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Trinity College
HARTFORD CONNECTICUT

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TRINITY COLLEGE BULLETIN

Report of the President
1969-1970

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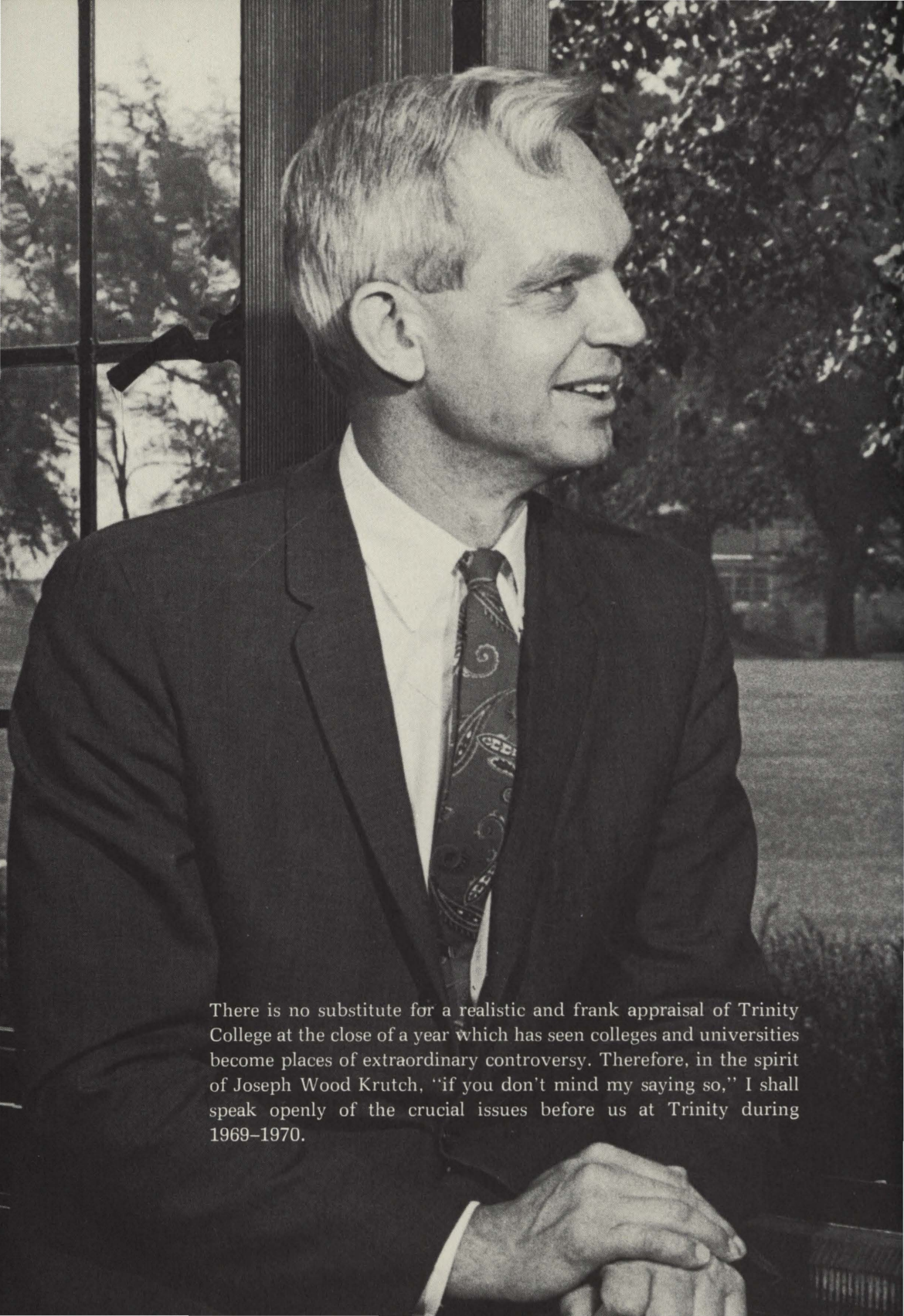
The Report of

President Theodore D. Lockwood

**on the one hundred forty-eighth year
of Trinity College**

October 1970

Hartford, Connecticut



There is no substitute for a realistic and frank appraisal of Trinity College at the close of a year which has seen colleges and universities become places of extraordinary controversy. Therefore, in the spirit of Joseph Wood Krutch, "if you don't mind my saying so," I shall speak openly of the crucial issues before us at Trinity during 1969-1970.

