March 4 classes cancelled at University of Pennsylvania

Provost David Goddard of the University of Pennsylvania announced Tuesday that he was "prepared to cancel classes" on March 4, in response to a request by 13 faculty and administration personnel.

Dr. Alfred Lieher, chairman of the History Department, relayed immediate response to the request. Goddard acceded to this request, according to the Daily Pennsylvanian because he did not want not want the wait until after he had been presented with a similar student petition, and also because of the fear that he didn't move quickly enough.

The request had wide faculty and administrative support. Although it is technically up to the Dean of Pennsylvania's five Colleges to cancel classes, there were signatures of the request, and the other areas to be in sympathy with the idea. The Deans of the graduate schools are free to take their own actions, although it is virtually impossible to shut down the Medical and Dental Schools for a day.

The activities on March 4 have broadly-based support at Penn. A statement by the major faculty group, led by Professor Lee Benner of the History Department, calls for the university to "examine the role of the University of Pennsylvania in American society" and the role of "free, rational, and critical inquiry" in an academic community. The planners intend to "broaden the range of inquiry of how the university functions with relation to society."

Not all faculty members support this particular request, however. A group of about 220 scientists at Penn want to see the day devoted to more specific topics. They plan a research stoppage to examine the present policies of the scientific community. This split between the factions has promised no compromise as yet. While the scientists want to examine the relationship between science and the government, the more influential social science group wishes an examination of the university's total involvement with society.

At a preliminary meeting of the planning committee for the March 4 activities, the scientists tried to label the topic "Misuses of Science and Technology." (However, the majority of faculty and graduate students decided that the theme of March 4 at the University of Pennsylvania will be "The Misuses of Knowledge.")

Student proposals all call for reform of requirements

In justification of its ideas, the Committee states, "The student would gain immensity by becoming involved with the determination of the course of his own future," and holds that course content of less importance than the freedom involved in the elimination of all requirements.

SCFP subcommittee report

Another proposal the faculty faces is a report from the SCEP subcommittee on the General Institute Requirements. Increased flexibility is the goal of a proposed change. The subcommittee recommends that the Institute. The subcommittee, emphasizing "a strong, flexible, and diverse base for educational achievement," and a released set of core subjects in particular, suggests that the basic content of the core subjects be retained.

Other features of the proposal are a 35-hour apparatus Humanities requirement (including the sophomore year), or which at least 17 must be outside the student's major field. The Laboratory Requirement would be replaced by a project course in either the Humanities or Science Distribution.

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