



“The Matter of Admissions . . .”

ON JULY 25, 1964, the Board of Trustees of Washington and Lee University, after long and thoughtful discussion, approved a statement for entry in the Board's official minutes, one which dealt with the University's admissions process.

The statement said:

"The matter of admissions was mentioned. It was noted that no provision of the Charter, no provision of the By-Laws and no resolution of the Board has established a policy of discrimination among qualified applicants for admission. Traditionally matters pertaining to the qualifications of applicants for admission have been entrusted to the Faculty and its appropriate committees, and the By-Laws of the University so provide. The Board of Trustees has no cause to doubt the appropriateness of this delegation of authority to the Faculty and has no cause to doubt the collective wisdom of the Faculty in discharging the concomitant responsibility."

By this statement the Board made clear the absence of any stated policy of discrimination at Washington and Lee, and it also made clear that the Board would impose no *de facto* policy of discrimination against fully qualified applicants for admission.

Because the action represented, in the Board's view, a clarification of policy, rather than a change or reversal of policy, the Board saw no need for a public statement. As a result of queries from faculty members, President Cole communicated the substance of the Board statement to the faculty at its first meeting in October.

When the Board of Trustees met in regular session on October 23-24, President Cole conveyed to its members the request of the editors of the *Ring-tum Phi* for a statement for publication relative to the matter of admissions. Subsequently, the Board authorized the release of the following statement exclusively to the student editors. The statement, which was carried in the *Ring-tum Phi* issue published on October 28, said:

"Washington and Lee University's Board of Trustees has reaffirmed the university faculty's responsibility in determining standards of admission for qualified applicants.

"President Fred C. Cole said today that 'The Board of Trustees has no cause to doubt the appropriateness of this delegation of authority to the faculty and has no cause to doubt the collective wisdom of the faculty in discharging the concomitant responsibility.'

"In response to an inquiry from the editors of the *Ring-tum Phi*, President Cole said the Board considered the University's admissions policy at its meeting on July 25.

"Said President Cole:

"'It was noted that no provision of the Charter, no provision of the By-laws and no resolution of the Board has established a policy of discrimination among qualified applicants for admission. Traditionally, matters pertaining to the qualifications of applicants for admission have been entrusted to the Faculty and its appropriate committees, and the By-laws of the University so provide.'

"A faculty committee on Admissions at Washington and Lee, which reports to the general faculty, is composed of nine professors from the College and the School of Commerce and Administration and four members of the University's administrative staff.

"Dr. Edward C. Atwood, Jr., dean of students and professor of economics, is chairman of the committee. Its members are:

"Dr. C. Westbrook Barritt, professor of Romance languages; Dr. Sydney M. B. Coulling, associate professor of English; Mr. John M. Gunn, Jr. assistant professor of economics; Dr. Leonard E. Jarrard, associate professor of psychology; Dr. William A. Jenks, professor of history; Mr. John K. Jennings, assistant professor of journalism; Dr. Cecil D. Jones, associate professor of fine arts; Mr. Henry L. Ravenhorst, associate professor of engineering; Dr. Edgar W. Spencer, professor of geology; Associate Dean of Students James D. Farrar, director of admissions; Assistant Dean of Students Lewis G. John, director of financial aid; and Dean, Emeritus, Frank J. Gilliam, former dean of admissions.

"The committee reviews all applications for admissions to Washington and Lee and selects the 330 to 340 students who annually compose the entering undergraduate class.

"A separate admissions committee functions within the School of Law. The faculty there has the same delegation of authority and responsibility for admissions to the School of Law as that possessed by the faculty in the college."

Reports relative to Washington and Lee's admissions procedures circulated by the general news media were interpolations of the statement appearing in the *Ring-tum Phi*.