I. THE CAMPUS AND NATIONAL ISSUES

No doubt the most dramatic development this year was the calling of a strike by students at the beginning of May on this and many other campuses. The term "strike" was misleading, for the students who organized these activities at Trinity explicitly ruled out coercion and directed their protest against the decision to invade Cambodia, not against the College. Classes met although for about a week attendance was low since, as always, attendance is the responsibility of the individual student. At no time was Trinity closed. Tests, papers, and other work required in courses and seminars were not altered; only the final examination was made optional by vote of the faculty, and students were urged to confer with their instructors so as to determine whether their standing made taking of the final desirable.

Response to the strike was as varied as one would expect but not as extensive as many may have assumed. There was never any threat of violence. In retrospect, although there may be limited reason to congratulate this community on its handling of a highly emotional situation—simply because colleges should exemplify reasoned discussion—it is important that all of us felt entitled to express our opinions freely without fear of repression and in a manner which did not jeopardize our academic mission even when the strike preoccupied many persons' time and energies.

Sufficient numbers of reports on these events have appeared that extensive comment is unnecessary. Yet, to establish the proper perspective requires us to place them within the context of the formidable changes which have occurred throughout higher education during the 1960's. The necessity of change has overrun us. In my first annual report published last year, I enumerated some of the forces which have pressed upon the academic community. To these have been added the questions raised first at Berkeley and subsequently on almost every major campus about the posture of the institution with respect to both the personal educational needs of students and national social and political problems. At no previous time has there been so much rhetoric about the future of the academy and its relation to external issues.

For these reasons I have felt that it is essential that Trinity restate its mission, a process well under way. At this point, however, I would observe that a college is a "community of learning." It is not a microcosm of the large society within which it performs its special functions. The resources it commands can neither effectively be used for the direct redressment of society's injustices and flaws nor properly be diverted to the therapy of young people not welcome in the job market. Yet obviously the College is a part of the wider community and cannot remain aloof. This paradox produces much of the tension we now experience: many students wish that the College would take an active and constant role in resolving society's problems, but in their enthusiasm they fail to see that we lack that power and, in my judgment, could easily jeopardize our primary academic mission if we tried. Equally disconcerting are those who would like us to extend the period of immaturity by not taking seriously our task of providing the opportunity for young people to learn about themselves and the world in which they live, a world about which students are legitimately concerned. It has seemed to me that, in the face of the challenges we shall confront in the seventies (and I, like others, tire of this vocabulary since we have always had some sort of challenge), we must reaffirm the college as that place where people study problems, inform their judgments, and then subsequently go about the difficult job of setting conditions aright.

Essential to that obligation is a continuing commitment to reason. Unhappily the advent of the Age of Aquarius does not lend much glamor to rational discourse, but ill-informed, impatient assertions in behalf of even the noblest cause serve us poorly. If we are to preserve the freedom to doubt and to question and thus to avoid catering to all kinds of pressures from the young and old alike, we must reassert the role of reason as the one route to that intellectual independence so necessary to responsible action.

Fortunately, despite their critics, the colleges and universities of this country have greater freedom of expression than any other of our institutions. Violence and disruption do threaten that freedom, but stringent controls imposed from without or from within will

not improve our ability to preserve the right of lawful dissent or our ability to assure academic excellence. I shall not write at length on what has concerned so many special commissions on campus unrest this year, but I wish to make clear our intent to maintain the kind of atmosphere at Trinity which truly permits us all to pursue our mission.

We are not unmindful, however, of the criticism which has been directed against colleges. Ironically, precisely because the colleges cannot isolate themselves from the turbulence which besets society, they reflect our collective uneasiness about the state of the world. Even as we seek to minimize the possibility of distraction, we must recognize that students are understandably concerned about contemporary problems and quite properly explore their solution as they learn. As I remarked in my inaugural, "Surely it would be ironic if, in the name of political and economic security those institutions which champion an education dependent upon a free and open society refused to be concerned about what is happening in that society." Sensitivity to these issues flows from being a community of learning, but debates about the state of society must be marked by reasoned argument.

