

Symbolic investment never enough

By Rebecca Weston

"With all of the criticism of public schools and public school teachers and the low salaries, how can we encourage students to go out into that situation in good conscience," asked Roberta Atwell, Associate Professor of Education. Questions such as this were addressed at a recent Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM) Conference on teacher education.

Three Grinnell professors attended the conference held October 10-12. Atwell, Al Jones, Professor of History, and Elizabeth Dobbs, Associate Professor of English attended the conference that discussed the role of liberal art colleges in teacher education.

The principle assumption under which the conference operated was that "colleges like Grinnell need to encourage students to teach in the public schools because that is the quality of people that [they] want in the profession," Atwell said.

In light of this assumption, much of the conference was devoted to discussing ways to improve the education departments within the colleges. Grinnell's Ninth Semester program was given as an example of possible solutions. The Ninth Semester Program enables students to earn an Iowa teaching certificate without sacrificing liberal arts courses. Moreover, it gives the student the opportunity to teach in either the Grinnell school system or in Chicago.

Tuition for the ninth semester is free, provided that after certification, the student teaches primary or secondary school within three years.

Grinnell offers the Ninth Semester Program, in its first year of operation, in lieu of offering an education major. According to Atwell, allowing a student to major in Education "would defeat the purpose of education . . . the emphasis should not be pre-professional," Atwell said.

It was also argued that an education major would not prepare students adequately in the subject matter they would be teaching. "It was a general agreement that in a liberal arts school, graduate students who are going to be certified should have a liberal arts major," Jones explained.

A second problem that was addressed was how to give the teaching profession greater credibility as a career. One way, both Atwell and Jones suggested, was to increase teacher's salaries. Furthermore, "[we need to] try to help students see that this indeed is a contribution that they can make . . . because they do not see it as being very rewarding," Atwell said.

Another way in which colleges could promote public school teaching is to encourage advisors to suggest the profession as a viable career. In the past, because teaching offered low salaries, little prestige, and few positions, Grinnell advisors tended to discourage public teaching, according to Jones.

However, the situation is looking less bleak. "Some good districts are trying to improve public school education. They are paying better salaries, they are giving teachers greater professional status, and as a career area, it is more attractive than it has been in the recent past," Jones said. Moreover, according to Atwell, in recent years there has been a shortage of teachers. Thus, advisors are less reluctant to suggest teaching as a profession after college.

In terms of the curriculum, a major concern was that the "education departments [of all thirteen ACM schools] were not as closely related to other departments as they might be," said Jones. Jones cited methods courses as examples of where education could be integrated with other departments. For example, a course in how to teach

English could be taught in the English department, rather than in the Education department.

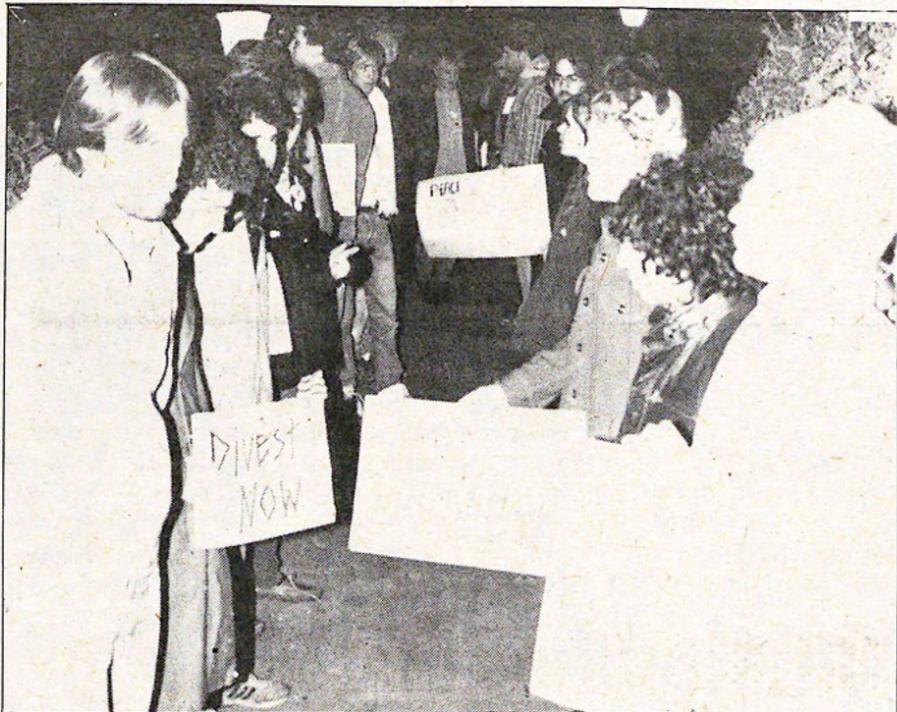
Jones explained that when more students were getting teaching certificates, some of the methods courses were taught outside of the Education department. Mirroring a national trend, fewer students are being certified to teach, thus, outside departments do not feel justified in teaching the course to such a limited number of students.

