefully in the W.C.

When you have finally given in to the obviously unchangeable situation in your place of living because personal initiative or admonishing among the fellow-students just causes name-calling, you decide to fall in with the general trend of the foreign students: to move off campus at the best opportunity.

Facilities

In the meantime you have the chance to get acquainted with all the unique facilities you have on the campus. A European student who is used to doing his work with makeshift and only the very necessary facilities is amazed by the abundance of material he has here: the full-fledged library, films, recordings, a University newspaper and radio station, music listening rooms, equipment for physical education, the school's own stadium, museums, a student union building, and a great variety of other material, institutions and organizations that can help to make studying successful and recreation enjoyable.

But most of all there is the faculty with their informal attitude toward the student that is of great help, and in this respect the for-

ign students have found much understanding and assistance from the foreign student adviser (K. S. Ghent).

And then it is high time to get down to studying. Here the new things are: the calling of the roll, always being pushed by reading assignments, papers, tests, mid-term exams, finals. Apparently the American student is not trusted very much and not considered mature enough.

Cramming

We got adjusted to the system regretting only that a little too much emphasis is placed on cramming the material than giving it deep thought, giving it its logical position in an overall system and allowing no time to spend on personal research work.

But in general I really appreciate the valuable endeavors made by the faculty to help the students in their work and advancement. It is not inferior nor superior to our system; it is just different.

Underground

After six weeks or so you start to understand underground tendencies which are perceptible only to a very alert ear and eye. You find that the campus also has its snobbish side. There is underlying behavior that boys or girls from fraternities or sororities are better or superior to people living in independent organizations.

Are they really? At least it is not a very nice or democratic attitude. It has created an extremely clannish atmosphere that has somewhat infected the whole community. I have experienced that the situation is different and better on other campuses.

Genuine efforts are made by some of the religious groups and by the Cosmopolitan club to absorb foreign students. So on the whole the average foreign student will have more friends among other foreign students than among Americans.

Sewage Problem To Be Discussed

C. D. Byrnes, chancellor of the state system of higher education, has appointed a special committee to investigate the possibility of having the University of Oregon and Oregon State college share the costs of new sewage disposal construction in Eugene and Corvallis.

A proposal to have the University share construction costs was recently made by the Eugene city council. Byrnes will take no action on the matter until the committee has made its report, said J. O. Lindstrom, business manager of the University.

Members of the committee include H. A. Bork, comptroller of the state system of higher education; A. M. Westling, planning consultant of the Bureau of Municipal Research; Lindstrom, and two members of the faculty of Oregon State college.

Library Announces Hours for Holiday

Library hours for the Christmas vacation period were announced Monday by Carl W. Hintz, librarian.

The University library will be open Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, Dec. 22 through Jan. 2, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It will be open Wednesdays and Saturdays, Dec. 20 through Jan. 3, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and it will be closed all day on Sundays and Thursday, Jan. 1.

The fact is that a new student meets an extremely friendly and warm atmosphere but hardly has any chance to get integrated with the groups, clubs or organizations that are on the campus. The recreation always has to be 'fun' and possibly noisy.

Outlet

The hard work of studying must find an outlet some time. I saw students in Berlin walking around with obsolete caps on their heads, night-gowns over their suits and carrying posters that said they belonged to the "Kuny-Movement" and demanded 'free love.' So I really enjoyed the noise-parade, but somewhere in the pit of my stomach it gave me an ill feeling. Is there not a psychological trend in modern man to cover up quietness?

One who withdraws from the crowd once in a while is labelled as 'different' and often enough called an introvert. Everything has to be in the superlative and very conspicuous. Why is there no contest for the smartest, the most polite, the most thoughtful fellow?

Superficiality

The same superficiality I found in the system of dating. When the freshman girl does not date as often as her friend, her social prestige will sink. So she will date with fellows she is not interested in. Symbols of affection become rather meaningless and more or less a habit.

You find the explanation that she wants to meet as many people as possible in order to get to know them and better understand them to make the right choice for the later partner. But I am sure that a better way of selection and sincere kind of friendship with fellows would give her more.

Once I went—for the fun of it—on a blind date. Believe me, I shall never do it again. I am afraid that a few people lose the sense of real values in this race for social recognition and association.

Tendencies

It must be admitted that there are strong generalizations in the above lines, but I tried to find general tendencies. I have found excellent buddies and less volupt and sophisticated girls on the campus than pictured.

Most of the foreign students realize that they have a singular chance to study at this university, and they do not stand aside critically, but try to participate and to get and to give as much as possible. Nevertheless, I felt an obligation to tell about the experiences and situations that stunned us most.

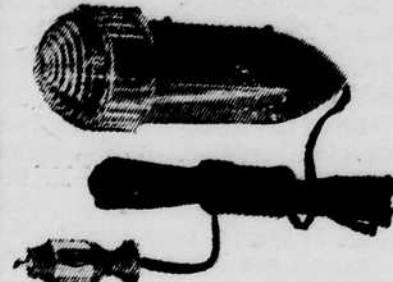
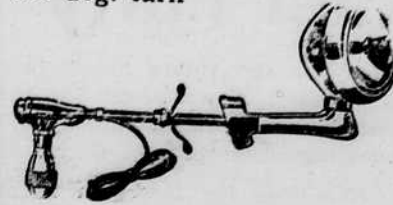
And any of us will take home an extremely valuable experience in international living because understanding each other and trying to find the sources for the behavior of the other will prevent further prejudice and antagonism.

Carefree

The carefree and somewhat careless behavior of the American student is certainly explained by his carefree life in comparison with all the troubles and hardships the most foreigners had to undergo. And they can be envied for that. Maybe it is a good thing that they enjoy their youth boisterously and are not too philosophical and problematic at so young an age.

And despite their noise at night, their curious system of dating and having recreation and the self-imposed caste-system of Greeks and non-Greeks they certainly are nice and friendly fellows and good buddies. With gratitude most of us took advantage of the academic freedom and the various facilities of the U of O. Special thanks should go to the faculty and the advisers. I wonder what I will write toward the end of the next term.

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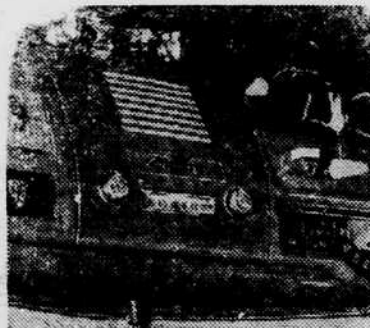
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