Once again we are talking of degree and style. A dedication to truth and to scholarly evidence and to the deliberate pursuit of honest research (and thus the scrupulous avoidance of meretricious arguments) should permit us to maintain freedom of inquiry. Too often the raucous style of a few is assumed to characterize an institution. Without denigrating the apprehension of the impatient, we may properly reassert the necessity of rationally sound answers reflecting all the human sensitivity of which we are capable. Surely the questions are sufficiently tough to exercise all the intelligence we can command. Therefore, our style must allow for that patience and courage which, I fear, are so often lacking in many arenas these days.

Finally, I have become persuaded that ultimately we are talking about society's renewing the search for a center of conviction about what is worthwhile in life. Trinity College can contribute to this



search best by retaining an openness in our attitudes and a firmness in the ideals of this community.

II. THE ACADEMIC PROSPECT

1. *The Curriculum:*

Trinity has sought to respond to the necessity of change by re-designing its academic programs. There is little doubt that the new curriculum, now one year old, has quickened student interest in significant intellectual matters. The Freshman Seminars were a welcome break with what students had known in high school, and they have served as the base from which a new and better advisory system is being built. The restatement of departmental majors and the creation of interdisciplinary majors hitherto unavailable has moved us away from a dangerous preoccupation with preprofessional training. The absence of requirements in general education has recognized that the exploration of ideas does not necessitate forced feeding at the table of presumed invariant truths laid out according to discretely departmental or divisional lines. And the creation of new cooperative programs has expanded the educational opportunities available to our students.

But there are problems. Many people, inside and outside of Trinity, have become uneasy about the lack of rigor in certain courses, especially those offered under some of the experiments authorized by the new curriculum. I share this worry. However, any new program which genuinely encourages departures from traditional teaching techniques—and surely colleges have too long been reticent about considering new ways of learning—will suffer occasional misconceptions. During this coming academic year we plan to review systematically just what has been happening and I am confident that the faculty will, if appropriate, suggest modifications. At the same time it is a source of reassurance that Trinity has attracted national notice because of its new academic approach. At the Danforth Workshop on the Liberal Arts College, to which a Trinity delegation was invited, our faculty members discovered how frequently we are cited as moving in the right direction. They also learned how important it is that we define the nature of our

commitment to undergraduate learning, for Trinity faces harsh questions in the near future about the range of studies which it can offer both at the undergraduate and graduate level.

2. Interinstitutional Cooperation:

Similarly, the College must decide upon its degree of participation in interinstitutional projects. With the University of Hartford we have had a cooperative venture in music, and we are grateful for the generosity of the Hartt College of Music in opening opportunities for our students. The College has also joined with eleven other colleges in New England in an exchange of students. It appears that approximately thirty students will take advantage of this chance to study in programs not available at Trinity. In addition, we begin this year an exchange program with Trinity College in Quezon City, Philippines, and we are negotiating with other institutions overseas for additional openings. Four students have completed the RPI/Trinity Master of Engineering Program; others have worked with the Institute of Living and the Newington Children's Hospital. Open Semester projects have ranged from the study of African art in Sierra Leone and Nigeria to service with a U. S. Senator in Washington. The questions in all such projects are both academic and economic: to what degree may we reasonably enrich our programs and at the same time prevent a rise in costs or, ideally, reduce our educational expenses by cooperative efforts?

3. AFROTC:

The Air Force Reserve Officers Training Corps program deserves special discussion. For three years enrollments have been sufficiently low as to raise questions about the long-term viability of a unit at Trinity. Whatever the reason for diminishing student interest, it stimulated further discussions with the Air Force, with whom we had sought some adjustments in the program last year—an effort which regrettably the Air Academy subsequently declined. This spring the faculty expressed growing concern about the program. In June the administration renewed conversations with the Air Force, particularly because Trinity's program was on an "evaluation status" for this year and because we had been advised that our "officer

production" was far below minimum levels. From those discussions it became clear that it was in our mutual best interests to consider termination of the program since only four sophomores and four juniors have enrolled. We are now working out the details so that in no event will presently enrolled cadets experience problems in completing their ROTC program. In commenting on this joint agreement the Air Force complimented Trinity College on its service, and I have every confidence that, should a national emergency arise requiring the reinstitution of such a program, Trinity will receive favorable consideration. The Air Force unit will leave in June, 1971.

