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[Memo from Alice Ilchman to All Trustees, August 1, 1989]

Alice Stone Ilchman
Sarah Lawrence College

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SARAH LAWRENCE COLLEGE

August 1, 1989

THE PRESIDENT

To: All Trustees
From: Alice Ilchman

With but a month to go before the opening of school, it seems an appropriate time to bring you up to date on the news of the College since Commencement.

FOLLOW-UP ON THE EVENTS OF THE SPRING: You will be pleased, I know, to learn that we are making progress on our commitment to achieve greater racial and cultural diversity in our community, our curriculum, and in campus life. We are hard at work as well on ways to create more sensitivity and awareness so that our community can live most productively together.

1. Faculty -- The faculty and administration made increasing the number of faculty of color our highest priority for the spring and summer. This effort appears to be paying off. Faculty search committees and the Advisory Committee on Appointments have worked diligently toward our announced goal of increasing the number of faculty of color on tenure-track appointments by six over the next five years, with the first two to be appointed by the fall of 1989. I am pleased to report that we exceeded our expectations for 1989 and that three black scholars have been appointed to the regular full-time faculty, in literature, music and political science. In addition, the 1989-90 guest faculty will include seven new black teachers, in American history, music, studio arts, theater, and writing.

In 1988-89, the total faculty of 152 included 12 faculty of color, six black, four Asian, and two Hispanic. In 1989-90, the total faculty of 149 will include 20 faculty of color, 14 black, three Asian, two Hispanic, and one Native American.

2. Curriculum -- Many of the new faculty will strengthen our international offerings and multicultural program, contributing new courses in Afro-American history, Latin American and Afro-American literature, the politics of black Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America, and a study of black female writers. In addition, several returning faculty have modified their courses to include a multicultural perspective, and others have initiated regular meetings to discuss multicultural issues and their impact on the curriculum.

3. Educational Programs -- Marilyn Katz and her staff have spent much of the summer working with Dr. Jean Wu, Associate Dean of Bryn Mawr College, on a program of workshops to educate the College community to the issues of living in a diverse society. The first of these programs will be held for all new students during orientation week. Upperclass students will be included in the follow-up programs.

The workshops will be led by a small group of faculty, administrators and students, trained by Dr. Wu, who has strong credentials in this field from her work at Brown University and Bryn Mawr.

4. Counseling and Support Systems -- A black female psychologist, Dr. [REDACTED], has been appointed to the Health Services staff. In addition, by chance, one of this year's two training psychiatrists from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine is a young black woman who is interested in forming a therapy group for black women students. Finally, a weekly support/education group for black women will be led by [REDACTED] '85, who is a doctoral candidate in psychology at New York University.

5. Administrator for Multicultural Affairs -- One of the major demands of the Concerned Students of Color was the appointment of a dean for multicultural affairs, who would have direct responsibility for students of color and for arranging educational and enrichment programs focusing on multicultural issues. While we are convinced of the need for an additional staff member in the Dean of Studies Office, whose primary responsibility would be to serve these needs, conversations with other colleges and universities have confirmed our belief that this administrator must have other official responsibilities that will bring him or her into contact with all students. Otherwise, the position is likely to become a professional dead end, serving students of color poorly, and marginal to the core activities of the College.

A number of potential candidates were interviewed during July. If we decide to go ahead with this appointment, we will bring a "short list" back to the campus this fall so that faculty and students can be involved in the second round of interviews.

6. Committee on Diversity -- Before leaving for the summer, the General Committee appointed the following faculty and administrators to serve on the Committee on Diversity for the coming year: Gary Burnley, Bob Cameron, Margery Franklin, Barbara Kaplan, Marilyn Katz, and Amy Swerdlow. The committee, which will also include two students, will be responsible for ensuring that the progress of the summer continues.

FRESHMEN AND TRANSFER STATISTICS: As I write, the freshman class stands at 231. Thirty percent are men, up from 25 percent in 1988-89 and 21 percent in 1987-88. Even more significant, 25.5 percent are ethnic minorities, up from 13 percent in 1988-89 and 9 percent in 1987-88, and including 18 Asians, 26 blacks, 14 Hispanics, and 1 Native American.

For the first time (in recent memory, at least), it appears that over half of our new transfer students will be men. Forty-seven transfers are enrolled to date, including 21 women and 26 men. The group also includes three ethnic minorities: one Asian, one black, and one Hispanic.

These increases in two minority groups, students of color and men, are both goals of the Walrus Report. We probably need to spend some time thinking about how the recent success in admissions for men can be translated into the most positive experience for both the men we seek and for the students who "liked the campus the way it was."

As always, the numbers for both freshmen and transfers will move slightly up or down during this last month of the summer. We will provide an updated and more detailed report at the first Board meeting in October.

ANDREWS COURT CONSTRUCTION: The extremely wet weather in May and June that ruined many an early vacation played havoc as well with the construction schedule for the new Andrews Court dormitories. We have reluctantly accepted the fact that occupancy of the units will be delayed to September 15, and possibly even to September 30. We are, of course, making contingency housing arrangements for the 28 prospective residents of the new units. In the meantime, Micheal Rengers has written each, reporting on the status of the construction, and enclosing a photograph of each student's "house in progress."

COLLEGE RESOURCES: The news from College Resources is good on all fronts. The first full year of the Walrus Initiative (June 1988 through May 1989) brought in \$4.8 million in new gifts and pledges, bringing the total raised since December 1, 1987 to \$8.9 million, toward our \$15 million Walrus goal. And, once again, the Annual Fund broke all previous records, exceeding the 1988-89 goal of \$1,250,000 by over \$9,000, a 10.4 percent increase over the dollars raised in 1987-88. The full report on annual and capital giving, "1988-89 Gifts and Grants," should be in your hands next month. For now, my deepest thanks to each of you for your generosity and leadership -- without you, our fund raising story would be very different indeed!

As we gear up for the 1989-90 effort, it gives me immense pleasure to announce that the Booth-Ferris Foundation has just awarded us a \$100,000 grant for our endowed fund for senior faculty salaries. The award brings the fund to just over \$500,000 (toward a goal of \$1 million), and comes from a foundation that we previously have been unable to bring into the fold. We shall view this as a benevolent omen as we put the finishing touches on the science proposal to the Olin Foundation, which will be submitted in mid-September.