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Student Government

By GRANVILLE NORRIS, '40

and

JOHN W. BUTCHER, '41

IN ANY EDUCATIONAL program there must of necessity be constant changes if progress is to be made. Such changes are inevitable when we consider the environment in which we live as an ever-changing one. The educational requirements are greater today than ever before; the schedules and programs are always subject to changes. Courses of study are constantly being adjusted, all to meet the demands of this ever-changing world. Such problems are usually approached and handled by administrative officers; however, we, as students at the College of Dentistry, likewise are subjected to this same environment and feel the need of such changes among us, if progress is to be made.

Year after year, new students are registered in the college as total strangers. We learn to know each other merely by occasional contacts in the corridors, each having his individual interest and going his own way. Under such a set-up little more can be expected than a classmate relationship, making each class a separate and distinct group within itself. The existence of such a relationship has proved to be very undesirable, especially when we consider the fact that our student body is small in number. Not only does this distant relationship exist within the student group, but also between the students and faculty.

As an outgrowth of generalized student dissatisfaction and unrest, a student group was called together with representatives from each class. The opinions, wishes and desires of the few were made known to the entire student body, after which three committees were formed; namely, a Constitution Committee, a Committee on Freshman Activities and a committee to make recommendations for the Dentoscope. Each committee carried out its duties in the spirit of the group which may best be expressed by quoting the preamble of the Constitution:

“We, the students of the Howard University College of Dentistry, in order to develop among ourselves a spirit



Student Council, 1939-40

of cooperation, to encourage student initiative, to afford development through self-expression, self-control and leadership, and to create a high degree of cooperation between the faculty and the students in matters of constructive ideals, do unite in establishing an organization of all students for the common good and for the promotion of the general welfare.”

Not unlike any other constructive program, many obstacles were encountered. However, the spirit of our endeavors was

not dampened. Each criticism or suggestion was considered seriously and used as a stepping stone toward the desired goal. At the close of the last school year our organization had not been officially recognized, yet we were encouraged to carry on our plans pending such recognition.

The program of the Committee on Freshman Activities was rather well organized and was carried out throughout the summer. Communications were made with each prospective student by the chairman of the Committee on Freshman Activities, and with the upperclassman assigned to act as a student advisor to the new student. By such a procedure each new student became acquainted with someone at the college prior to his entrance. On registration day personal contacts were made between most of the new and old students. This fellowship was further carried out through a smoker to which all students and faculty members were invited.

The proposed program for reorganization of the Dentoscope staff was based essentially upon the idea that much of the actual work in editing and writing should be done by the students, the faculty representatives acting as guides and censors. The plan called for a staff composed of the following members:

Faculty Co-Editor-in-Chief, Student Co-Editor-in-Chief, Faculty Associate Editor, Student Associate Editor, Faculty Business Manager, Student News Editor, Student Feature Editor.

After several alterations, following suggestions from the faculty concerning the Constitution of the proposed Student Government, the organization finally received official faculty recognition in a letter addressed to the president of the Student Government on January 27, 1940:

January 27, 1940.

Mr. Granville Norris,
College of Dentistry,
Howard University,
500 W Street, N.W.,

Dear Mr. Norris:

I am happy to advise you and your committee that at a meeting of the faculty of the College of Dentistry held on December 11, 1939, it was voted to approve the revised

proposed Constitution for Student Government and plans for reorganization of the Dentoscope staff.

On behalf of the faculty, may I congratulate your committee and the entire student body upon the far-sightedness and painstaking efforts which were required to accomplish this purpose. I am sure that this agreement marks the beginning of a more effective plan of cooperation, unity and general comradeship on the part of the students and faculty of the College of Dentistry.

Very sincerely yours,

RUSSELL A. DIXON,
Dean.

As students, we fully realize the responsibility which we have before us. Through such an organization we feel that a big gap in a progressive educational program may be filled through which all may profit.

—————oOo—————

“We should all be concerned about the future because we have to spend all the rest of our lives there.”—Charles F. Kettering.