4. *The Faculty:*

The faculty has had an extraordinarily vigorous year. A new curriculum, extensive discussion of such matters as interdisciplinary programs, the adjudicative system, and its own committee structure, and the events of the spring have demonstrated yet again the advantages of the smaller college in which the faculty know one another and know the students. Faculty support and concern for the College, above and beyond professional commitment, has been particularly gratifying and I hope will always distinguish Trinity's teachers.

5. *The Students:*

The student body has grown and changed. We had 1,375 students enrolled, of whom 165 were women. This growth has virtually filled our residence halls. For this coming year we are adding one apartment house to our available student housing, but it is still too early to predict how future patterns of student living may affect our residential planning. Unhappily we have no easy way to accommodate the larger number of students who elect to eat in Mather Dining Hall.

Although it is impossible to demonstrate precisely how the presence of women undergraduates has changed Trinity, there is little doubt that they have contributed substantially to both the academic and residential life of this campus. And they have been most considerate and patient as we sought to meet their special needs.

It is easier to provide statistics on the entering class than to characterize a student body. Suffice it for this purpose to note that the graduating class largely followed the pattern of its immediate predecessors in seeking admission to advanced study in professional and graduate schools, in entering service programs like the Peace Corps and VISTA, and in finding jobs until either their military obligation or their own plans for a career become clearer. A few married, and of these a number in the College Chapel! During the year student activities have flourished. Although the Student Senate voted to disband, the Mather Hall Governing Board has taken over many of its responsibilities.

Ever since the word "activist" became attached to students particularly concerned with political matters, I feel we have lost sight of the fact that most students are activists in the general sense of the term. The largest group of activists are those who participate in athletics. Trinity now has more teams and clubs than ever before, prompted in part by the new Ferris Athletic Center. The Trinity College Action Center, Cinestudio, the *Tripod*, the "Od Squad," WRTC-FM, two store fronts for tutorial help and the number of other organizations is truly impressive. This is as it should be in a residential community, but this increase in activities and in cultural events taxes most heavily our limited social facilities.

6. Admissions:

One consequence of the decision to become coeducational has become quite apparent: we received the highest number of applications in the history of the College for the Class of 1974. Nearly 2,500 completed their forms for admission and over 300 students, largely young women, sought transfer. We attribute this 26% increase in applicants both to our new academic programs and to our being coeducational. More important, the intellectual and personal qualities of applicants impress us most favorably. The greatest problem is adequate financial aid. Trinity has been proud of its record in utilizing scholarships, loans, and employment to help qualified students lacking the resources otherwise to attend a private college, but financial constraints have forced a limitation on the





percentage of freshmen to whom we can offer aid. Frankly this limitation worries us, and we wonder if colleges like Trinity will become predominantly populated by sons and daughters of higher income families with a small number of economically disadvantaged students. The expansion of public, low-tuition institutions will hasten this trend since they in effect subsidize those with moderate incomes. Many of us have concluded that the long-range solution to our national commitment to equal access to higher education lies in some variation of the Educational Opportunity Bank, but for the immediate future the College will be dependent on private giving to support worthy students.

7. *The College Community*

However, this residential community also has its problems. It has taken a long time to arrive at a unique and interesting, though tentative judicial system affecting equally students, faculty, and administrators. We do not know whether it will work better than other models. We do know it fills a need since the Medusa, a disciplinary body for many years, disbanded itself in 1968. (Medusa has now reconstituted itself as a purely honorary society.)

The Trinity College Council, serving as an advisory body on campus matters, has sought to describe a new policy on drugs, but I am not so optimistic as to assume that a new policy and the existence of a College Drug Advisory Committee will make much headway on what is a national scandal and a serious danger to the young. Drug abuse requires a massive parental and community effort; colleges alone can do little to alleviate the situation.

The Trinity community continues to discuss more effective ways to arrive at appropriate decisions—at all levels. This task will not end shortly, for it is intimately tied to the restatement of goals and to the achievement of a consensus on national issues such as race relations, the vote for eighteen-year-olds, Selective Service, and those political developments which directly affect young persons. I foresee no early resolution; and therefore the continuing debate over participation in decision-making.

To these pressures has been added the question of Trinity's position in the Hartford community. Thanks to a grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving we have begun to determine in what ways we may most effectively relate the College to this wider community. We have undertaken many projects, ranging from the summer recreation and athletic programs for neighborhood youngsters to an Alternate Learning Center for children having particular difficulties with their secondary education. Trinity is working with other groups in the City as they try to plan for the future development of this area. I am convinced that this process must continue, but it is as complex and frustrating as any urban renewal effort.

