
RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE BULLETIN.

LETTER TO ALUMNI AND OTHER FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOL.

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RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE,
TROY, N. Y.

Personal

DEAR SIR:—Great changes have occurred at the Institute since my last letter to the Alumni, dated September 25, 1917. We have become a part of the military establishment of our country:—a unit of the Students' Army Training Corps has been established here. We have quartered on our grounds about 550 student soldiers and 120 student sailors. The White, Hunt and Campus dormitories, the '87 Gymnasium and the two upper floors of the Club House are now barracks in which these soldiers and sailors sleep. The second floor of the gymnasium and the two large rooms on the first floor are used for sleeping quarters. The headquarters of the Commandant, Captain Van Velsor, are in the gymnasium office and his lieutenants, 10 in number, also do their work there.

There are 44 shower baths in the new dormitories and gymnasium and the swimming pool in the latter building is 30 by 75 feet in size, so that ample bathing facilities are provided.

The Sage Dining Hall is the mess hall. Pine tables, with benches attached, have replaced the small oak tables heretofore used. The seating capacity is 384 or, for two shifts, 768. The '86 Athletic Field will be the drill ground. Various drawing and recitation rooms in the Sage Laboratory will be used for study rooms for

the Training Corps. It will be seen from the description given above that we have an excellent equipment for taking care of this Corps.

On October 1st, at 12 noon, our flag was raised on the 60-foot flag pole erected on top of the rocks near the gymnasium and the members of the Corps, assembled on the athletic field, took the "Oath to the Flag." The exercises included speeches by representatives of the Army and Navy and of the clergy of Troy.

Our four year curriculums in Civil, Mechanical, Electrical and Chemical Engineering have each been cut to two years. These shorter courses are divided into eight periods each three months in duration with a vacation, one week in length, between each period. The number of days, including Sundays, in the shorter course is about 63 per cent. of those in our four years course. Recitations are held on Saturday morning as well as on the other five week days. Fifty-three hours a week are allowed for military and civil work including drill and study. For the first two periods eleven hours a week are given to military work and for the last six periods six hours a week. This leaves 42 hours a week for recitations, lectures and study during the first two periods, and 47 hours for the last six periods. Two hours of study are required for one hour of recitation.

Students in the Corps, whether of the Army or Navy, take the same military training, and those in the same engineering course take the same subjects. That is, the curriculums for the Army and Navy students are the same. The daily routine is the same. All arise at 5.45 a. m., breakfast at 6.15 and have drill until 8, at which hour recitations begin. Dinner is between 12 and 1.30 p. m., and recitations begin at the latter time. At 3.30 there is military drill. Supper is between 6 and 7 p. m., and there is a study period between 7.30 and 9.30 p. m. Lights are out at ten o'clock.

Athletics on our grounds will be encouraged but only two games of football taking any time of any student before 12 o'clock Saturday will be permitted this year. This means that only two or three inter-collegiate games may be played. All students in the Corps are either private soldiers in the Army or seamen in the Navy. As such, subsistence is provided them by the Government. The soldiers also receive \$30 a month and the sailors \$32.60 a month. The Government pays us for the quarters and food and for the tuition of those in the Corps. All members of the Corps must live in the barracks

on the Campus. They cannot live in Fraternity or Society houses and these cannot be used as barracks. The first floor of the Club House will be used as a canteen. The Y. M. C. A. may establish a unit here and build on the grounds a hut of sufficient size to hold the Corps when general lectures are given or moving pictures shown.

I have described the military situation here in some detail since it is a matter of great importance to us and of considerable interest to all friends of the school.

There are other students here beside those in the Army and Navy. Some are citizens who were under 18 years of age September 12th. Others are foreigners. A few have been rejected by the Army or Navy on account of physical unfitness and have remained as students outside the Corps. All these pay their own tuition and expenses. They take the course given the S. A. T. C., at times supplemented by other work. For instance no French is taught the S. A. T. C., but we are teaching this language to students of Divisions D and C not in the Corps. The arrangement made for all students outside the Corps is that they shall take one of the S. A. T. C. courses as long as it is continued and that when it is discontinued we will give them all the subjects not in the S. A. T. C. curriculum which they would have had if times had been normal—if there had been no war—and will give them a degree, if deserving. Since such students will work all summer they may finish their course and obtain their degrees before the time at which they would have received them if the regular courses had been given. We shall probably give Army and Navy students, if they finish the two years course, certificates showing that they have taken the courses, but they will not receive diplomas.

We have at this date about 860 students, altogether, of whom about 670 are in the Army and Navy. There are 502 new students of whom 416 were over 18 years of age September 12th and are now in the Corps, 73 are under 18 and 13 are foreigners. All students in the August 24th or previous drafts, except those who were last year in the Engineer Enlisted Reserve Corps or in the Navy, are being taken away and sent to cantonments. Others are leaving to go into other branches of service, so that the numbers in our upper classes are constantly decreasing. Furthermore our contract with the Government is a per diem arrangement. If the war should end soon the Corps would be discharged and the new students would

leave in large numbers since large numbers entered and joined the Corps who would not have been able to pay their own way.

Captain Van Velsor, the Commanding Officer, has arranged to have drilled those students wishing it who are not in the Corps. They cannot be drilled with the Corps and cannot wear uniforms.

The June Bulletin of this year contains the names of 634 graduates and former students at that time wearing the uniform either of the Army or the Navy. Many of the addresses given were naturally not complete and doubtless many names were omitted. By this time hundreds more are in the service. Of course almost all of our graduates are in some form of war work though they may not be wearing a uniform. In May we had a service flag made with 675 stars upon it. Up to that time six had died in the service and four had been decorated for bravery.

Tenders were obtained during the year for the four dormitories for which the money was given by members of the Alumni Association and also for an addition to the Chemical Laboratory but, as was expected, they were so high that it was decided not to attempt to build them until after the war.

I greatly regret to record the death of the Vice-President of our Board, Elias P. Mann, of the class of '72, who had been a Trustee for 39 years. He died August 5th. Also the death of Charles G. Roebbling, of the class of '71, President of John A. Roebbling's Sons Company, of Trenton, N. J., who had recently been elected a member of the Board. He died October 5th. Another Trustee, Robert Cluett, to our great regret resigned from the Board. He no longer resides in Troy. I am glad to announce the election of two new members of the Board, L. H. Cramer, President of the Harvey Company of Saratoga Springs, a former student, and William P. Denegre, a member of the class of '77 and of the firm of A. J. Cameron and Co., of Philadelphia.

Yours very sincerely,

PALMER C. RICKETTS.

NOTE:—This letter is for the information of graduates and other friends of the Institute and is not for publication.