

The Surveys

academically qualified students," 72.9 percent of the faculty strongly believe it would, 11.9 percent "somewhat" believe it would, 11 percent believe there would be no change, 3.4 percent "somewhat" believe it would not, and 0.8 percent strongly believe it would not.

The survey asked faculty to list in order of importance both the advantages and disadvantages they think coeducation would have on the University. Faculty cited "better students" as the number one advantage and potential cost as the primary disadvantage.

Meantime, 83.3 percent indicated they think the academic environment would be "greatly" or "somewhat" enhanced by coeducation.

According to David Novack, associate professor of sociology who directed the project, the faculty is more strongly in favor of coeducation now than it was in 1981 when 76.9 percent favored coeducation in a similar survey.

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STUDENT SURVEY: Administered during registration for spring term classes, the student survey was completed by 1,297 undergraduates, or 84 percent of the undergraduate student body. In addition a telephone survey of non-respondents was conducted to validate the findings of the broader study.

In the student survey, 22.3 percent said they "strongly believe" W&L should become coeducational with 20.1 percent saying they "somewhat believe it should." There were 4.7 percent with no opinion while 33.9 percent said they "strongly believe W&L should not" become coeducational and another 19 percent indicating they "somewhat believe it should not."

Meantime, 62.1 percent of the students said coeducation would be in the University's best interests with 32.1 percent choosing "strongly" and 30 percent choosing "somewhat." There were 13 percent indicating no change, 11.5 percent said they "somewhat believe" it would not be in the University's best interests, and 13.4 "strongly believe" it would not.

Asked how they felt coeducation would effect the academic environment at W&L, 56.1 percent of the students indicated that it would be either "greatly" or "somewhat" enhanced by coeducation.

Students listed "loss of tradition" most often as the primary disadvantage with "increased academic standards" the primary advantage.

More than 80 percent of the students thought coeducation would harm the fraternity system at W&L either greatly (32.3 percent) or somewhat (49 percent). More than half (50.4 percent) of the students said the presence of women in the classroom would not be a distraction to them while 44.8

percent said it would present "somewhat" of a distraction.

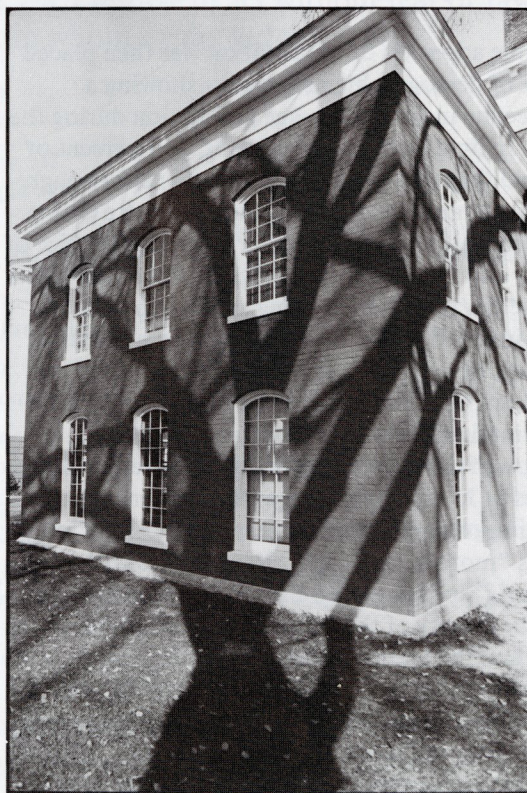
Comparatively, a majority of students (50.2 percent) in a 1980 survey favored coeducation while a majority in the current survey is opposed.

Examining the recent survey in light of previous studies of the issues, Novack said one of the most noteworthy trends the sociology students found is that both students and faculty are becoming increasingly concerned about academic standards.

"That fact becomes apparent when you consider that a majority of both students and faculty perceived coeducation as worth adopting to maintain or improve W&L's academic standards," said Novack. "Also, the primary advantage of coeducation listed by both faculty and students was improved academic quality."

Disagreements between students and faculty concern potential problems for the students as a consequence of attending an all-male school, noted Novack.

"With the changing role and place of women in our society, two-thirds of the faculty believe that our students might experience problems when they encounter women in graduate programs or in the work place while only 18 percent of the students share that concern," he said.



Charles Mason photo