

editorial

Orientation: a social event,

THE ELEMENTARY
TEACHERS SAID
HIGH SCHOOL.



IN HIGH SCHOOL
THEY SAID -
UNIVERSITY.



NOW I'M AT
UNIVERSITY.



AND I STILL
WANT TO KNOW.



WHEN DOES
MY EDUCATION
BEGIN?



D.G. Smith '70.

but what else?

Why have an orientation week for freshmen students? Why spend approximately \$40,000 to do it? After all, that amount of money could pay for a year's tuition for 40 of those same students. In these times of cutbacks and budget belt tightening, surely that seems an important consideration.

But, hey, let's get our priorities straight. The university exists, ostensibly, to serve the students as an institution of higher learning. Granted, universities do important research and serve as part of the community in which they exist, but students remain (or should remain) the prime priority.

In this context, let's look at orientation. Basically, orientation aims to acquaint the frosh with other students and university life in general. This is done by dividing the frosh into groups led by volunteer second-to-fourth-year students. Each frosh receives a frosh pack—a mixture of gift items, coupons and information from the university. The group participates in group meetings, social activities and competi-

tions like the scavenger hunt and Shinerama. Placement tests for math and French, registration and a parent-campus life symposium are among other orientation activities.

Well and good. A mixture of educational and recreational activities. However "you don't get very oriented by getting bombed at the Frosh Ball," suggests one former frosh group leader. True, but that's hardly the point of it all, is it?

The emphasis is on social life during orientation week, and rightly so. University - going to classes, exams, papers, etc. - is not something that can be taught or shown. It's like learning to ride a bicycle. No matter how many complicated instructions you may receive beforehand, it's a whole different story once you actually get on that bike and try to ride it.

As for course requirements, all freshmen receive appointments with an academic advisor to help them select courses and programs. At registration this year, there were 60 members

of the Orientation Committee to help out despairing first-year students.

University is not just going to school, it's four years out of your life, and if Orientation Week can make those years more fun and more valuable, what more can one ask? The people that one meets in one's life are of indescribable value. Orientation helps new students to break that first stretch of ice. One second year student put it this way, "The people you meet during frosh week are the people who are your friends for the rest of your life."

At this point some readers might be raising an eyebrow and thinking wow, how gung-ho. Fine; but let those same people consider the lamentable lack of interest shown in university activities during the last few years. A phenomenon of the seventies or perhaps simply a lack of that elusive something popularly called "school spirit?" Frosh week encourages "keenness" among the frosh - that willingness to throw yourself heart and soul into something - to get involved in student govern-

ment, the student newspaper or radio station or any of a hundred different organizations. It's something that's easy to sneer at but difficult to have an interesting, thriving university community without.

This editorial has talked about those events sponsored by the Student Union Orientation Committee. It has not considered those individual residences who persist in their "hazing" of new students.

How the ritual humiliation of frosh serves to make them feel at home is beyond the scope of this writer. Unless someone out there actually finds wearing a brassier on one's head or wallowing on hands and knees in mud, mustard and ketchup a valuable life experience.

At any rate, there are some good things going on at this campus for the first-year students. Let's keep it up.

NOTE: This year the orientation committee is attempting to make orientation a year-round process. See the information booth in the SUB (in front of the Smoke Shop) for further details.

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