As to the degree to which outside departments should participate in teacher education, "the consensus [at the ACM conference] was that it is better to have closer cooperation between departments," Jones said.

Dobbs attended the conference to address yet another problem: how to improve the quality of the writing of students who come out of public schools, according to Jones. It was suggested that writing workshops could be established to improve students' writing.

However, Jones admitted that much of the problem of getting quality teachers in the public schools could not be solved by the schools themselves. "Not all the problems can be handled by the schools proper . . . It is difficult to get leverage [on the problem]. The issue of creating excellence is complicated because it is dependent on local and state legislative decisions . . . one can't anticipate progress in the near future," Jones said.

Atwell alluded to the same problem when she said, "We spend more on alcohol and tobacco in this country than we do on education, then we look at the salaries athletes get; it is a value system . . . You do a poll in Iowa and a lot of people say education is important and we are willing to spend money on it, but they pass a tax levy, and the people vote it down . . . It is a matter of priorities. In this society we value education, but we don't want to spend money on it."



Taking stock from the situation

The Associated Press

The number of colleges and universities moving to sell at least some of their stock in companies with ties to South Africa is up sharply this year, though schools with the largest endowments are still reluctant to take the step.

The preliminary results of a study by the Investor Responsibility Research Center, a group that monitors business activity in South Africa, show that 29 schools have divested all of their stock in South African-related companies and another 44 have divested part of it.

Forty of those 73 institutions made their decision this year, as pressure has grown to sell off such holdings as an expression of opposition to South Africa's apartheid system of racial separation and denial of political rights to blacks.

The value of all stock divested is \$292 million, said Chris Coones, a researcher for the center, which is based in Washington.

David Hauck, senior research analyst at the center, said, "There are a lot more universities considering their investment policy toward U.S. companies with investments in South Africa. The number of universities willing to adopt total divestment policies is also up. They're tending to be the larger, more prestigious universities."

There is also a trend toward divestment among pension funds operated by states and cities, which control far more money than the colleges, the center said. At least 10 states and 32 cities have some kind of divestment policy.

New Jersey, for example, has more than \$10 billion in its state employee retirement system, and it is selling some \$2 billion in South Africa-related investments as a result of a state divestment law passed in August, Mr. Coones said.

Of the 100 universities with the largest endowments, about one-third have taken some divestment step, according to the study, but only five have totally divested.

Columbia University's trustees voted last month to sell the university's \$39 million in stock in U.S. companies that do business in South Africa, making it the first Ivy League school to take the step.

It is also the only one of the schools with the 10 largest endowments to totally divest, Mr. Coones said. Harvard, with a \$2.5 billion endowment, the nation's largest, has selectively divested.

Besides Columbia, others with the largest endowments that are totally divesting are the State University of New York; Rutgers; the University of Wisconsin system and Mount Holyoke, according to the center's study.

Ring ring . . . hello . . . \$

By Jenny Halcrow

\$10,000 is a lot of money to earn in just one hour. This year the Fall Telethon has broken several records. In the first two hours of calling that started Sunday afternoon, student callers raised pledges totalling \$23,000. However, in the third session of calling on Sunday the students beat the earlier record by raising \$23,500.

The semi-annual telethons are staffed by students who call alumni, parents, and friends of the college, requesting them to pledge monetary support to the school. These funds are used to supplement Grinnell's financial aid program, purchase library materials, cover heating and lighting bills as well as other operating costs of the college.

Last year the Student Development Committee opted to pay students for working on the telethons. Barb Cardell, this year's committee chair, said the committee pays students because "it increases the professionalism of the callers. Also, paying the student is more fair; everyone receives benefits from the telethon instead of just a few callers." In past years student teams with the largest pledge increases were awarded prizes — one year it was a trip to Vail. Currently the \$15.00 payment for four hours of work makes the telethons one of the highest paid student jobs at \$3.75 an hour.

Cardell said an additional problem with

the one large prize was "too much competition. People wanted to win the prize so badly that sometimes callers would record pledges that alumni weren't willing to give. Then at the end of the year we would have some angry alumni and we would be short of our expected donations total."

This year student callers receive fringe benefits; the top caller and top team each night win gift certificates to J.D.'s Restaurant and all callers are allowed a five minute long-distance phone call after each session that he or she works.

The Student Development Committee has made some changes in the telethon that may account for the success in the first four sessions held on Sunday and Monday. "One of the biggest changes has been Tor Hough and his computer," said Warren Reinecke, Director of Annual Giving. Hough has developed several programs enabling the committee to get instant results on each session's totals, as well as information on the progress of each caller.

In addition to the computer, the committee has developed a new approach for student callers. "We're stressing a more personal and positive approach to calls," said Cardell. In the first two days of calling the students have received pledges totaling \$82,000, a new record for the telethon. Cardell is very optimistic and said "we're aiming for \$150,000 in donations by Saturday and a 50 percent donation rate by alums."

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