III. THE FINANCIAL PROGNOSIS

Any analysis of conversations held among college presidents or at an educational conference leads to identifying the financial future of higher education (in common with other service enterprises) as a preeminent problem. States face horrendous decisions on the allocation of limited resources among worthy services expected by the public; private institutions recognize the pressure of all the relevant demands upon private philanthropy. Inflation has caught up with us all. And precisely the kinds of needs we see in education today all cost still more money. As David Riesman has observed, the problem has been compounded this last year by a decline in the enthusiasm with which the public regards its extensive commitment to education.

I have written earlier of our own particular situation (see the Alumni Magazine, Vol. X, No. 2, Summer, 1969). The Treasurer will have more to say in his report this fall. But I should like to comment on a few aspects of Trinity's fiscal situation. First, we have had our second year of deficits, a modest record compared to many independent colleges but a most serious outcome. In our judgment these imbalances were historically unavoidable. They cannot continue. The problem is how best to restore the balance. We have concluded that we must simultaneously increase income and realign our expenditures. I have admired the understanding way in which both students and parents have accepted increases in the tuition and room

rents. I have been grateful for the rise in the average gift in our annual fund-raising campaign. These responses are critical in meeting the increase in costs. On the expenditure side we have decided to hold administrative costs by reducing staff even though, in all candor, I must admit that we have too few people to perform the services asked of us. We will not increase the budget in athletics, and we will hold expenditures in supporting instructional services. However, lest we incur an educational "deficit," more debilitating than financial deficits, we are proceeding with increases in faculty salaries, library services, and the maintenance of our facilities.

My second observation on college finances falls under the rubric of inevitability. Inevitably our commitment in financial aid increases, although at a diminishing rate. We cannot reduce the aid now provided upperclassmen and we have tried to offer as much aid to freshmen as possible, though to a smaller percentage of the entering class. Our costs in maintenance climb both because of the national inflation and because of the expansion and renovation of our plant over the last decade. We have no choice when wages go up. I have felt particularly aggrieved about how little we can do for our clerical staff. Our wages have never been truly competitive and the need for additional clerical and secretarial help goes unheeded.

Therefore, my third comment relates to the future. As we achieve greater and greater efficiency in the use of our resources, we must also reach higher levels of support. Our projections, which inevitably suffer both from hazardous extrapolations of past experience and from uncertain assessments of an economic future hardly clear to even the experts in forecasting, indicate that we must seek a new relation among the key factors of student size, faculty productivity, and supporting services. We are reviewing various options. Perhaps the greatest problem in any financial prognosis is to find the balance between our resources and our academic aspirations, for we do not wish to realize a decline in our educational excellence by budgetary compliance just as we cannot afford fiscal irresponsibility in the name of academic overcommitment. The very vocabulary of these remarks suggests how complex is the task confronting the Trustees, the Administration, and the Faculty.

IV. "THE FUTURE WITHIN OUR REACH"

In closing I revert to the title of my Report last year. Candor always runs the risk of eliciting more uneasiness than comfort. Nevertheless, I think the great attribute of facing severe problems is that we find at least a few solutions. Trinity is now closer to the future within its reach than it ever has been: the College has made tremendous progress, especially when seen over twenty-five years. It is equally true, as I have said on another occasion, we face harder times at precisely the moment when people have even greater expectations from education. The challenge exists, I am convinced, because we are essentially optimistic. However harrowing the rhetoric of contemporary debate, we can both preserve and improve the community of learning.

In this regard I have been pleased by the interest expressed by both alumni and parents. The alumni have raised hard questions at our regional gatherings: some have been harsh in their observations, but the vast majority have shown a genuine concern which heartens all of us who wonder about the future of the independent college. The Board of Fellows has been especially active in helping us to study the academic alternatives before us. Particularly gratifying also has been the continuing support of the Parents' Association. Parents can and should, I am convinced, play an increasingly important role in our deliberations.

* * *

A long time ago Socrates observed that a teacher never really teaches students; rather students learn from truly understanding what has become important to their perception of themselves and the world in which they live. At Trinity we must sustain the environment in which that learning is possible, in which truth is free, in which wisdom is the end of all that we do.

