Report and Recommendations of the Residence Halls Committee

Background

At the faculty meeting on May 12, 1960, the Residence Halls Committee made the following recommendation:

All University sponsored institutes and conferences be charged for the use of dormitory facilities, the rates be determined by the business office, consistent with needs and dormitory costs. (Document 131, May 12, 1960)

It was voted by the Faculty at that time to refer this recommendation back to the Residence Halls Committee for clarification of matters pertaining to fees with a report to be submitted to the Faculty in the fall of 1960. (Minutes of the faculty meeting, May 12, 1960)

Function of the Residence Halls Committee

This committee is authorized to act as a fact finding and advisory body concerned with the operation and maintenance of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee dormitories (AS 5.220 p. 34).

The members of the present Residence Halls Committee interpret this definition to mean that the function is that of recommending policy, and, therefore, that the setting of fees is not a responsibility of this committee but of the administration.

Data Used in Determining Recommendations

1. The practices since the merger would indicate that the following policy has been followed even though, to our knowledge, it has not been stated:

   That the cost to the student occupants of the dormitories shall be based upon all activities held in the buildings for the calendar year. The cost of the twelve months is amortized against the nine month academic year payment for services.

2. The university dormitory operation is a business operation. It functions as a part of Auxiliary Enterprises, which includes the bookstore, concession machines, and the cafeteria. It is not included in the university budget for classroom facilities.

3. Dormitories are expected to be self-supporting. All costs including salaries (head resident, cook, maid, firemen, etc.), replacement of furniture, equipment and complete maintenance should come from dormitory income which is determined by the number of residents accommodated.

   a. If receipts should exceed disbursements, such moneys remain part of the Auxiliary Enterprise fund and are not kept for exclusive use of the dormitories.
b. Since depreciation of buildings and equipment are important factors to be considered, it must be emphasized that dormitory income has never been sufficient to cover repairs and maintenance which would bring the dormitories up to minimal standards. For example, in 1958, an evaluation of the dormitories was made by an ad hoc committee. This committee presented its findings and recommendations to SLIC which voted to allocate $12,000 to be used for the improvement of the dormitories. This money has now been spent and many improvements were limited to the basement and first floor of each house. The $12,000 did not cover the refurbishing of the second and third floors which still need extensive improvements.

c. It is to the interest of the institution to keep the dormitories self-supporting and in good repair. Needless to say, each year the wear and tear of daily living results in more repair and replacements. Unless the dormitory income is sufficient to keep them in good condition, they will again become shabby in appearance and inefficient. When repairs and replacements are finally made, they will be more expensive than if they had been taken care of immediately.

4. The use of the dormitories by groups other than student occupants during the academic year:

   a. Has caused additional janitorial work.
   b. Has caused wear and tear on furnishings and plant.
   c. Has deprived residents of the use of facilities.
   d. Has meant that the maids and janitors have less time to spend on regular duties which in turn means more work chores for the residents.
   e. Has increased operating costs such as light, soap, towels, etc.
   f. Has meant that the housemothers' private bathrooms are turned over for public use because of lack of other facilities.
   g. Has meant that during the school year the student occupants of each dormitory vote to permit various groups to use their study room, TV room, parlor, and kitchen. It has been the practice to charge these groups a fee of $5. This amount goes into a fund to be used as the student occupants see fit. Some groups have not paid this fee on the grounds that the dormitories are part of the University buildings proper and are to be used in the same way as the classrooms.

One housemother summarized the use of one dormitory for the academic year of 1959-60:

   Number of groups using the dormitory..........38
   Number of groups who paid the fee............16
   Number of groups who did not pay the fee.....22

5. The use of the dormitories by groups other than student occupants during the summer sessions:

   a. Has caused additional janitor and maintenance work.
   b. Has caused wear and tear on furnishings and plant.
   c. Has increased annual operating costs such as light, soap, towels, etc.
d. Has meant that agreements by groups (paying and non-paying) to use only certain portions of the dormitories sometimes have been violated. There have been no procedures to deal with these violations.

e. Has made it necessary for the housemother to assume unassigned duties without compensation because no plan or funds for supervision have been provided.

6. All the State Colleges within the State discourage the use of the dormitories by any groups without or within the institution. Occasional exceptions are made. When an exception is made a fee is charged by the business office and this fee is payable to that office.

Recommendations

In view of all the data collected the Residence Halls Committee presents the following recommendations:

1. That the cost accounting procedures of the University Auxiliary Enterprises properly identify the maintenance and operational costs of the dormitories so that a differentiation can be made between the academic year costs and the summer session costs.

2. That the Auxiliary Enterprises allocate sufficient funds each year to provide for continuing repairs, maintenance, and necessary improvements of dormitory facilities.

3. That the cost to the student occupants of the dormitories shall be based upon the actual operational cost of the nine month academic year.

4. That the costs incurred through the use of the dormitories by credit and non-credit courses and service activities shall be the responsibility of the University. (These costs should not be assumed by the academic year occupants.)

5. That during the academic year, groups other than the student occupants be discouraged from using the dormitories.

6. That any exceptions to policy #5 above be made by the Business Office with the approval of the student occupants through the housemother of the dormitory involved.

7. That when an exception is approved an equitable fee be charged and collected by the Business Office.

RESIDENCE HALLS COMMITTEE

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